Landmarks Preservation Commission
March 23, 2010, Designation List 427
LP-2384

REFORMED CHURCH ON STATEN ISLAND, SUNDAY SCHOOL BUILDING, AND CEMETERY, 54 Port Richmond Avenue, Staten Island
Church built 1844, architect, James G. Burger; Sunday School Building built 1898, architect, Oscar S. Teale; Cemetery active 1704-1916
Landmark Site: Borough of Staten Island, Tax Map Block 1073, Lot 75

On August 11, 2009, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Reformed Church on Staten Island, Sunday School Building, and Cemetery and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 9). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. A total of eleven witnesses, including City Council member Kenneth C. Mitchell, Reformed Church on Staten Island Consistory President Warren Mac Kenzie, and representatives of the Historic Districts Council, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, and the Preservation League of Staten Island testified in support of this designation. The representative of the Preservation League also appeared on behalf of the North Shore Waterfront/Greenbelt Association, the West Brighton Restoration Society and the Four Boroughs Neighborhood Preservation Alliance. A number of members of the congregation who were present at the hearing also rose with President Mac Kenzie to indicate their support for the designation. The Commission has received two letters and one e-mail in support of the designation. There were no speakers or letters in opposition to the designation.

Summary

This Greek Revival style church was erected in 1844 to the designs of Staten Island builder James G. Burger and was enlarged in 1898 with a Colonial Revival Sunday School addition designed by architect Oscar S. Teale. The church's congregation is the oldest in Staten Island and its first church building was erected on this site in 1715. The present church is the congregation's third; it is the oldest church building on the North Shore and one of the oldest churches on Staten Island. The church's graveyard is the oldest non-private cemetery in Staten Island.

The church is one of the few surviving Greek Revival style churches on Staten Island and appears to be the sole remaining example of the distyle-in-antis temple-front church type, which is characterized by its central recessed entrance porch with two free-standing columns and framing enclosed bays, articulated by corner pilasters (antae). An unusually handsome and well-proportioned example of this building type, the basilican-plan church rests on a high stone foundation and is faced with tawny-red brick trimmed with brownstone and wood moldings. Its north and south façades are lit by tall square-headed windows, which contain stained glass by J. & R. Lamb Studios installed in 1906. All three facades are capped by denticulated wood entablatures and the brick pediment over the façade is outlined by wood cornices (preserved beneath vinyl siding). The distinctive wood bell tower is enriched with corner pilasters, paired louvered windows in a molded surround, a denticulated cornice, and a parapet decorated with paired acroteria.

The 1898 Chapel and Sunday School addition by Oscar S. Teale, a noted Manhattan-based architect specializing in churches, is an Akron-plan building, incorporating a large horseshoe-shaped auditorium. Set back from the street and oriented at a right angle to the church, the addition has an asymmetrical four-bay façade that references the earlier church building in its materials, tawny brick

trimmed with brownstone and wood, as well as in details such as the paired pilasters and denticulated sheet metal and wood cornices. Other notable details include the rounded bay, the open pediment crowning the paired pilasters, the flat- and round-arched window surrounds with stone keystones, stained-glass windows, and the polygonal roof with drum and lantern over the auditorium.

The cemetery is divided into three sections. The section to the north of the church incorporates a burying ground associated with the Corsen family known to have been in use by 1704/05 that was taken over by the church by 1715. It has 224 grave markers dating from 1746 to 1882 and includes a number of gravestones that have been ascribed to the workshops of noted New Jersey stone carvers. The cemetery to the south of the church occupies land donated by Daniel Tompkins in 1816 and includes 105 markers dating between 1816 and 1896. The third or "new" section of the cemetery located to the west of the Sunday School addition contains 363 markers dating between 1834 and 1916 and includes the grave of Judge Jacob Tysen (1773-1848), who had a long and distinguished public career, serving as a congressman and as a judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and the family plots of the Van Name, Houseman, Drake, Kohler, and Post families. Morris's *History of Staten Island* records that the cemetery also includes the unmarked grave of a female slave, who was the mother of Benjamin and Fortune Perine. Fortune and his wife Hettie were members of this church and Benjamin continued to worship here until his death in 1900, at the age of 104. At his death Perine was by far the oldest man on Staten Island and the last born into slavery. Together the church, Sunday School Building and cemetery are significant reminders of the historical, cultural, and architectural development of the Port Richmond neighborhood and Staten Island.[1]

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Early History of Port Richmond and the Reformed Church on Staten Island[2]

Port Richmond is located on the North Shore of Staten Island, adjacent to the Kill van Kull, the strait between Staten Island and Bayonne, New Jersey. There is evidence of Paleo Indian occupation on Staten Island as early as 10,000 B.C. [3] Over time, as the climate changed from post-glacial tundra to coniferous forest to deciduous forest, the island was able to sustain increasingly larger populations. By the Late Woodlands period (AD 900-1600), considerable land had been cleared for horticulture. Staten Island was then occupied by Munsee-speaking members of the Lenape nation. The Munsee supplemented their diets with hunting, gathering, and shellfish collecting. Agriculture allowed them to establish large permanent or semi-permanent base camps and villages that were usually located on well-drained land near streams and coastal waterways. Europeans were slow to colonize Staten Island because of the resistance they faced from the Native Americans on the island. However, in 1660 a peace treaty was reached with the Native Americans. By 1664 there were sufficient settlers that the French on the island requested a preacher from Governor Peter Stuyvesant. The Rev. Samuel Drisius, one of the pastors of the Dutch Church in New Amsterdam, who spoke French as well as Dutch and English, was given permission "to go and preach there every two months and administer the Lord's Supper."[4] At that time the congregation consisted of about twelve or fourteen Dutch and French families from the Palatinate region of Germany. This congregation was the beginning of the Reformed Church on Staten Island.

In 1670, four years after the English takeover of New Amsterdam, the English Governor Francis Lovelace "purchased" Staten Island from the Native Americans, who left the island to move westward. During the next decade the Dutch congregation on Staten Island grew to about

50 members, comprised of about twenty families, many living on the North Shore. Initially the Staten Island congregation was ministered to by the Rev. Casparus Van Züren, Pastor of Long Island. In 1683, the congregation called its first resident pastor, the Rev. Petrus Tesschenmacker, who had ministered to congregations in Dutch Guiana (1676-78) and Kingston, New York. He settled on an eighty acre farm on the south side of the island and ministered to the French and Dutch on Staten Island until 1686, when he moved to Schenectady.[5]

Following Tesschenmacker's departure, the Rev. Rudolphus van Varick, who resided in Flatbush, held services on Staten Island twice a year from 1686 to 1690. After 1690, the French Huguenots on Staten Island established their own church, which was ministered to by the Rev. David Bonrepos.[6] A Dutch congregation was also organized in Port Richmond in the 1690s by the Rev. Guiliam Bertholf, a minister from New Jersey, who visited Staten Island on a periodic basis.[7]

In addition to receiving these periodic ministerial visits, at the close of the 17th century the Dutch on Staten Island were also served by a lay leader known as a voorlezer who led worship services in which he read "prayers, a passage from the Bible, and a sermon from an approved book."[8] The voorlezer also served as schoolmaster. He resided and taught in a two-story building (built c. 1696) at Richmondtown which was also used for church meetings.[9] Although the Voorlezer has not been definitively identified, he is generally believed to have been Henderyck Kroessen (aka Hendrick Kroesen/Hendrick Croesen/Hendrick Cruser, c. 1665-c. 1760).[10] Henderyck was the son of Gerrit Dircksen Kroessen (c. 1639-1680), one of a number of Dutch-born residents of Brooklyn, who in 1677, acquired patents on north shore of Staten Island. Around 1687, Henderyck Kroessen moved to Staten Island and, with his brother Dirck, began farming their late father's farm, which was located on the Kill Van Kull to the east of modern-day Broadway. Henderyck probably began acting as the Voorlezer in 1696 and moved to the Voorlezer's House around 1697, with his new wife Cornelia Corsen (1681-?). In addition to his other duties he was responsible for recording the baptisms performed by the visiting Dutch Reformed ministers on Staten Island.[11] In 1700, the Dutch Reformed congregation in Richmondtown acquired land for a separate church building. The Voorlezer's house was sold the following year, and Henderyck and Cornelia probably moved to Port Richmond.[12] Although he was principally a farmer, Henderyck seems to have continued to function as voorlezer and record keeper for the Dutch Congregation.

At the beginning of the 18th century the enclave that eventually became Port Richmond grew rapidly, due in large part to the establishment by Jacob Corson of a ferry to Bergen Point in present-day Bayonne[13] and the opening of two roads ─ one running along the North Shore along the route of present-day Richmond Terrace and the other linking the ferry and North Shore road to Richmondtown. In 1715, Governor Hunter gave the rapidly expanding Dutch congregation license to build "a Meeting House in some convenient place at the Northside of said Island at their own Costs and Charges."[14] The site selected for the new church adjoined an already established burial ground at the junction of the North Shore road and the road to Richmondtown. First mentioned in the 1704/05 authorization to open these roads, the burying ground was originally within the patent of Captain Cornelius Corsen, granted in 1680, and, as suggested by Staten Island historian-genealogist Marjorie Decker Johnson, probably began as a private family burying ground for the Corson family following Captain Corsen's death in 1693.[15] The land on which the first Dutch Reformed church was built was originally within the patent of the

Hooglandt family, immediately adjoining the Corson farm.[16] Members of the congregation listed on the license are Captain Corsen's sons Christian and Jacob, his son-in-law Henderyck Kroessen (the voorlezer), Johannes Hoogland, and Garret Boughty. Although no images of the first church survive, a seating plan from the 1750s shows that it was a hexagonal building, which likely had a steeply pitched polygonal roof.[17]

With the completion of the new church (c. 1717-18), the congregation on the North Side and a "united" congregation of Huguenots and Dutch at Richmondtown called Cornelius Van Santvoord of Leyden as their pastor.[18] Van Santvoord married Anna Staats, the granddaughter of one of the original patentees who had settled in the Port Richmond area in the 1670s, purchased land from her family, and built a house (c. 1722), which survives as the center section of the Cornelius Cruser House (aka Kreuzer-Pelton House, 1262 Richmond Terrace, a designated New York City Landmark). A learned clergyman who preached in Dutch, French, and English and published several books on theology, Van Santvoord was a proponent of the Pietist evangelical movement and a supporter of the Rev. Theodore Frelinghuysen.[19] During the 1720s, Frelinghuysen, a renowned evangelist and important religious figure, held several revival meetings on Staten Island including one at the "North Side Church" which filled the church "beyond capacity."

In 1742, Van Santvoord left Staten Island to answer a call from Schenectady. The North Side Church relied on voorlezers for eight years, and then joined with Bergen (now Jersey City) in a call to Peter De Wint, each congregation agreeing to receive "a righteous half of services" and provide a "righteous half of payment."[20] De Wint began serving in 1751, but it was discovered that he was an imposter with forged credentials. In 1753 the Dutch Reformed churches of Staten Island and Bergen again issued a joint call to William Jackson, a student of the Rev. John Frelinghuysen, who was a son of Theodore Frelinghuysen. With Dutch-speaking clergymen in short supply, the congregations agreed to support Jackson for four years of additional study in Holland.

The Rev. William Jackson and the North Side Church

By 1757, when William Jackson returned from his studies in Holland, the enclave that would eventually became known as Port Richmond was a thriving commercial and transportation hub. The ferry from the village to Bergen Point had become an important link in a major overland route between New York and Philadelphia and was a transfer point for stagecoach service between the two cities.[21] Usually the enclave was known by the name of the proprietor of the ferry to Bergen's Point ─ Beck's Ferry, Ryerss's Ferry and Decker's Ferry ─ but alternately was called Dutch Church. Here, according to historian Phillip Papas, "merchants and shopkeepers bought and sold a variety of goods and offered the island's farmers basic commercial services."[22] There was also an inn for the comfort of stage passengers, built by Isaac Decker, the best-known of the ferry proprietors.

