

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

USE THIS COPY  
FOR DUPLICATING

1. Name

historic The High German Evangelical Reformed Church

and or common Zion Reformed, or Zion United Church of Christ

2. Location

street & number 620 Hamilton Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Allentown

N/A vicinity of

state PA

code 42

county Lehigh

code 077

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Zion United Church of Christ

street & number 620 Hamilton Street

city, town Allentown

N/A vicinity of

state PA

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lehigh County Courthouse

street & number Fifth and Hamilton Streets

city, town Allentown

state PA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Pennsylvania Historic Site Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1982  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records PHMC-BHP Bureau of Planning

city, town Harrisburg, Allentown

state PA

# 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Zion Reformed Church is located on a narrow lot along a major commercial street in downtown Allentown. The building is surrounded by office buildings. The north facade, which is the street entrance, is the only exterior wall with extensive architectural treatment. The building employs a hall plan and is divided into three sections. Fronting Hamilton Street, the northern third of the building comprises the narthex and the nave, the middle third is used for office space and the southern third is used for Sunday School classrooms. The gable end of the building is flanked by a 3½ story tower on the northwest and a 2½ story tower on the northeast. A fine example of the late Victorian period Gothic Revival architectural style, the building facade and flanking towers display the texture variety of random coursed rough ashlar and smooth belt courses and trim.

The gable end of the nave is of dark ashlar, has a one story entrance porch with a shed roof and is recessed from the two flanking towers. The porch contains two entrances that are separated by a central window. The window and entrance have Gothic arches with light colored stone in the archivolt. Below the porch roof is a band of false arcading and a dentilated frieze. A free standing aedicule stands on the porch roof above the central window. The gable end of the nave is filled with a large stained glass window subdivided by extensive tracery. A very shallow false battlement and a triangular section of light colored stone define the gable end. A Celtic cross stands atop the steeply sloped gable roof.

The northwest tower of the church building is square in plan, has three stages, corner finials and a prominent spire. The first stage has stepped lancet windows above a light colored stone belt course. The light colored stone archivolt of both windows contrast with the dark ashlar used throughout the body of the tower. The first stage is separated from the second stage by a belt of light colored stone and a parapet with bas-relief. On three sides of the second stage are paired lancet windows. All window archivolt are light in color. False arcading separates the second and third stages. Both stages have corner buttresses of broken faced stonework. The second stage buttresses are topped by stone weathers carved as shallow aedicules. On the third stage are tripartite lancet openings with louvered panels. The openings have light colored stone archivolt. False arcading and a parapet with bas-relief separates the third stage from four steeply pitched gable ends. Each gable has a clock face and a single course of dark stone above the clock. The steeply pitched gable is topped by a finial. On either side of each gable is a pinnacle with an aedicule and a finial. The steeple rises well above the gables and has three aedicules about midway to the apex. The steeple is topped by a ball finial.

The northeast tower is square in plan and 2½ stories in height. The lower stage has a light colored stone porch which projects from the first stage of the tower. The tower porch has twin lancet entrances. On the first stage of the tower above the porch is a small lancet window. A belt course of light colored stone separates the lower stage from the upper stage. At the base of the upper stage is a parapet which is surmounted by two tall, paired lancet windows. The windows have light colored archivolt. Above the windows is false arcading which separates the upper stage from the gable end of the tower. The buttresses on upper stage are rough faced and are topped by stone weathers carved as shallow aedicules. The gable end of the tower has three small lancet windows and a bas-relief panel in the upper-most section of the gable. The gable end is topped by a finial and the steeply pitched roof has a dormer that resembles the aedicules on the tower.

The church interior employs a hall plan with three aisles. The chancel has a rectilinear apse with a central altar. The apse is framed by a Gothic arch and is flanked by lower pointed arches which frame the organ ranks. Choir pews are in front of the two flanking arches. Within the apse is a stained glass window. The window is subdivided into four lancets with an extensive tracery that employs trefoil designs. Wall stenciling defines the altar window. A Celtic cross and the Greek letters alpha

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and omega are stenciled above the apex of the central arch. There is also stenciling which resembles hammerbeams on the end wall.

The side walls are divided into eight bays. A single lancet behind the choir pews is separated from a triple lancet section by hammerbeams. In the triple lancet section the central window is taller than the two flanking windows, and the two flanking windows are taller than the other five side windows. Plaster moldings define all eight windows and stenciling decorates the walls. The hammerbeams at either side of the triple lancets simulate a crossing and help support a steeply pitched roof. The two mid-braces on each hammerbeam are connected to one another by the rods. Trefoil and quartrefoil designs are carved into all the hammerbeams. The ceiling has wooden ribs with diagonal tongue and groove beaded sheathing.

Three doors at the rear of the nave provide access from the narthex. The doors align with the aisles and are separated by large, stained glass windows. Above the center door is a large wall painting with a stenciled border. The painting is topped by a pointed Gothic window which subdivides into six lancets. The extensive tracery in the rear window is similar to the tracery in the chancel window. Stenciling on the rear wall resembles the hammerbeams throughout the nave. The narthex is flanked by a vestibule on the northeast and the tower stairs on the northwest.