Shortly after his return from Holland, William Jackson married Anna Frelinghuysen, sister of his mentor the Rev. John Frelinghuysen and daughter of the Rev. Theodore Frelinghuysen. Jackson made his home in Bergen but preached frequently at the North Side church, and occasionally at Richmondtown, where a new United Reformed Church was constructed in 1769, and at a chapel on the South Shore in the enclave that became present-day Tompkinsville (built 1770). Jackson, according to a history of the Dutch Church in Bergen, was

"blessed with a most commanding voice, and was, in the Dutch language, a powerful orator."[23] "A field preacher, second only to Whitfield," he often preached "to immense assemblies."[24] In an age when politics and religion were often intertwined, Jackson was a staunch Whig who opposed Parliament's imposition of the Stamp Act, Townshend Duties, and the Tea Act.[25]

During the Revolutionary War, the village of Decker's Ferry was at the center of military activities. British forces occupied the village from 1776 to 1783, and the ferry landing was an embarkation point for British troops. The Dutch Church's congregation included both rebels and Tories.[26] Understandably, the British viewed the Dutch Church as a center of rebellion; all three of the congregation's church buildings were plundered early in the war. The hexagonal church on the North Side became a barracks, was damaged, and finally blew down in a storm. The Dutch congregations' other churches were also ultimately razed. There are only a few grave markers dating from the Revolutionary years in this church's graveyard; however, the earlier sections of the graveyard with their many colonial-era and post-Revolutionary-era gravestones (including the Mersereau and Ryerrs gravestones) survive as a tangible reminder of the colonial history of Staten Island and its role in the Revolutionary War.

The Second Church[27]

In June 1785, the North Side congregation resolved to rebuild its church. Joshua Mersereau, president of the congregation, and Gozen Ryerrs, treasurer, headed the building committee. Mersereau had been one of the leading Revolutionaries on the island and Ryerrs was one of the leading Tories, suggesting that their election "was a purposeful step toward reconciliation."[28] Additional land adjoining the burial ground was secured for the project in 1786 and construction took place in 1787-88. The new building had a brick façade and stone side walls. Rectangular in plan with its long axis running north-south, the building had its main entrance at the center of the east façade facing the main road (Port Richmond Avenue).

About a year after the new building was completed, the Rev. Jackson, who had become mentally ill, was relieved of his duties at Bergen and Staten Island. The congregation then called the Rev. Peter Stryker who served as minister from 1790 to 1794. He was the first pastor to preach in the English language.[29] In 1792 the Dutch Reformed Church in America adopted a formal constitution and this church was incorporated under the name of "The Reformed Protestant Dutch Church" on Staten Island. The Rev. Thomas Kirby served as pastor from 1797 to 1800. He was succeeded in 1802 by the Rev. Peter I. Van Pelt.

A descendent of French Huguenots and Dutch families from Flatbush, Van Pelt had recently completed his divinity studies when he was called to Staten Island. A gifted orator with excellent social connections, Van Pelt brought many new members to the congregation. Early on he devoted himself to repairing the congregation's shaky finances. He then began an ambitious building campaign that included constructing a new steeple for the brick church on the North Shore (completed 1806), replacing the church in Richmondtown that had been destroyed during the Revolutionary War with a new building (1807-08), and building a school "fronting the Kills in the North East part of the Church Yard" near the main road (1810).[30] In this building Van Pelt organized a Sunday school in 1812, thought to be one of the first Sunday schools in New York State. During the War of 1812, the Rev. Van Pelt was appointed by Governor Daniel D. Tompkins as chaplain to the troops stationed on Staten Island.[31] When Tompkins moved to Staten Island in 1816, he became a member of this congregation. Wanting a large pew near the

center of the church, suitable to his office as governor, Tompkins persuaded the church's consistory[32] to close the main entrance on Port Richmond Avenue and move the door to the north wall of the steeple. Because it would have been impossible to reach the entry without encroaching on the adjacent property, Tompkins purchased and donated to the church a strip of land measuring 32 feet by 110 feet immediately to the north of the steeple.[33] The Tompkins lot was also used to create a new graveyard on the south side of the church. In 1833, the consistory provided for future needs by purchasing a large irregularly shaped lot to the south and rear of the Tompkins tract; this third section of graveyard came to be known as the "new burying ground."[34]

In 1835, Van Pelt was forced to resign his ministry after he was accused of having an adulterous affair with a member of the North Church.[35] Demoralized by the controversy created by these scandalous events, most of the consistory resigned and the combined membership of the North and South churches fell to 93 members. At that point, the consistory brought in a young Scottish Presbyterian minister, the Rev. James Brownlee, the nephew of the Rev. Dr. William Brownlee, pastor the of the Middle Collegiate Dutch Church of New York. James Brownlee went on to serve the church as its pastor until 1890, a term of 55 years (in 1884 the Rev. Alfred H. Demarest was called as associate pastor). Under Brownlee's leadership, the church went through a number of profound changes, notably in its treatment of African-Americans. Among these changes was a change of name to the Reformed Church on Staten Island, following the Protestant Dutch Reformed Church's adoption of the name Reformed Church in America` in 1867.

Racial Attitudes and the Reformed Church on Staten Island

Throughout the colonial period and early 19th century, the Dutch Reformed Church in America had an equivocal position regarding slavery and its treatment of blacks.[36] During the early days of settlement blacks, free and enslaved, were married and baptized in Dutch Reformed churches. Because some theologians and courts maintained that blacks could only be held as slaves until they became Christian at which time they were to be freed, and Dutch settlers, especially farmers, were reliant on slave labor, the Reformed Church began to discourage slave baptisms limiting them only to cases in which the parents had become full communicant members of the Dutch Reformed Church. Since this "entailed memorizing and understanding the Heidelberg Catechism and various hymns, psalms, and set prayers,"[37] a difficult task for the literate and virtually impossible for illiterate or semi-literate slaves denied any formal schooling, only a handful of blacks became full communicants. Although denied full benefits of formal membership, blacks, especially those connected with Dutch families, did sometimes attend Dutch Reformed Church services where they were often relegated to separate sections of the church, usually a gallery. After the Revolution, attitudes began to change. Article 59 of the Reformed Constitution, adopted in 1792, stipulated that "in the Church there is no difference between bond and free, all are one in Christ."[38] Black membership in the Dutch Reformed Church increased, although it remained "small compared with the number of African-Americans owned by the Dutch."[39] This was especially true in rural areas, where Dutch farmers remained particularly dependent on slave labor, and where educational opportunities for blacks were very limited.

Many of the original members of this congregation were slave owners, including the probable first voorlezer and church founder Henderyck Kroessen, who in a 1755 listing of

"slaves male and female above 14 years of age" in Northfield, appears as the owner of three women, Lade, Dina, Sary, and one man, Charles.[40] At least 17 other members of the congregation appeared on the 1755 list, with ferry keeper and church founder Jacob Corsen, Sr., having the largest number of slaves ─ Japhory, Sam, Jupiter, Mary and Nan.[41] As late as 1800 there were 107 slaves in Northfield, many belonging to members of this congregation, as well as 15 free blacks.[42] It is not known whether the Rev. Jackson was a slaveholder; the Rev. Kirby does not appear to have owned slaves. The Rev. Peter Stryker owned a female slave Dinah and her two children, Teen and Henry; having accepted a call from another congregation in 1794 and about to move from Staten Island, he sold all three to a member of the congregation, Daniel Garrison.[43] The Rev. Peter I. Van Pelt had at least one female slave, who had two sons while she resided in his home on Richmond Terrace. The elder of the sons, Benjamin Perine, was born prior to the passage of the Gradual Abolition Act of March 1799, which provided "that every child born of a slave within this State after the Fourth of July next shall be deemed and adjudged to be born free."[44] His brother, Fortune, was born in 1804 and in July 1805, the Rev. Van Pelt formally acknowledged this and relinquished all claim upon him. At about age 18, Benjamin Perine was sold to a Mr. Ridgeway who retained ownership until slavery was abolished in 1825.[45] Later Benjamin worked as a deckhand on a ferry run by Commodore Vanderbilt, was employed at a hotel in Elm Park, and was a servant with the family of George Jones in Mariners' Harbor. He lived until 1900, by then the oldest man on Staten Island and the last born into slavery. He continued to worship at this church throughout his life but never became a member. According to Morris's *History of Staten Island,* Benjamin Perine's mother was buried in the shadow of the Dutch church, presumably within the precincts of the church's graveyard.

The consistory minutes do not provide much information about black participation in this church during the post-emancipation period, although it appears that there were African-American members of the congregation.[46] Among the few names that have come down to us are those of Fortune Perine and his wife Hettie. The consistory minutes also record that Harry C. Simons, "a colored person," made a profession of faith, was baptized, and admitted as a member in full communion with the church in 1841.[47] Until Brownlee became pastor, Holy Communion services, held four times a year, were conducted separately for men, women, and "colored people." Brownlee insisted on integrating the services, threatening to leave his pastorate if the change was not adopted. He prevailed, but three prominent families left the church. Ultimately, Brownlee proved to be an extremely popular minister and by 1844, the congregation had outgrown its church building and the consistory was faced with enlarging the existing building or building a new church.

The 1844 Church

In the spring of 1844, the pastor, consistory, and pew holders of the Reformed Church on Staten Island voted by two-thirds in favor of a new building.[48] Building and fundraising committees were established and James G. Burger, a local builder and church member who had built a parsonage for the Rev. Brownlee, was invited to prepare preliminary estimates for the work based on the dimensions and finishes specified by the committees, taking into allowance any materials that could be salvaged from the existing building. The building committee subsequently stipulated that the plans were to include an excavated basement and cupola of "proportionate dimensions to receive the bell, etc."[49] Three builders bid on the project; Burgher,

the low bidder, was awarded the commission. In August 1844, the old building was demolished and by October 1844 the new building was completed and ready to paint, although the new pews were not installed until March 1845.

The church is basilican in plan and is 49 feet wide and 85 feet deep. It rests on a free-stone basement, is faced with brick with brownstone and wood trim, and has a gabled roof. Its façade exemplifies the Greek Revival distyle-in-antis temple-front church type, which is characterized by its central recessed entrance porch with two freestanding columns and framing enclosed bays, usually articulated by corner pilasters (antae).[50] This treatment imparted a monumental quality to the building, in keeping with the Greek aesthetic, but was much cheaper to build than a temple-fronted building with a full colonnade across the front and less wasteful of space, since the porch usually occupied only about one third of the façade and the remaining space was typically used for staircases or storage. Moreover, the end bays were often treated as blank walls, unadorned save for the pilasters.

Although there were some English precedents for this building type, its introduction in this country is usually attributed to Town & Davis, who first employed it for their Doric style South Congregational Church in Middletown, Connecticut (1829, demolished).[51] This was followed in New York City by the firm's West Presbyterian Church at Carmine and Varick Streets (1831-32, demolished).[52] The following year, Town & Davis's former draftsman, James Dakin, who had just become a partner in the firm, employed the scheme for his Washington Street Methodist Episcopal Church in Brooklyn (demolished), using an unusually rich decorative treatment incorporating Ionic columns in the porch and pilasters on the side-street elevation. By the mid-1830s, there were a number of distyle-in-antis churches going up in Lower Manhattan, including two surviving Catholic Churches ─ St. Joseph's at 371 Avenue of the Americas (James Doran, 1833-34, within the Greenwich Village Historic District) and St. James Roman Catholic Church at 32 James Street (1835-37, a designated New York City Landmark).[53] In the late 1830s, Dakin employed the formula for two important Southern churches ─ Government Street Presbyterian Church, Mobile, Alabama (1837) and the First Methodist Church, New Orleans (1836), the later incorporating an Egyptian Revival Style steeple. By the mid-1840s, when this church was erected, the distyle-in-antis type had spread throughout the country and was widely used either with or without a bell tower or steeple. Noteworthy surviving examples include William Strickland's St. Mary's Cathedral, Nashville (1844), the Second Congregational Church of Coventry, Connecticut (1847, Edwin Fitch, builder-architect), the First Reformed Protestant Church of Griggstown, New Jersey (1842) and the First Free Congregational Church, now Polytechnic Institute Building, 311 Bridge Street, Brooklyn (1846-47, a designated New York City Landmark).

Builder-architect James Burgher's design for this building is a relatively unadorned version of the type, which may have been influenced by two no-longer-extant Manhattan churches ─ the well-known Spring Street Presbyterian Church (1835-36), which architectural historian Jacob Landy suggested might be the work of Martin Thompson, and the Seventh Street Methodist Episcopal Church (1836). Like Burgher's design for this church, both of these buildings had relatively plain distyle-in-antis brick facades incorporating Doric columns, end chambers articulated with pilasters, simple moldings and high basements approached by wide stoops. Spring Street Presbyterian also had a simple side façade with a stone base, large rectangular windows, and a crowning entablature. This church, like the Seventh Street Church, is

distinguished by the relatively steep proportions of its pediment. Here, the pilasters are also unusually wide and closely spaced, giving strength to the design. The overall effect is of an unusually handsome and well-proportioned example of this building type. On Staten Island, where only a few Greek Revival style churches survive, it also appears to be the sole surviving example.[54]

Little is known about the life and career of James G. Burgher (b. 1809), the carpenter-builder who designed and constructed this church. He was the son of Colonel Nicholas Burgher/Burger, a farmer and slave owner (1768-1839), and Catherine Swaim/Swain (1772-183) who resided in Southfield. James G. Burger married Maria Allen daughter of John and Eunice Allen of Connecticut, and by 1838 they were members of this congregation. Burger designed the Rev. Brownlee's parsonage and then this church in 1844. In 1845 his wife died and was interred in the third section of the cemetery. He subsequently married Jane M. Haggerty, a widow, who had inherited large tracts of land in Port Richmond and Factoryville (West Brighton) from her first husband. In 1850, Burger was one of a number of Staten Islanders who went to California in hope of earning a fortune in the Gold Rush. Ill health forced him to return to Staten Island and by 1851 he had resumed his trade as a house carpenter. In 1855, he was employed by the Reformed Church "to finish part of the unfinished portion of the basement … to be used for the infant class."[55] Burger also purchased land in Port Richmond and constructed houses that he retained as rental properties. One of these properties was the 121 Heberton Avenue House, constructed around 1859-61, a rare surviving picturesque villa in the Rustic style (a designated New York City Landmark). Following his wife's death in 1871, Burger may have moved to Manhattan where he continued to work as a carpenter-builder.[56]

The Chapel and Sunday School Addition of 1898

In 1884, the Rev. Alfred H. Demarest (1859-1904) was called to the Reformed Church on Staten Island as an associate pastor to assist the 75 year-old the Rev. Brownlee. Demarest was a graduate of Rutgers College and had taught for three years in New York and New Jersey prior to entering the New Brunswick Seminary. [57] The Reformed Church was his first posting following his graduation. In 1890, Brownlee retired and became Pastor Emeritus, serving in that role until his death in 1895. Demarest took over as Pastor and continued to serve in that capacity until 1901, when he received a call from a church in Catskill, New York.

During Demarest's years with the Reformed Church, the congregation underwent a number of significant changes. Women members "in regular standing," who heretofore were forced to express their ideas in letters read out to the congregation by men, were in 1884 given the right to speak and to vote "at any meeting of the congregation at which a vote may be required."[58] In the 1890s the women of the congregation organized a Chapel Auxiliary which helped establish the Port Richmond Day Nursery and Central Relief Association.[59] The Church also established a branch of the Christian Endeavor Society, which had both religious and social components that created a need for additional space for social events. Periodic flooding from a "dry" brook near the rear wall of the church, which inundated the basement Sunday School classrooms, was also an impetus for change. In July, 1897, a special meeting was called to consider erecting "a suitable building for Sunday school and Congregational meetings."[60]

The building committee, consisting of eight members of the congregation and the Rev. Demarest, turned the project over to a specialist in church design, Oscar S. Teale (1848-1927).[61]

Teale was a Brooklyn-born architect who had graduated from Cooper Union in 1866 and apprenticed in the office of Charles Duggin from 1865 to 1868. He then worked for the Architectural Board of the Brooklyn Board of Education from 1869 through 1870. In 1871, he entered the offices of the prominent church architect J. C. Cady, where he rose to the position of foreman. In 1879, Teale left Cady's office to work for James E. Ware's firm where he was the chief assistant and foreman. In 1881 he worked briefly for Lamb & Rich, and then established an independent practice in New York City. In 1892 he entered into a short-lived partnership with Arthur Curtis Longyear. He began working independently again in 1893 and continued in practice until 1925. During much of his career he resided in Plainfield, New Jersey.

Teale designed dozens of Protestant churches for various denominations in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the communities surrounding New York City, and worked as far afield as Duluth, Minnesota, and Knoxville, Tennessee. He also was responsible for the Centenary Collegiate Institute for Girls in Hackettstown, New Jersey (1901); public schools in Plainfield and Westfield, New Jersey; a hotel in Paducah, Kentucky; the Officers Quarters at David's Island (demolished); warehouses in Lower Manhattan; and residences in Plainfield, Seabright, Cranford, and Flemington, New Jersey, and in Oswego, New Rochelle, and Glen Cove, New York. He worked in most of the popular styles of the day, including the Second Empire, Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, Tudor Gothic, Beaux Arts, and Colonial Revival, and his work evinced "a strong spatial ability and skillful, if exuberant, use of materials."[62] Teale also was an amateur magician who served as the president of the American Society of Magicians, and with his friend Harry Houdini was involved in exposing "fraudulent mediums." Teale published books on both architectural drawing and magic. His last work, and his most famous, was the Houdini memorial in the Cypress Hills Cemetery, which was unveiled in October, 1927.

Teale's 1898 addition is an Akron Plan Sunday school, a type of religious building popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in which an auditorium, often hemispherical in plan, is surrounded by one or two tiers of galleries that were divided into small classrooms or meeting rooms by means of folding doors or partitions. Originally devised by architect George Kramer for the Akron Sunday School system so that students could participate in large assemblies led by the minister and then with the partitions closed take part in small separate age-appropriate classes, the Akron Plan worked well for a variety of church-related functions from small prayer groups and committee meetings to large church socials and Christmas pageants.[63] Judging from the photographs in a scrapbook of his work at Avery Library, Teale seems to have specialized in the design of such buildings. Here, at Port Richmond, he employed a horseshoe-shaped auditorium with partitioned galleries, a ground-floor parlor and offices, and a passage connecting the Sunday School spaces to the church.

Teale designed the Sunday School wing to give precedence to the church by placing the wing at a right angle to the church, by attaching it to the rear of the church's side elevation so that it sets back from the street, by making it lower in scale, and by tucking the main entrance away at north end of the façade between the church and a projecting bay. The exterior of the Sunday School wing is Colonial Revival in style, undoubtedly referencing the historic roots of the congregation and the 1844 church building, which would have been regarded as Colonial in 1890s, when period styles were seen in much broader terms than they are today. The design of the Sunday School wings echoes the earlier church building in its materials ─ brick trimmed with brownstone and wood ─ as well as in details, such as the paired pilasters, denticulated wood

cornices, brownstone window sills, and brownstone belt courses, which align with the brownstone courses capping the church basement. The long four-bay-wide façade is largely asymmetric and incorporates a variety of forms, changes in plane, and window shapes. The main entrance, located at the north end of the façade, is framed with brick pilasters with brownstone caps (painted) and surmounted by a full entablature. It retains its original paneled wood door and narrow transom. Adjoining the entry is a rounded one-story bay with gauged arched window surrounds set off by stone keystones. The focal point of the design, set just north of center, is a projecting two-story pavilion with paired giant brick pilasters capped with an open pediment. A two-story segmental recessed brick arch with a tripartite brownstone keystone and springers frames the paired windows in this bay. These are flat-arched and have brownstone keystones at the first story and segmental arches at the second story. Flat-arched windows with keystones arranged in a single file and pairs articulate the third bay (reading north to south), while the southern end of the façade ells forward to create a corner pavilion enclosing a stair hall providing access to the second-story galleries. The north wall of the pavilion has a stoop and wide entry containing historic paired paneled wood doors, while narrow round-arched windows with stone keystones and lintels are employed at the second story. The façade has lost the balustrades that originally extended along the roofline and atop the rounded bay and contributed to the Colonial Revival character of the design. At the center of the roof is the building's most distinctive feature, a domical structure with a twelve-sided drum and a pitched polygonal roof topped by a small lantern with arched louvered windows and a conical cap. Sited on one of Port Richmond's principal thoroughfares, the church and the Sunday School building, with its distinctive roof, contribute significantly to the architectural character of the neighborhood and the borough.

Later History

The new Sunday School-chapel wing was dedicated in November 1898. The cost of the new addition severely depleted the church's treasury and over the next two years lots were sold to raise funds. The Rev. Demarest left at the end of 1901 to accept a call from a church in Catskill and in March 1902 the Rev. J. Frederic Berg took over as pastor. A descendant of the Stuyvesant and Bayard families and one of several brothers who became Reformed ministers, the Rev. Berg held a PhD in classics from Columbia University and was a graduate of the New Brunswick Theological Seminary.[64] A noted orator and writer, he proved to be a popular minister. During his ten-year tenure at this church, a number of improvements were made to the building. Chief among these was the replacement of the original clear windows in the sanctuary with ten stained-glass memorial windows with abstract designs purchased from the J. & R. Lamb Studios in 1906. In addition to these windows, a beautiful "Tiffany-style" stained-glass window above the altar, probably dating from the 1890s, was dedicated to the Rev. Alfred Demarest, who died suddenly in 1904. In 1907, the consistory began to experiment with using a light colored paint for the front columns of the church, which had historically been painted brown to match the brownstone capitals on the pilasters. Historic photographs reveal that the columns were alternately painted with light or dark colors in the 1910s and 1920s, before the consistory finally settled on white to match the wood cornices. Eventually much of the trim on the Sunday School addition, which originally had also been painted a dark color, also began to be painted white.

Following the Rev. Berg's resignation in 1911, the consistory extended a call to the Rev. Otto L. Mohn, who like the Rev. Demarest and the Rev. Berg was a graduate of the New

Brunswick Theological Seminary.[65] During his pastorate, the congregation held a week-long celebration of its 250th Anniversary in 1915.[66] In 1926, the Rev. Mohn and Rabbi I. A. Milner of the Temple Emanuel in New Brighton held a combined service for their congregations at this church in celebration of Richmond's Sesquicentennial.[67]

In 1928, the Rev. Mohn resigned to become pastor of a church in Asbury Park. At the beginning of 1929, the Rev. Frank S. Fry, a pastor from the Midwest who had graduated from the Central Theological Seminary and served as pastor to churches in Michigan, Indiana, and Pennsylvania, accepted the Reformed Church's call. In March 1929, two months after his installation, a spark from a fire at a nearby lumberyard ignited the church's bell tower, severely damaging the tower and causing extensive water and smoke damage to the eastern (front) end of the church. James K. Whitford, a prominent Staten Island architect and Port Richmond resident, was retained to prepare reconstruction plans. Whitford restored the pre-fire appearance of the tower with its paired louvered arched openings inscribed within larger arches set off by a molded archivolts and quatrefoils. This decorative treatment of the bell chamber seems to have been created in the 1890s, since earlier photos show the simpler articulation with square-headed openings. Inside the church, Whitford made a number of changes, including cutting away the galleries and reconfiguring the area at the front of the church. A rededication ceremony was held on Sunday, September 15, 1929, with a sermon by the Rev. William H.S. Demarest, president of the New Brunswick Theological Seminary.

During the 1930s and 1940s there was an increasing recognition of this church's role in the early history of Staten Island.[68] In 1940 the congregation celebrated its 275th Anniversary and was presented with a plaque from the Daughters of the American Revolution memorializing the church's sixteen pastors.[69] Throughout the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, the congregation included several members who were prominent in the civic and business affairs of the island.[70] Among them was Anning S. Prall, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission and a leader of the Democratic Party on Staten Island, whose 1937 funeral at this church was attended by almost 1,000 people including Senator Robert F. Wagner, Congressmen John O'Connor and James O'Leary, and a host of bankers, industrialists, and state, city, and county officials. [71] Attorney John M. Braisted, Jr., who was the church's choirmaster and organist from 1927 to 1995, served as a New York State Senator from 1947 to 1952 and was District Attorney for Staten Island from 1956 to 1975.[72]

The Rev. Fry continued as pastor of the church until his death in 1946. In 1932, he was elected president of the New York Classis of the Reformed Church in America, which included 50 churches within the city. He also served as the director of the Greater New York Federation of Churches and was the chairman of the General Synod's Committee for the Revision of the Liturgy.[73]

In 1948, the church called the Rev. Cornelius Vander Naald (1910-2004) as its pastor.[74] A graduate of Hope College in Michigan and the Western Theological Seminary, Rev. Vander Naald had served as director of Religious Education at Central Church in Grand Rapids and as pastor of the First Church of Lincoln Park, New Jersey, before accepting the call from Port Richmond. He remained with the church for ten years before moving on to the Dutch Reformed Church in Flatbush. During his tenure at the Reformed Church on Staten Island he began organizing the church's historic documents and writing a book on the church's history. (His second draft is preserved in the church's archives.) He also published a brief article on the

history of the church in the *Staten Island Historian*.[75]

The Rev. Vander Naald was succeeded by the Rev. Jack H. Hascup, a graduate of Hope College and the New Brunswick Theological Seminary, who had previously been pastor of a church in Schenectady.[76] Under his pastorate, the church renovated the basement beneath the sanctuary for use as a community room and upgraded its heating system, necessitating the construction of a small rear addition and an exterior stairwell on the north side of the building.[77] In 1965, the church celebrated its Tercentenary, marked by a special message from President Lyndon Johnson read by Congressman John M. Murphy, and the dedication of a bronze plaque installed on the façade.[78]

The Rev. Fred W. Diekman became pastor in 1968 and remained at the Reformed Church on Staten Island until 1988. He was followed by the Rev. Debra L. Jameson (1989-1994), the Rev. Ian. S. Todd (1996-98) and the Rev. Ruth Robbins (1999-2001 and 2003-2007). Currently, Warren Mac Kenzie, church elder and president of the consistory, acts as voorlezer.

During the last thirty years there have been a few changes to the exterior of the church. In 1972, the old wood enclosures, which used to serve as wind blocks for the doors on the front porch, were replaced by the present one-story brick vestibule. More recently the church's denticulated wood cornices were covered with vinyl siding (the moldings remain intact beneath the vinyl). In the 1990s, a wrought-iron fence was installed along Port Richmond Avenue on either side of the stairs to the 1844 building. More recently, the "new cemetery," which had become overgrown and inaccessible, was cleared of brush providing access to the rear part of the graveyard.

In the 1970s, the formerly thriving shopping area on Port Richmond Avenue began to decline due to the closing of the Bergen Point ferry and construction of several neighboring small shopping centers and the Staten Island Mall (1973).[79] There have been changes to the demographics of the neighborhood and the congregation's membership has declined. The congregation remains proud of its rich heritage and over the years has participated in historic walking tours of Staten Island and other events highlighting its history. In 2004 it sponsored the listing of the Reformed Church on Staten Island, its Sunday School Building, and cemetery on the National Register of Historic Places. Speaking on behalf of the congregation at the public hearing in regard to this designation, Consistory President Warren Mac Kenzie said that "our congregation intends to use this designation as a tool to educate our community to the importance of preserving that sense of place envisioned by generations of those who have gone this way before us."[80]

Cemetery[81]

The graveyard of the Reformed Church is the oldest non-private cemetery in Staten Island and incorporates a number of gravestones that have been ascribed to the workshops of noted New Jersey stone carvers.

As indicated above, the graveyard probably began as a private burying ground for the Corson family in the 1690s. When the first hexagonal church was built in 1715, or perhaps even before, since it was referred to in official documents as the "burying place" as early as 1705, the churchyard became the burial grounds for most families on the North Shore. As Royden Vosburgh wrote in his 1923 history of the cemetery, "there is little evidence available to determine its dimensions in the 1700s."[82] A Revolutionary War map shows that the first church

was located near the present-day intersection of Richmond Terrace and Port Richmond Avenue on what became the site of the Port Richmond National Bank Building. Vosburgh believed the oldest section of the burying place was probably just southwest of the church. The church yard was encroached on beginning in 1810 when the Rev. Van Pelt's Academy Building was constructed. It was sold in 1826 and in the 1870 the present building was erected on the site. In 1871, a triangular gore from the burying grounds, measuring 10 feet on Port Richmond Avenue and 30 feet at the rear, was sold to the owner of the Academy lot and has been partially developed. In addition, portions of the cemetery fronting on Port Richmond Avenue were also taken for street widenings in the 1860s and 20th century.[83]

First Section

Presently, the first section of the cemetery, lying north of the church extends for approximately 120 feet along Port Richmond Avenue and is approximately 80 feet deep. There are 224 gravestones, arranged in 11 rows. It seems likely that the earliest grave markers were made of wood and have been lost. The earliest surviving gravestone with a legible inscription is that of Mary Van Pelt, daughter of John Van Pelt, who died in 1746 at age 15. This red sandstone gravestone is topped by a curved tympanum, carved in low relief with a winged grinning death's head with empty eye-sockets, thought to symbolize the soul's triumph over death. It is one of seven carved sandstone gravestones with tympanum tops dating between 1746 and 1760 in the Reformed Church graveyard that employ the same mortality motif.[84] Art historian John Zielenski has suggested that at least five of these stones are attributable to the "Common Jersey Carver," an anonymous artisan, who worked extensively in the Northern New Jersey communities of Elizabeth and Woodbridge and whose work is characterized by its "well-proportioned mortality figures with rows of neat teeth."[85]

In the period following the "Great Awakening," with its emphasis on personal redemption, the iconography of gravestones changed. One new option was the use of tulips to mark the graves of unmarried women and girls. The Reformed Church has three examples − the markers of Nelly Corsen, died 1767; Mary Mercereau, died 1766; and Mary Prall, died 1775. All three of these red sandstone markers have been attributed to carver Ebenezer Price (1728-88). The most prominent and artistically gifted of the stone cutters in the New York-New Jersey region, Price operated a large workshop in Elizabeth, New Jersey, from the 1750s onward. In addition to his tulip markers, Price was well known for his effigies of the soul, realistic, puffy-cheeked winged cherubs with deep-set eyes, oval braided hair, beautifully modeled features, and cleft chins. Price often carved a cloudlike "spirit image" above the cherubs. Five of the winged-cherub gravestones in the cemetery are signed Price works, the Abraham Kruse (1771), Doctor Ernest Linde (1771), James Duffee (1776), Johanna Housman (1771), and Fytie Mersereau (1770), gravestones. The Kruse and Linde grave markers also feature low-relief carvings of crossed bones, a memento mori Price used elsewhere, including on the Mary Read gravestone at Bound Brook. Three other gravestones − Joshua Mersereau (1769), Cornelia Corsen (1769), and Mary Mersereau (1770) − though unsigned, seem to be high enough in quality and similar enough in style to known works by Price to be attributed to him. Two other soul effigy gravestones in the first section − David Mersereau (1763) and Mary Mersereau (1763) − have been ascribed to William Grant, a New England carver who relocated to New Jersey by 1760. These have simpler carvings, with characteristic egg-shaped heads that narrow at the bottom,

downturned mouths, and separated corkscrew curls. In addition to these artistically significant gravestones, several Colonial-era headstones are of note because they are inscribed in Dutch. These include the tombstones of Jannetie Veghte, died 1749/50, and Cornelius Corsen, Esq., the youngest son of Captain Cornelius Corsen, who died in 1755, at the age of 53.

In the Federalist period, the tympanums of tombstones began to take more elaborate forms and new iconographic elements were adopted, reflecting the growing interest in Neo-Classicism. One of the most popular forms was the urn, which has classical funerary associations. Urns appear on a number of gravestones including that of Elizabeth Corson (1821). Another form, the willow tree, which is both an ancient symbol of mourning and has biblical associations with the Tree of Life, was also extremely popular. Among the noteworthy examples is the tombstone of Captain John Daniels, Master of the Schooner Margaret Ann, who, together with his crew, died in a shipwreck on Middletown Beach in 1823. Another stone with both a finely carved urn and representation of a tree, commemorating Closha Corsen (1822), is signed by the New York City stone carvers P.D. and G. Braisted. By the 1820s, marble began to replace sandstone as the material of choice for gravestones, and predominated by the 1830s. Other notable grave markers from this period include the slab tombstone of Dr. Isaac Ledyard, Health Officer of the Port of New York, whose epitaph notes that he was one of the electors for New York State in the presidential election of 1800 and perished in 1803 of Yellow Fever.

Second Section

The second section of the cemetery was established in 1816 when Daniel D. Tompkins donated a strip of land measuring 32 feet by 110 feet immediately to the north of the second church to provide for a new entrance and entrance path to the steeple. The lot was almost immediately put into use as a burial grounds. In 1898, when the Sunday School addition was constructed, six graves were moved to accommodate foundation piers. Three other rows of graves remained in the crawl space beneath the wing, with their grave markers simply laid flat. The second section has also been reduced in size because of the periodic widenings of Port Richmond Avenue and by the sale of the southernmost portion of the lot in the early 20th century.

At present the second section contains 105 markers, including two sarcophagi, dating between 1816 and 1896. Most of the markers are marble and neo-Classical or Renaissance Revival in style; many are illegible because of weathering and many are now broken. Among the most notable is the marble obelisk and pedestal monument surmounted by an orb, the double-arch stone memorial commemorating Helen and William Jacques, and the paired marble headstones with incised representations of fabric (suggestive of shrouds) and tulips memorializing Mary Tyson (d. 1818) and Richard Tyson (d. 1841). In addition to the Tysons, Mersereaus, and Jacques, such leading families as the Sinclairs, Haughwouts, Crocherons, Housmans, and Posts have graves in this section of the cemetery.

Third Section

In 1833, the Consistory of the Reformed Church provided for future needs by purchasing an irregular lot with a frontage of about 33 feet on Port Richmond Avenue that extended westward for about 275 feet. At the beginning of the 20th century, the church sold the southernmost portion of its property fronting on Port Richmond Avenue combining portions of the Tompkins tract and the 1833 tract to create a lot that extended for 75 feet along Port

Richmond Avenue and was 100 feet deep. This left a narrow strip of land between the Sunday School wing and the stores that were being built on the new lot for access to the third section of cemetery, which was also known as the "new burying ground." In the 1870s additional land was acquired at the rear of the third section for private family plots. As burials and/or gravestones were relocated to accommodate new construction and street widenings, they were moved to this section of the cemetery.

Presently, the third section has "363 markers distributed among 20 rows and family plots" dating from 1834 to 1916.[86] Most of the markers are marble or granite. The earliest stones dating from the 1830s through the 1850s are simple shaped stones, most having only inscriptions. A few have relief decorations featuring urns and Tree of Life motifs or Gothic arches and foliate decorations. There are also some notable mid-19th-century Renaissance Revival-inspired marble markers including the Anna Sharrett tombstone (1856) and the Louis Muir tombstone (1866). One mid-Victorian child's memorial to Lila Henrietta Hubbard (1852) features an upward-pointing hand carved in high relief. Later tombstones from the 1880s and 1890s, such as the paired tombstones of Patrick O'Rorke and Elizabeth Housman O'Rorke, or the Drake family cenotaph have elaborate sculptural forms. Among the notable individuals buried in this section of the cemetery is Judge Jacob Tysen (1773-1848), who had a long and distinguished public career, serving as a congressman (1823-25) and as a judge of the Court of Common Pleas (1822-1840). There are also family plots for the Van Name, Housman, Drake, Kohler, and Post families.

Description

The 1844 Reformed Church Building, the 1898 Sunday School Building, and the Cemetery are located on an irregularly shaped lot which extends approximately 262 feet along the west side of Port Richmond Avenue, south of Richmond Terrace. Most of the lot, which is not occupied by buildings, is used as a cemetery and has historic gravemarkers dating from the 1740s to the 1910s. A non-historic wrought iron picket fence dating from the 1990s extends along the Port Richmond Avenue from either side of the church. Other portions of the graveyard are also enclosed with non-historic chain-link fences (described below).

1844 Church

The Greek Revival style church is basilican in plan and is 49 feet wide and 85 feet deep. It rests on a high fieldstone basement with brownstone corner quoins. (Some of the fieldstones may have been salvaged from the 1780s church previously on the site.) The basement windows have brownstone lintels and are surrounded by red brick. All of the windows have historic multipane window sash ─ the windows on the south wall have ten-light hoppers, the windows on the north elevation have ten-over-ten double-hung sash. Above a wide brownstone belt course, the upper stories are faced with red-orange brick laid in stretcher bond on the façade and common bond on the side walls. The distyle-in-antis front has a recessed entrance porch with two freestanding fluted Doric columns. The one-story brick entrance foyer at the base of portico was erected in 1971. Brick pilasters with molded Tuscan capitals articulate the outer bays of the façade. The side elevations have tall trabeated window openings with narrow brownstone sills and wider brownstone lintels. These contain stained glass by the noted manufacturer J. & R. Lamb Studios. The wood entablature that caps the façade and side walls is enriched with

moldings and a dentil course. Both the entablature and the raking cornice that sets off the front gable were covered with vinyl siding in 1997. The historic wood bell tower, rebuilt in 1929 following an older design from the 1890s that incorporated elements from the building's original 1844 design, retains its decorative moldings.

Façade: The façade is approached by a wide staircase with concrete risers and stone treads and non-historic metal railings. To the north of the stair, a former basement entrance has been filled in with rubblework. The south and north ends of the brownstone course that caps the basement have been patched with stucco. At the first story, the wood columns were painted brown to match the brownstone capitals of the pilasters on the outer bays. They have been painted white since the late 1920s. The non-historic foyer is faced with red brick and is topped by a simple cornice. The outer bays have non-historic wood entrance surrounds and non-historic paneled wood doors. The center bay has a projecting header course which forms a shelf to support a non-historic metal-and-glass message board with a pedimented top. Immediately above the foyer, on the rear wall of the porch, there is an original stone tablet set into the brickwork. It is inscribed "REFORMED PROTESTANT DUTCH CHURCH – FOUNDED 1716 – DESTROYED IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR – RE-ERECTED ANEW 1786 – REBUILT & ENLARGED 1844." The historic bronze plaque affixed to the center of the south end bay commemorates the church's tercentenary in 1965. There are also scars from a missing plaque honoring the Revolutionary War hero William Bernard Gifford (1750-1814), which was installed by the DAR in 1913 and aligned with Gifford's grave, now under the sidewalk in front of the church, due to the widening of Port Richmond Avenue.[87] At the center of the north bay there is also a bronze plaque erected in 1998 by the Staten Island Chapter of the DAR, which replaces a stolen 1925 plaque honoring the Revolutionary War contributions of the Mersereau Brothers. There is also a historic bronze "Landmarks of New York – Reformed Protestant Dutch Church" bronze plaque, installed by the New York Community Trust in 1959, on the pilaster to the north of the entrance porch.

North Elevation: The north elevation is articulated into five bays. Both ends of the basement wall are framed with corner quoins. The brick upper stories are framed on the east by a brick pilaster with a brownstone capital and on the west by brownstone quoins. Non-historic concrete stairs with non-historic wrought-iron hand rail lead down to the non-historic basement areaway and entry which were created c. 1960. The walls and flooring of the areaway are concrete. The recessed entry is enclosed by non-historic brick walls and is surmounted by a non-historic concrete lintel. The entry has a non-historic wood door and is lit by a non-historic light fixture. There are also non-historic light fixtures affixed to the brickwork just above the basement between the second and third and fourth and fifth bays (reading east to west). The four basement windows retain their historic ten-over-ten windows and are protected by non-historic storm windows. The entire length of the brownstone course between the basement and first story has been refaced with stucco, which has spalled off over the easternmost window. The lintels above the basement windows are also coated with stucco, which has spalled on all but the westernmost lintel. On the upper story the westernmost window lintel has been refaced with stucco. All of the stained glass windows are protected with non-historic plexiglass storm windows.

South Elevation: The south elevation originally matched the north elevation except for the lower height of the basement. The two western bays are now largely concealed by the Sunday School wing. On this wall the basement brownstone trim survives in better condition but there are areas

of stucco patching on the belt course between the basement and upper story. The stained-glass windows are protected by plexiglass storm windows.
Rear Elevation: Visible above a series of sheds belonging to the lumberyard on the adjoining property, the rear elevation is faced with brick laid in common bond and is framed by corner quoins. Sections of wood cornice create returns above the quoins. There is a single round arched window opening with a brownstone keystone that contains a 1904 stained glass window, which is protected by plexiglass. A square brick chimney projects from the southern portion of the wall. The cornice returns and the narrow raking cornices on the eaves of the gable wall are largely concealed by vinyl siding. On the north eave a portion of the siding has fallen off revealing the original wood molding.
Tower: Located at the east end of the church near the entrance is a wood bell tower. Resting on a plinth the square tower is framed by corner pilasters that support a wide entablature trimmed with dentils. The sides of tower are pierced by paired arched openings with louvers set off by arched surrounds enriched with tracery and capped by hood moldings. The wood parapet above the cornice terminates in small plinths, which support small finials in the form of simple, abstracted acroteria.

1898 Chapel and Sunday School Wing
The Colonial Revival style Sunday School is attached to the rear two bays of the church's side elevation. It comprises four main parts ─ an L-shaped, four-bay-wide, one-bay-deep, two-story, front section containing a galleried side aisle and stair tower; the rectangular, two-story 34-foot-wide, main block, which has a low-pitched gabled roof and a central domical vault; a one-bay-deep, two-story shed-roofed block containing a galleried side aisle; and a one-story, hipped-roofed rear wing that was originally used as the pastor's office. Lower in height than the church, the Sunday School wing was intended to be seen as subordinate to the church. Its design echoes many of the earlier building's decorative features including the brownstone belt course beneath the first story windows, which aligns with the brownstone belt course on the basement of the church, and the denticulated wood-and-sheet-metal entablature on the front section, which is similar in design to the denticulated wood entablatures on the church. Most of the historic detailing survives on the Sunday School wing except for the balustrades that originally surmounted the bow window in the north bay and extended along the length of the roofline on the front section. Almost all of the building's historic wood window sash and original stained-glass windows also survive, although some of windows at the rear of the building have been sealed. Some windows are protected non-historic storm windows. The stained-glass windows are protected by plexiglass.
Front Section: Decorative attention is concentrated on the front portion of the Sunday School wing. It is faced with a reddish-brown brick laid up in stretcher bond, except for a rounded bay laid in header bond, and is richly ornamented with brownstone and wood trim. The façade is organized into four bays, with the southernmost bay elling forward to create a corner pavilion enclosing a stair hall. The asymmetric design incorporates a variety of forms, changes in plane, and window shapes.
Bay 1 (reading north to south): The main entrance is located at the north end of the façade. It is approached by a low non-historic stoop, with concrete risers and stone treads, which has a non-historic iron hand rail. The entrance is framed with brick pilasters with brownstone caps

(painted) and is surmounted by a full entablature. It retains its original paneled wood door and narrow single-light transom, which has the number "54" painted on the glass. A light fixture is suspended from the entablature above the entry. Adjoining the entry is a rounded one-story bay with round-arched window surrounds set off by brownstone keystones. The three windows retain their historic molded one-over-one wood sashes, which have frosted bottom lights and stained-glass upper lights, which are protected by plexiglass. The rounded bay is capped by an original molded cornice that was initially surmounted by a no longer extant balustrade. The second story has a single flat-arched window opening with a brownstone keystone over the door and paired flat-arched windows with brownstone keystones over the rounded bay. All three windows retain their original one-over-one molded wood sash and original stained-glass upper and lower lights. The stained glass is covered with plexiglass. There is a non-historic metal box on the brickwork between the single and paired window bays.

Bay 2: The focal point of this facade, set just north of center, is a projecting gabled pavilion. It has a high brick basement framed by brownstone corner quoins. The basement is lit by a pair of low segmental-arched windows with brownstone sills. The windows retain their historic triple-light wood hopper windows, which are protected by non-historic storm windows. The section of the brownstone belt course extending above the basement is patched with stucco. Above the basement, the pavilion is framed by paired giant brick pilasters and a richly molded open pediment. Inscribed within this framework is a recessed two-story segmental arch with a tripartite brownstone keystone and springers. It frames the paired flat-arched windows with brownstone keystones at the first story and segmental-arched window openings with brownstone sills at the second story. The windows retain their historic one-over-one wood sash. The first-story windows have frosted bottom lights and stained-glass upper lights, which are protected by plexiglass. The second-story windows have stained glass in both the lower and upper lights and are protected by plexiglass.

Bay 3: Bay three is articulated with single and paired files of windows. The basement is lit by paired segmental-arched windows that match the windows in the second bay. They have historic tripartite wood hopper windows and non-historic storm windows. Both the first- and second-story window openings are flat-arched and have brownstone keystones; the second-story windows also have brownstone sills. The first-story windows have frosted glass in lower lights and stained glass in their upper lights, which are protected by plexiglass. The second-story windows have stained glass in both the lower and upper lights and are protected by plexiglass.

Bay 4: The southern end of the front section ells forward to create a corner pavilion enclosing a stair hall providing access to the second-story galleries. The north wall of the pavilion has a brick and granite stoop with a historic wrought-iron railing. The wide flat-arched entry is set off by brownstone skewbacks and a triple keystone. The entry retains its original paired paneled wood doors, which have rectangular windows in their top panels. Currently the doors are barred shut by a non-historic horizontal wood timber resting on two blocks at the base of the entry. The doorway is lit by a light fixture that matches the light above the main entrance in bay 1. The second story has two narrow round-arched windows with brownstone stone keystones and lintels. These retain their original one-over-one molded wood sash and stained-glass windows.

The east face of the pavilion has a tall basement lit by paired segmental-arched windows with brownstone sills. These windows have lost their historic wood panning and have non-historic vinyl-covered windows. At the first story, a pair of flat-arched windows are arranged in

steps to the light the staircase. The windows retain their historic one-over-one wood sash and stained-glass bottom and top lights. At the south end of the first story, just above the belt course, there is a granite date stone inscribed "1898." At the second story there are three narrow round-arched windows with a continuous brownstone sill and brownstone keystones. The windows retain their original one-over-one wood sashes and stained-glass lights.

South Wall: The façade articulation is repeated on to the south wall of the front section. At the basement level the brickwork has sustained significant damage. There is a small, almost square, flat-arched window opening at the center of first story, which retains its historic one-over-one wood sash and is protected by a non-historic one-over-one storm window. Just to the east of the window is a pipe connection for a water hose. At the center of the second story there is a tall flat-arched window, which retains its historic one-over-one wood sash and is protected by a non-historic one-over-one storm window.

Main Block South Wall: The main block is articulated with a symmetrical design with the windows grouped into threes on either side of a blank section of wall that terminates in a slightly pitched gable surmounted by a tall chimney. This section of the façade is faced with a lighter shade of brick than the front block and the bricks are laid in common bond rather than stretcher bond. The decorative articulation echoes that of the front section, but is considerably simplified. There are two segmental-arched windows at the basement level. The basement is capped by a belt course that acts as a sill course for the first-story windows. The first-story windows are flat-arched and have brownstone keystones, the second-story windows are segmental arches and have brownstone sills and keys. Instead of a full entablature the façade terminates in a simple brick dentil course and a molded wood architrave. The basement windows retain historic tripartite wood hopper windows; the eastern has a non-historic storm window. The first-story windows retain their historic stained-glass upper and lower lights and non-historic storm windows. The second story also has historic one-over-one wood sash with clear glass protected by non-historic storm windows.

Main Block West Wall: Visible above the office wing, the second story of the main block is faced with the same materials and articulated with the same decorative elements as the south wall. It has one segmental-arched window, which is slightly smaller than the windows on the south wall and has a brownstone sill but no keystone. The window has a non-historic storm window which protects a one-over-one sash window.

Rear Section: The one-bay-deep, approximately 50-foot-wide, two-story, shed-roofed, rear block is visible above the buildings of the neighboring lumber yard. It is faced with brick laid in common bond and has a dentil cornice running along the roof line. Tall square chimneys are located at either end of the rear (west) wall. At the second story, segmental-arched window openings are arranged in pairs except at the south end of the wall where there is a single window, which matches a window on the south wall. Both of these windows have been sealed with wood. The other windows have non-historic one-over-one storm windows. The north wall of this rear block was refaced with non-historic siding in the 1960s when a small frame extension was constructed linking this wing to the rear of the church. This extension is faced with non-historic siding and has a pair of non-historic windows.

Cupola: Rising from the gabled roof near the center of the Sunday School wing is a domical structure with a twelve-sided drum and a pitched polygonal roof topped by a small lantern with arched louvered windows and a conical cap. The drum is lit by 27 single-light windows (three

windows on nine sides, with the three southernmost bays enclosed and covered with clapboard siding). The windows retain their historic frames but clear glass has been substituted for stained glass in all but one window on the southeast section of the drum adjoining the closed bays. Both pitched roofs are covered with non-historic asphalt shingles and a rear section of the lower pitched roof has a gable-shaped opening with a non-historic metal covering, presumably used as a hatch.

Cemetery

The cemetery is divided into three sections, two of which are visible from the street.

First Section: The oldest section of the cemetery extends north from the church along Port Richmond Avenue. It is trapezoidal in shape, and extends for about 120 feet along the street, is approximately 85 feet deep, and is about 106 feet wide at the rear (west). A non-historic iron picket fence resting on a concrete foundation extends along the streetfront attaching to the north wall of the church behind a basement entrance. The northern boundary is defined by the rear elevations of a group of late-19th- and early-20th-century commercial buildings fronting on Richmond Terrace. To the west is a lumberyard, which is separated from the cemetery by a non-historic chain-link fence. The southern boundary is the north wall of the church and a non-historic concrete path which extends along the side and rear of the church. Just west of the fence, near the center of the burial grounds, there is a historic metal sign installed in 1932 by the New York State Education Department noting the historical significance of the cemetery as a "Burial Place of the Dutch Settlers of the North Shore Until 1866." A non-historic pre-fabricated garden shed is located near the western boundary of the cemetery.

There are 224 grave markers, arranged into 11 rows. They range in date from 1746 to 1882. Because the graves are arranged (at least to some degree) in family groups, mid-to-late-19th-century stones are interspersed amidst historically and artistically significant markers from the 18th and early 19th centuries. The headstones dating from prior to 1800 are almost all red sandstone and exhibit a variety of rounded and curved tops and decoration typical of New Jersey carving traditions in the Colonial and Federal periods. There are a number of signed stones by the noted carver Ebenezer Price. Most of the headstones from the post-1820s period are marble and have forms and decoration typical of the neo-Classical period. Several stones have cursive initials, or feature representations of urns and willows. There are also a number of footstones and two Federal-era brownstone sarcophagi with flat marble tablet lids. The bottom-left corner of marble lid of the Ledyard sarcophagus has broken off.

Due to weathering and vandalism, a number of stones have been broken or become unseated. At present, several unseated stones and many fragments are propped against other stones. One tombstone and footstones are lying flat on the ground.

Second Section: This section of the burial grounds was put into use in 1816. In 1898, when the Sunday School addition was constructed, several graves were moved. Three rows of graves remained in the crawl space beneath the wing, with their grave markers simply laid flat. The second section was also reduced in size due to the periodic widenings of Port Richmond Avenue and through the sale of the southeast corner of the lot in the early twentieth century.

At present the second section of the cemetery is a rectangle measuring 75 feet by 53 feet. It is bounded on the east by the non-historic wrought-iron fence that extends along Port Richmond Avenue, on the south by the same fence and the north wall of the church, on the west

by the Sunday School, and on the south by a non-historic chain link fence. A non-historic concrete path next to the south wall of the church leads to the entrance to the Sunday School wing. Another non-historic path extends in front of the Sunday School providing access to a now closed gallery entrance.

Currently there are 105 markers, including two sarcophagi, which are arranged more or less into eight rows. Dating between 1816 and 1869, most of the markers are marble. Many are illegible because of weathering. Over the years, due to weathering and vandalism, many markers have been broken and/or have become unseated. In some cases footstones have been inserted into the rows in place of missing headstones. Among the most notable markers is the marble obelisk and pedestal monument located in the second row at the north end of the cemetery which is topped by a wood finial.

Third Section: The third section of the cemetery was acquired in 1833. It originally extended to Port Richmond Avenue, but the front portion of the lot was sold in the early 20th century. In the 1870s, additional land was acquired from the owners of the house lots fronting Maple Street to create private family burial plots at the rear of the third section. This accounts for the odd shape of this portion of the cemetery. It comprises a rectangle of about 100 feet by 120 feet with a second rectangle of roughly 100 feet by 45 feet set at a 40-degree angle from the first rectangle. Access to this section of the cemetery is provided by a grassy passage between the Sunday School wing and the stores on Port Richmond Avenue that were erected on a portion of the former church lands. This portion of the cemetery is partially visible to passersby on Port Richmond Avenue. Glimpses are available from Richmond Terrace and Maple Street and the burial ground is, of course, highly visible from the surrounding buildings.

The third section is currently bounded on the west by chain-link fences, to the north by the buildings and chain-link fences of the neighboring lumberyard, to the south by a non-historic wood fence and the brick walls of a neighboring building, and on the east by the Sunday School, grass passage, and the commercial buildings on Port Richmond Avenue. A drainage ditch runs just behind the Port Richmond Avenue commercial building. It is a remnant of the brook that once ran behind the church property in the 18th century. The ditch empties into a pipe which extends under a slab of bluestone and then continues under the rear of the church.

Presently the third section has 363 markers distributed among 20 rows and family plots, dating from 1834 to 1916. Most of the markers are marble or granite. The earliest stones, dating from the 1830s through the 1850s, are simple shaped stones, most having only inscriptions. A few headstones have relief decorations featuring urns and Tree of Life motifs or Gothic arches and foliate decorations. There are also some notable mid-19th-century Renaissance Revival headstones and some impressive late Victorian headstones and monuments. Many stones have been broken or have become unseated. The family plots located at the rear of the third section are set off by fences with granite posts and iron rails and decorative gates. (Many of the gates have come off their hinges and are simply leaning against fences.)

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NOTES

[1]This item was previously heard at a public hearing on September 13, 1966.

[2] This section on the early history of the Dutch Reformed Church on Staten Island is based on Tamara Coombs, *Reformed Church on Staten Island National Register Nomination* (Washington, D.C.: United States Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, 2004); William A. Starna, "American Indian Villages to Dutch Farms: The Settling of Settled Lands in the Hudson Valley"; Richard T. Clark, "Historical Archaeology and Dutch Reformed Church Site at Historic Richmond Town," *Staten Island Historian* 18, n.s. 1 (Summer-Fall 2000); Historical Perspectives, Inc., "Phase 1A Archaeological Assessment Markham Gardens Proposed Residential Development, prepared for Urbitran Associates, July 2006; Firth Haring Fabend, "The Reformed Dutch Church and the Persistence of Dutchness in New York and New Jersey," in Roger Panetta, ed., *Dutch New York: the Roots of Hudson Valley Culture* (Yonkers: Hudson River Museum, 2009); Margaret Lundrigan, *Staten Island: Isle of the Bay* (Charles, S.C.: Arcadia, 2004); Richard M. Bayles, *History of Richmond County, Staten Island, New York* (New York: L. E. Preston & Co., 1887); Ira K. Morris, *Memorial History of Staten Island* (New Brighton, Staten Island: printed privately, 1900), 2, 275-77; Charles W. Leng and William T. Davis, *Staten Island and Its People: A History, 1609-1929* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1930), v. 1, 71-164, 429-440.

[3] Most of the evidence of this early occupation has been found in the area between Rossville and Tottenville.

[4] Quoted in Leng & Davis, 1, 429.

[5]Tesschenmacker was killed in an Indian attack in Schenectady.

[6] In 1698, the Huguenot congregation received a grant of land in Greenridge on Arthur Kill Road and shortly thereafter built a church.

[7] Bertholf was born in Holland in 1656. He was among the early settlers in the area of New Jersey between the Hackensack and Passaic Rivers where he served in the capacity of catechizer, voorlezer and schoolmaster. In 1693 he returned to Holland and was admitted to the ministry by the Classis of Middleburg. Called the "itinerating apostle" of New Jersey, he helped organize eleven Reformed Dutch congregations (Harlem Village, Port Richmond, Tappan, and Sleepy Hollow in New York; Passaic, Dumont, Tenafly, Belleville, Oakland, Pompton Plains, and Somerville in New Jersey). His home church was in Hackensack. See Fabend, "Reformed Dutch Church," 140.

[8]Coombs, sec. 8, 3, quoting from Arie R. Brouwer, *Reformed Church Roots: Thirty-five Formative Events* (Reformed Church Press, 1977).

[9]Now the oldest surviving school building in the United States, the Voorlezer's House is a designated New York City Landmark.

[10]On the identification of Henderyck Kroessen as the voorlezer see Coombs, sec. 8, 2, 37; Loring McMillen, "The Voorlezer," *Staten Island Historian* 8 (July-Sept. 1946), 17-19, 22; Warren D. Cruise, *The Croeser Families of America* (Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1998), 78-79, 339-380.

[11] The earliest surviving records of the Reformed Dutch Church on Staten Island date from 1696 and are assumed to be in Henderyck's hand since he recorded the baptism of "my daughter Marritje" in 1698.

[12] Gerrit Kroessen left his Staten Island land to his two sons and his daughter Elsje but when his will was destroyed in a fire at the home of the County Clerk, Dirck Kroessen claimed the entire property under the English law of primogeniture. Henderyck sued to regain his rights to the Staten Island property in 1699 but the case was not entirely settled until 1709, so it is likely that Hendrick and Cornelia Krossens resided with her family or leased land in Port Richmond. Eventually the courts upheld Gerrit Kroessen's will, his farm was sold, and the proceeds divided among the three heirs. Dirck used his share of the settlement to relocate to Bucks County, Pennsylvania; Henderyck bought a farm on the Kill Van Kull near modern-day Bement Avenue.

[13] This road led directly to Bergen, now Jersey City.

[14]License from Governor Hunter, dated 1715 in the Archives of the Reformed Church on Staten Island.

[15]Marjorie Decker Johnson, Reader's notes for Patricia Salmon, *Realms of History: the Cemeteries of Staten Island* (Staten Island: Staten Island Institute, 2006). The author is grateful to Patricia Salmon for sharing these with her.

[16] For this deed see Leng & Davis, 1, 437.

[17]In 1922, a red sandstone block measuring 9 inches by 19 inches, inscribed with the initials "H.K." and "G.K." and the date 1715 was discovered in the graveyard and is now on display in the present church. This is thought to be the cornerstone of the first church and the initials are generally assumed to be those of Henderyck Krossen and his nephew Garret Kruse, who are thought to be the "master builders" of the first church.

[18] For Van Santvoord see, Frederick L. Weis, *The Colonial Clergy of the Middle Colonies* (Worcester, Mass: American Antiquarian Soc., 1957), 334; Cruise, 345-46, 380-8.

[19] For Frelinghuysen see Firth Haring Fabend, *Zion on the Hudson: Dutch New York and New Jersey in the Age of Revivals* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 16-18.

[20]Benjamin C. Taylor, *Annals of the Classis of Bergen, of the Reformed Dutch Church and of the churches under its care* (New York: Board of Publication of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, 1857), 117.

[21] The North Shore road also provided access to several other ferries on the Kill Van Kull and Arthur Kill, notably the ferry to Elizabeth, New Jersey, and the ferry at the foot of Morningstar Road, owned by Dutch Church members Joshua and John Mersereau. The road to Richmondtown (Port Richmond Avenue) was a primary route to the island's governmental center and its inland farming community.

[22] Phillip Papas, *That Ever Loyal Island: Staten Island and the American Revolution* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 14.

[23] Taylor, 117.

[24] Ibid.

[25]According to Papas, the Rev. Jackson in his sermons, "simultaneously denounced the British government and the Anglican clergy as immoral tyrants seeking to undermine political and religious freedom in America. He also told his listeners that resistance to British civil and religious policies was righteous and justified." Papas, 25.

[26]Shipyard owner and ferry keeper, Joshua Mersereau was perhaps the island's most ardent supporter of the rebellion. Joshua, his son John LaGrange, and his brothers John and Jacob became key operatives in a spy ring that supplied vital information to General Washington. Other members of the Mersereau family served in the Continental Army. On the Loyalist side, Gozen Ryerss "became one of the British army's chief military contractors" and "made a fortune supplying them with livestock and provisions." Coombs, sec. 8, 10. See also Papas, 66-67, 86, 108.

[27] This section on the second church is based on Coombs, sec. 8, 11.

[28] Warren Mac Kenzie, Reader's Notes, LPC Draft Designation Report, Mar. 15, 2010, 2.

[29]This reflected a growing trend to phase out Dutch, as a younger generation of English-speaking members began to predominate in congregations.

[30]Quoted in Coombs, sec. 8, 14.

[31]Under Tompkins' auspices, Van Pelt was subsequently appointed Chaplain to the Third District Militia, covering southern New York and New England.

[32]In the Reformed Dutch Church, the consistory, formed of the minister and a number of elders and deacons, is the governing body of the congregation, with the elders "responsible for ecclesiastical discipline and deacons responsible for the maintenance of church property and the needs of the poor and infirm." Fabend, *Zion on the Hudson,* 13.

[33]Office of the Register, Richmond County, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber H, 191, 192. In addition to this gift, Tompkins donated land and a sum of money to establish a Dutch Reformed Church in Tompkinsville that was also intended to serve the Quarantine. That church was completed in 1820 and became independent in 1823.

[34] Conveyances, Liber V, 275.

[35]Van Pelt, who had inherited property in Staten Island, remained on the island until 1836. During that year he ministered to his ailing friend Aaron Burr, who was residing in Port Richmond at the St. James Hotel, and delivered the oration at Burr's funeral.

[36]This discussion of the Dutch Reformed Church's attitudes to blacks and slavery is based on Gerald Francis De Jong, "The Dutch Reformed Church and Negro Slavery in Colonial America," *Church History* 40, n. 4 (Dec. 1971), 423-36; Fabend, *Zion on the Hudson,*179-186; Dennis J. Maika, "Slavery, Race, Culture in Early New York," *De Halve Maen* 73, n.2 (Summer 2000), 27-33; Graham Russell Hodges, *Root & Branch: African Americans in New York & East Jersey, 1613-1863* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1999), 16-23, 121-124, 181.

[37]Fabend, *Zion on the Hudson,* 180.

[38]Quote from Fabend, *Zion on the Hudson,* 179.

[39]Hodges, 181.

[40] Ibid, 21. In his will Kroessen stipulated that his daughter Nieltie was use a portion of her inheritance for "the care and maintenance of my Negro wench called 'Lada' during her natural life." Cruise, 385.

[41]Bayles, 147-150.

[42]US Census, 1800, Northfield, Richmond County, New York. Joseph Ryerrs, one of Gozen Ryerrs' slaves, purchased his freedom at age 41 in 1802. When Gozen Ryerrs died in 1811 he reaffirmed the freedom of Joseph and his brother James, but indicated that his other slaves were to be sold. Joseph purchased his son Henry's freedom from Ryerrs' heirs as well as the freedom of Henry's future wife Peggy De Hart from another family. Both Joseph and Henry were landowners and Henry established a cemetery on his land, later the Staten Island Cemetery. See Vivienne Kruger, *Born to Run: The Slave Family in Early New York, 1626-1827* (Ph. D dissertation: Columbia University, 1985), on line at http://newyorkslavery.blogspot.com/2007/08chapter-nine.html.

[43] Following a fire in 1929, the document conveying the slaves was discovered in the rafters of the church tower. See Vernon B. Hampton, "Port Richmond Minister Sold His Slaves: Rare Document Found in Reformed Church," newspaper clipping, dated Sept. 21, 1929, in the Staten Island Historical Society, Port Richmond, Reformed Church clippings file.

[44] Quotation from Richard B. Dickenson, Edna Holden, *Holden's Staten Island: the History of Richmond County Revised Resource Manual* (Staten Island, New York: Center for Migration Studies, 2003), 52. On the gradual manumission of slaves in New York see also Kruger, chapter 12.

[45]Slavery was abolished in Richmond County in 1825, two years before the rest of the state. For an account of emancipation day on Staten Island and for Benjamin Perine see Morris, 2, 45-48; "Said He was 111 Years Old," *New York Tribune*, Oct. 5, 1900, 1.

[46]Telephone interview, February 3, 2010, with Warren Mac Kenzie, President of the Consistory. This information on black membership in the congregation and the changes brought about by the Rev. Brownlee are based on Coombs, sec. 8, 17-18; "Fifty Years Among His People," *New York Times*, Aug. 24, 1885, 8.

[47]Coombs, sec. 8, 18.

[48]Immediately after Brownlee assumed his pastorate the 1780s building, which had become very dilapidated, was repaired and refitted. By 1844 there were new structural problems, which probably had an effect on the congregation's decision to erect a new building. Coombs, sec. 8, 18-19; James Brownlee, "Some Items of the Early History of the Reformed Dutch Church on Staten Island" (pamphlet printed by the Consistory of the Reformed Church, 1861). Warren Mac Kenzie also suggests that the choice to build a new church may have been influenced by the construction of a new Greek Revival style Dutch church at Bergen. Local tradition has it that members of Staten Island church's consistory attended the 1841 dedication of the Bergen church and "were impressed enough to imitate."

[49]Consistory minutes, quoted in Coombs, sec. 8, 19.

[50]This discussion of the distyle-in-antis building type is based on Jacob Landy, *The Architecture of Minard Lafever* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1970), 218-224; Talbot Hamlin, *Greek Revival Architecture in America* (1944, rpt. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1964), 151, 277, 344; Arthur Scully, Jr. *James Dakin, Architect* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), 5-6, 17, 60-61, 69, 80.

[51]For this church see Amelia Peck, ed., *Alexander Jackson Davis: American Architect 1803-1892* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), 10-11, 105.

[52]For this church see Hamlin, 151; Peck, *Alexander Jackson Davis,*106; David Dunlap, *From Abyssinian to Zion* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2004), 293; Roger Hale Newton, *Town & Davis Architects* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1942), 62, 201-202.

[53]Other no longer extant examples included St. Bartholomew's Church on Lafayette Place (1835-36); the Third Universalist Church, later the Church of St. Benedict the Moor, a quadristyle variant of the type, at 210 Bleecker Street (1836); and the Spring Street Presbyterian Church (1835-36), at Spring Street near Varick Street. For these churches see Dunlap, 194-195, Landy, 218-219.

[54]The other Staten Island Greek Revival Churches include the Woodrow United Methodist Church, 1075 Woodrow Avenue (1842; a designated New York City Landmark) and the Moravian Church at Richmond Road and Todt Hill Road in New Dorp (1845).

[55] Consistory minutes quoted in Coombs, sec. 8, 20.

[56] There is a listing in the New York City directories of 1871 and 1871-72 for James G. Burger, carpenter.

[57]"The Rev. Dr. A. H. Demarest," *New York Times*, Nov. 5, 1904, 9.

[58] Coombs, sec. 8, 24.

[59]The Port Richmond Day Nursery was founded to provide day care so that indigent women would be able to work to support their children and supplement the family income. "It was the first day care center in the city to provide a formal mental health program and to this day its mission is sustained." Warren Mac Kenzie, Testimony before the Landmarks Preservation Commission, August 11, 2009.

[60]Coombs, sec. 8, 25.

[61]This section on Oscar Teale is based on Oscar S. Teale, Scrapbook, Avery Library, Columbia University; and Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Tribeca West Historic District Designation Report (LP-1713)* (New York: City of New York, 1991).

[62] Coombs, sec. 8, 26.

[63]See Coombs, sec. 8, 27; Stephen Jenks, "American Religious Buildings: The Akron Plan Sunday School" at http://www.ssacredplaces.org/PSP-InfoClearingHouse/articles/American%20Religious%20Buildings; "The Many Forms of 'Akron Plan' Churches," *New Jersey Churchscape* at http://www.njchurchscape.com/index-Mar02.html.

[64]For the Rev. Berg see Coombs, Sec. 8, 30; "Dr. J. Frederic Berg, Clergyman, Dead, *New York Times*, Apr. 5, 1958, 15.

[65] "Rev. Otto L. Mohn," *New York Times*, June 9, 1949, 31.

[66]The events included speeches by the President of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, a session of Classis of New York in the Sunday School auditorium, speeches by the Mayor, President of the Board of Aldermen, and Borough President, and addresses by pastors of several Staten Island churches and the Bergen Reformed Church, reflecting the historic association between the Bergen and Port Richmond congregations. Reformed Church on Staten Island at Port Richmond, *Program of the Services and Exercises Commemorating the 250th Anniversary* (Staten Island: Reformed Church on Staten Island, 1915).

[67] "Richmond's Sesqui Observed Indoors," *New York Times*, Sept. 6, 1926, 10.

[68]In 1932 the New York State Education Department installed a marker in the burial grounds noting the historical significance of the cemetery as a burying place for the North Shore's Dutch settlers. The following year the Staten Island Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution placed a tablet on the building commemorating Staten Islanders who had fought in the Revolution including the five Mersereau brothers. See "Church History Seen on Tablet to Be Unveiled," *New York World*, Nov. 4, 1933; *New York City Guide*, 621.

[69]"Church to Observe 275th Anniversary," *New York Times, May 12, 1940, 41; "D.A.R. Unveils Memorial," New York Times*, May 20, 1940, 20.

[70]Historic Staten Island, *Evening World*, July 15, 1930; "Peter La Forge Dies; Founded Loan Group," *New York Times*, July 31, 1936, 19; "Mrs. George H. Tredwell," *New York Times,* Sept. 2, 1942, 24.

[71]"Political Leaders at Prall Funeral," *New York Times*, July 28, 1937, 20.

[72] Emanuel Perlmutter, "Staten Island District Attorney Retiring Dec. 31," *New York Times*, Apr. 3, 1975, 33; "John Braisted Jr., 90, Lawyer and Staten Island Prosecutor," *New York Times*, Dec. 17, 1997, B7; Phillip Papas and Lori R. Weintrob, *Port Richmond* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 35.

[73]"Rev. Frank S. Fry of Port Richmond," *New York Times*, May 2, 1946, 21; "Mrs. Frank S. Fry," *New York Times*, Mar. 24, 1948, 25.

[74]"Old Church in Flatbush Will Install New Minister," *New York Times*, Jan 31, 1959, 8; "Deaths," *News From Hope College*, Apr. 2005, 22.

[75]Cornelius Vander Naald, "History of the Reformed Church on Staten Island," *Staten Island Historian* 1st series, 16 (1955), 1-5.

[76]"Jack H. Hascup," *The Acts & Proceedings of the Regular Session of the General Synod* 87 (June 2007), 160.

[77]New York City Department of Buildings, Staten Island, alteration permit 239-59; "Borough's Oldest Church to Observe Tercentenary," *Staten Island Advance*, Jan. 23, 1965.

[78] "Borough's Oldest Church"; "LBJ to S.I. Reformed: 'A Happy Anniversary,'" *Staten Island Advance*, May 1, 1965; "Early Dutch Settlers Founded S.I. Reformed Church in 1665," *Staten Island Advance*, May 3, 1965

[79]For Port Richmond's more recent history see Papas and Weintrob; Claire Wilson, "Lots of Arrivals, and No One Wants to Leave," *New York Times,* Dec. 3, 2006, K7.

[80]Warren Mac Kenzie, Testimony before the Landmarks Preservation Commission, August 11, 2009

[81] This section on the cemetery of the Reformed Church is based on Coombs, sec 8, 32-35; Royden W. Vosburgh, ed. "Records of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church on Staten Island," vol. 2 [Gravestone Inscriptions], January 1923, in the archives of the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences; Richard F. Veit and Mark Nonestied, *New Jersey Cemeteries and Tombstones* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008); Richard F. Welch, "The New York & New Jersey Gravestone Carving Tradition," *Journal of the Association for Gravestone Studies: Markers* 4 (1987) @ http:// www.archive.org/streammarkers04asso/markers04asso_djvu.txt.

[82] Vosburgh, 168.

[83] Because not all graves are marked, many grave markers have been lost, and it is not always clear that burials were disinterred when their markers were moved, and because subsequent street widenings and new construction have encroached on all three sections of the cemetery, burials likely lie outside the current cemetery boundaries.

[84] The others are the gravestones of Margaret Van Pelt, died 1749; _____ De Hart, daughter of Balthus and Mary De Hart, died 1748; Sarah Beek, died 1749; Daniel De Hart, died 1753; Joshua Mersereau, died 1760; Jannett Van Boskerk [Buskirk], died 1759. The carving on the gravestone of Daniel De Hart is especially fine.

[85] Veit and Nonestied, 47.

[86] Coombs, sec. 7, 8.

[87]The congregation hopes to replace the plaque. See Mac Kenzie, "Readers Notes," 2; Daughters of the American Revolution, *Proceedings of the Twenty-second Continental Congress*, 1913.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and the other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Reformed Church on Staten Island, Sunday School Building, and Cemetery have a special character and a 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, that the 1844 Greek Revival style Reformed Church on Staten Island Building, the 1898 Colonial Revival style Sunday School Building, and the church's cemetery, with grave markers dating from the mid-18th century to the early 20th century, are significant reminders of the historical, cultural, and architectural development of the Port Richmond neighborhood and Staten Island; that established by Dutch settlers in the late 17th century, the church's congregation is the oldest on Staten Island; that the congregation's first church on this site was erected in 1715 and the present church, the third on the site, is the oldest church building on the North Shore and one of the oldest churches on Staten Island; that the church's graveyard is the oldest non-private cemetery in Staten Island; that the 1844 church, designed by Staten Island builder James G. Burger, is a simple and well proportioned temple-fronted building with brick facades accented by brownstone belt courses, sills and lintels, and denticulated wood entablatures (currently covered by vinyl); that the church's façade exemplifies the popular distyle-in-antis plan type which is characterized by its central recessed entrance porch with two free-standing Doric columns and framing enclosed bays, articulated by pilasters; that that its north and south facades are lit by tall stained-glass windows by the renowned J. & R. Lamb Studios installed in 1906; that it is surmounted by a distinctive wood bell tower which is enriched with corner pilasters, paired louvered windows in a molded surround, a denticulated cornice and a parapet; that it is one of the few surviving Greek Revival style churches on Staten Island and appears to be the sole remaining example of the distyle-in-antis type on the island; that the Akron-plan 1898 Sunday School addition by Oscar S. Teale, a noted Manhattan and New Jersey-based architect specializing in churches, echoes the earlier building in its use of materials and certain decorative details including brownstone belt courses, paired pilasters, and denticulated cornices; that the building's asymmetrical four-bay façade includes a rounded bay, a center pavilion set off by paired pilasters and open pediment, flat- and round-arched window surrounds with stone keystones, stained-glass windows, and a polygonal roof with drum and lantern over the auditorium; that the oldest section of the cemetery to the north of the church incorporates a burying ground associated with the Corsen family known to have been in use by 1704/05 and was taken over by the church by 1715; that it has 224 grave markers dating from 1746 to 1882 and includes a number of gravestones that have been ascribed to the workshops of noted New Jersey stone carvers; that the second section of the cemetery to the south of the church occupies land donated by Daniel D. Tompkins in 1816 and includes 105 neo-Classical and Renaissance Revival marble markers dating between 1816 and 1896; that the third or "new" section of the cemetery to the west of the Sunday School contains 363 markers dating from 1834 to 1916, most of which are marble or granite and neo-Classical, Gothic Revival, and Renaissance Revival in style and includes the grave of Judge Jacob Tysen

(1773-1848), a congressman and judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and the family plots of the Van Name, Housman, Drake, Kohler, and Post families; that together the three sections of the cemetery incorporate the graves of many of the leading figures in Staten Island's Colonial, Revolutionary, Federalist, and 19th century history.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Reformed Church on Staten Island, Sunday School Building and Cemetery, 54 Port Richmond Avenue, Staten Island, and designates Borough of Staten Island Tax Map 1073, Lot 75, as their Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Pablo Vengoechea, Vice-Chair;
Frederick Bland, Stephen F. Byrns, Diana Chapin, Joan Gerner, Roberta Brandes Gratz, Christopher Moore, Elizabeth Ryan, Roberta Washington, Commissioners

Reformed Church on Staten Island, Sunday School Building, and Cemetery
Landmark Site: Borough of Staten Island, Tax Map Block 1073, Lot 75
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010

Reformed Church on Staten Island
Façade from east
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010

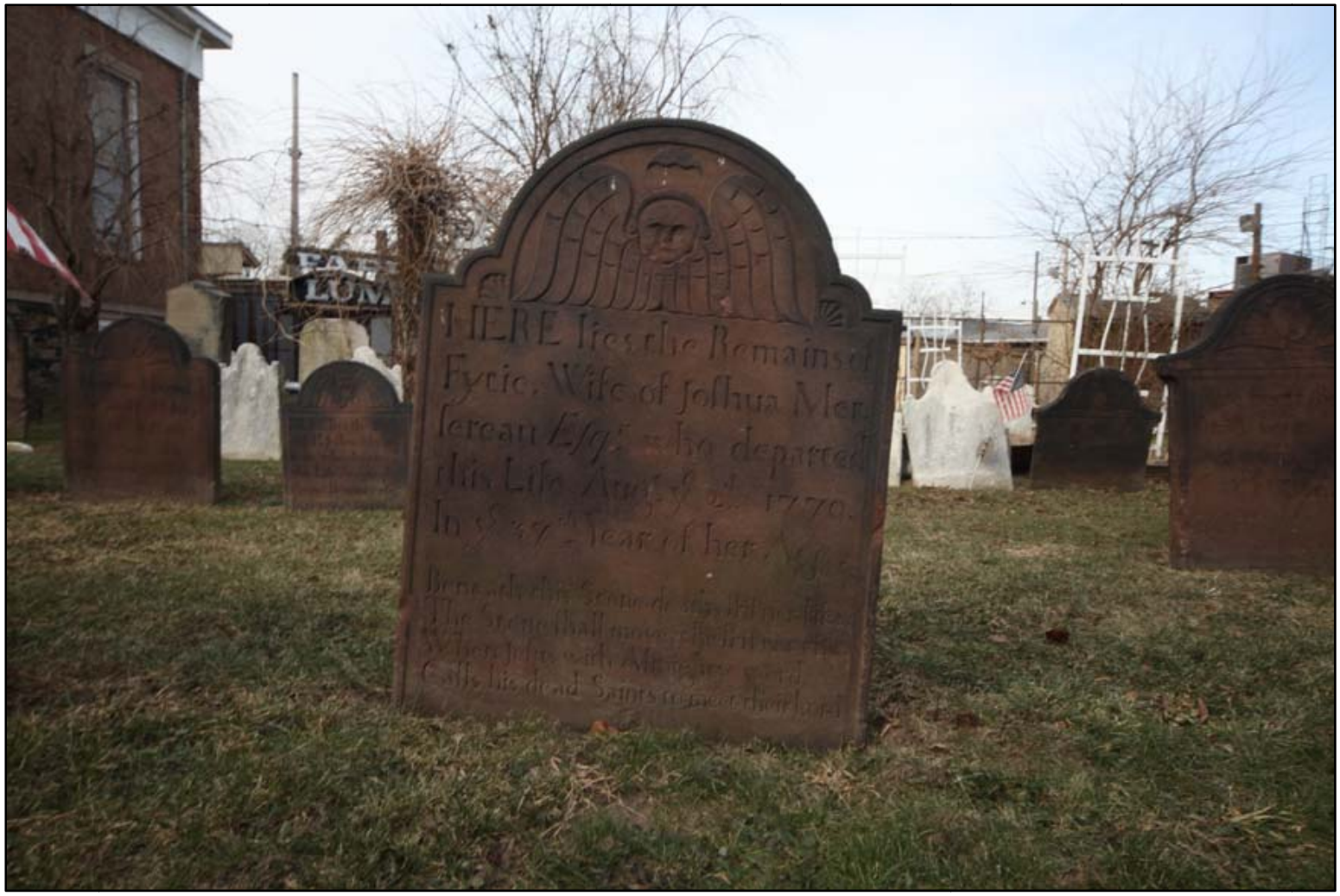
Reformed Church on Staten Island
South Façade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010

Reformed Church on Staten Island
North Façade
Photo: Gale Harris, 2009

Reformed Church on Staten Island
Sunday School Building
Façade from east
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010

Reformed Church on Staten Island
Sunday School Building
Dome from east
Photo: Gale Harris, 2009

Reformed Church on Staten Island
First (north) section of the Cemetery
In the foreground the death's head grave marker of John Beek, 1749
Attributed to the "Common Jersey Carver"
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



Reformed Church on Staten Island
First (north) section of the Cemetery
In the foreground the winged cherub grave marker of Fytie Mersereau, 1770
Signed EP
New Jersey stone carver, Ebenezer Price
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010

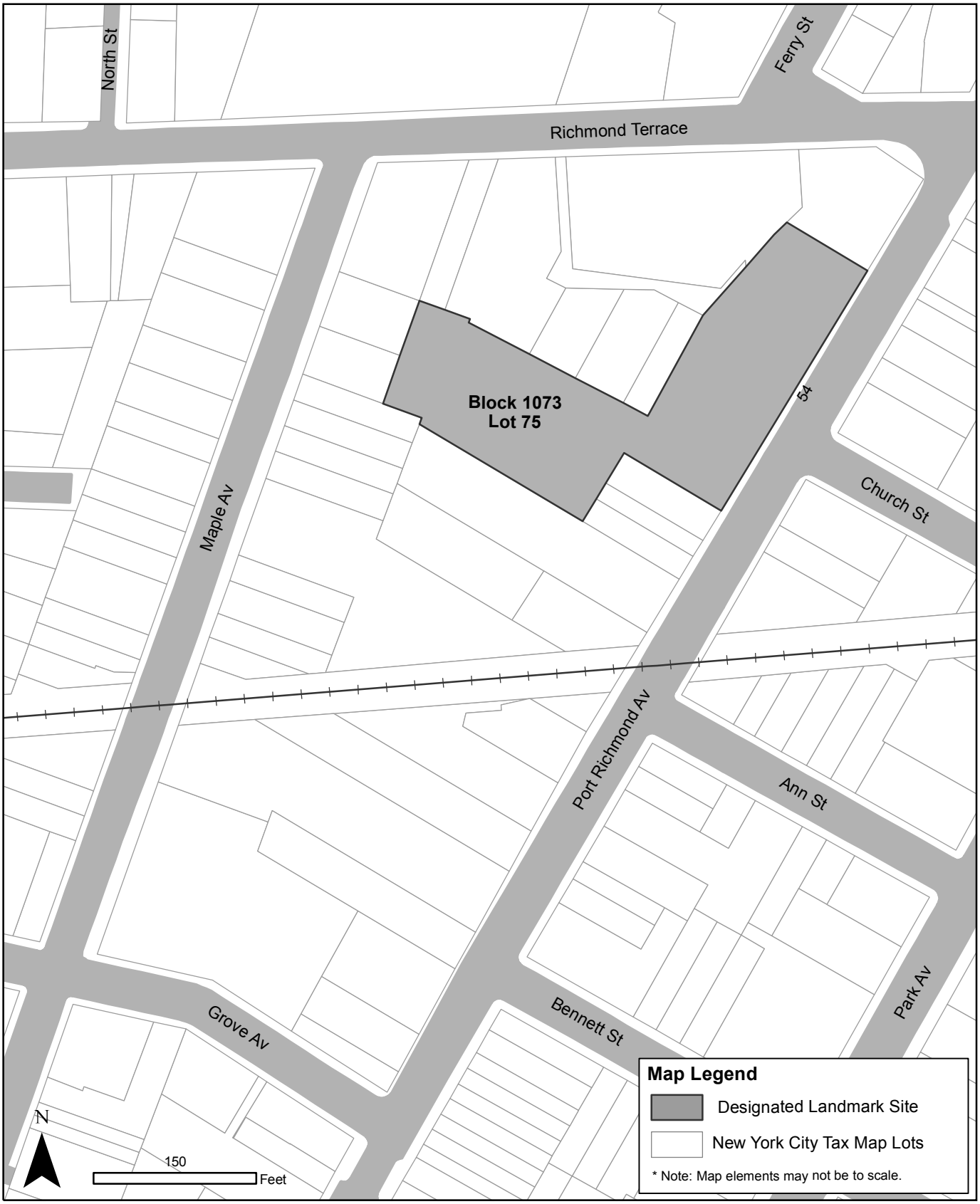
Reformed Church on Staten Island
First (north) section of the Cemetery
Three grave markers associated with the Corsen family
At the center the gravestone of Closha Corsen
Signed by New York City carvers P. D. & G. Braisted
New Jersey stone carver, Ebenezer Price
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010

Reformed Church on Staten Island
Second (south) section of the Cemetery
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010

Reformed Church on Staten Island
Third (south) section of the Cemetery
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010

Reformed Church on Staten Island
Third (south) section of the Cemetery
Tyson Family Gravestones
Headstone of Judge Jacob Tyson, second from right
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010

Reformed Church on Staten Island
Third (west) section of the Cemetery
Family burial plots at the west end of the cemetery
Photo: Gale Harris, 2009



REFORMED CHURCH ON STATEN ISLAND, SUNDAY SCHOOL BUILDING, AND CEMETERY (LP-2384), 54 Port Richmond Avenue. Landmark Site: Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 1073, Lot 75.

Designated: March 23, 2010

Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 09v1, 2009. Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, JM. Date: March 23, 2010.