The Zion Reformed Church building has undergone four major periods of construction. The original building was erected in 1762. The building was then a small, one room log structure situated in the area that today is behind the chancel. It is believed that remnants of the 1762 building still exist within the walls of the boiler room. In 1773 the log structure was abandoned in favor of a new Federal vernacular style building that was built by the congregation a few yards north of the log church. The Federal style, stone building was a one story, three bay by five bay building with a moderately pitched gable roof. In 1838 the south wall of the 1773 building was extended to enlarge the sanctuary and provide some Sunday school classrooms. It was during the 1838 renovation that the remains of the original log structure may have again become part of the building. The most important alterations were made between 1886 and 1888. It was during this renovation that the structure became a Late Gothic Revival style building. Between 1886 and 1888 the side walls of the 1773 structure were bricked over and eight lancet windows were added. At the south end of the building an addition was built which provided increased room for Sunday schools and office space. On the north end the nave was extended, a narthex added, two towers and a central entrance porch were constructed. The 1886-1888 additions almost doubled the size of the structure. The only notable alteration since 1888 is the stone entrance, built in 1962, on the northeast tower.

# 8. Significance

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

**Specific dates** 1762, 1773, 1838, 1886-8 **Builder/Architect** (1886-1888) Lewis Jacoby

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

A fine example of the late Victorian Gothic Revival architectural style, the Zion Reformed Church building has stood as a local landmark in Allentown for almost a century.

The nineteenth century was a time of growth and expansion in Allentown. This expansion was reflected in the Zion Reformed Church building. During the century the Federal style building that served the church was periodically altered and enlarged. In the 1880's the Zion congregation initiated a very extensive renovation which resulted in the present Gothic Revival style building. A locally prominent architect, Lewis Jacoby, who later designed the First Allentown Bank building, was contracted in 1886. When the renovations were completed two years later, the Gothic Revival building was considered one of the most outstanding architectural examples in Allentown.

The church building displays many architectural qualities characteristic of Gothic Revival architecture. The Hamilton Street facade, which is the only exterior wall with extensive architectural treatment, is rough faced, dark coursed ashlar and has smooth faced, light colored Gothic window and entrance arches throughout. False arcading, aedicules and finials are also prominent features. Two slightly projecting towers flank the central entrance section. One tower is 3½ stories and includes pinnacles, four steeply pitched gable ends, each with a clock face, and a steeple that rises well above the gable ends. The other tower is 2½ stories and has a steeply pitched gable roof with a dormer that resembles the aedicules used throughout the building. Both towers have buttresses topped by carved weathers.

Like the exterior, the building interior has qualities typically associated with Gothic Revival style architecture. The most outstanding interior feature is a large stained glass window which is divided into four lancets and has an elaborate tracery. Stenciling is prominent throughout the interior with an extensive section on the rear wall. Both side walls have a triple lancet section near the front of the nave. At either side of the lancet sections, there are hammerbeams which simulate a crossing. Supported by hammer beams, the ceiling has wooden ribs with diagonal tongue and groove, beaded sheathing.

In addition to being an architectural landmark in Allentown the Zion Reformed Church building has intrinsic value to local residents. In many communities there are a few buildings that represent the beginnings of the community. In Allentown the Zion Reformed Church is one of those buildings. From the time the town was laid out in 1762, there has been a church located where the Zion now stands. Although the original structure survived only ten years, the church building that replaced it in 1773 became the center of religious life for many inhabitants. The church gained additional prominence in 1777 when it became the hiding place for the Liberty Bell while the British occupied Philadelphia. Throughout the alterations and expansions in the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, the Zion Reformed Church building remained a central part in the religious lives of many Allentown residents.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Rhoades Roberts, History of Lehigh County
Reverend Simon Sipple, History of Zion Reformed Church, 1762-1937
Zion's Reformed Church Archives
Registry of Deeds

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .5 acres

Quadrangle name Allentown East, Pa.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 18 461200 4494500
Zone Easting Northing

B Zone Easting Northing

C Zone Easting Northing

D Zone Easting Northing

E Zone Easting Northing

F Zone Easting Northing

G Zone Easting Northing

H Zone Easting Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Theodore J. Mabus, Chairman of Historical Archives and Restoration

organization Consistory, Zions United Church of Christ date June 9, 1982

street & number 328 S. Cloud Street telephone 435-5882

city or town Allentown state PA 18104

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

[Handwritten signature]

title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer

date 6/21/83

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Lehigh County

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Beginning at a point, said point being the intersection of eastern curb of South Church Street and the south curb of Hamilton Street; thence in an eastwardly direction along the curb line of Hamilton Street to a point, said point being the intersection of the south curb of Hamilton Street and the eastern property line of Zions Reformed Church (620 Hamilton Street); thence in a southwardly direction along the eastern property line of Zions Reformed Church (620 Hamilton) to a point, said point being the intersection of the eastern property line of Zions Reformed Church (620 Hamilton Street) and the northern curb of Maple Street; thence in a westwardly direction along the northern curb of Maple Street to a point, said point being the intersection of the northern curb of Maple Street and the eastern curb of South Church Street; thence in a northwardly direction along the eastern curb of South Church Street to the point of beginning.

5865 J. NE  
(CEMENTON)

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



INTERNATIONAL

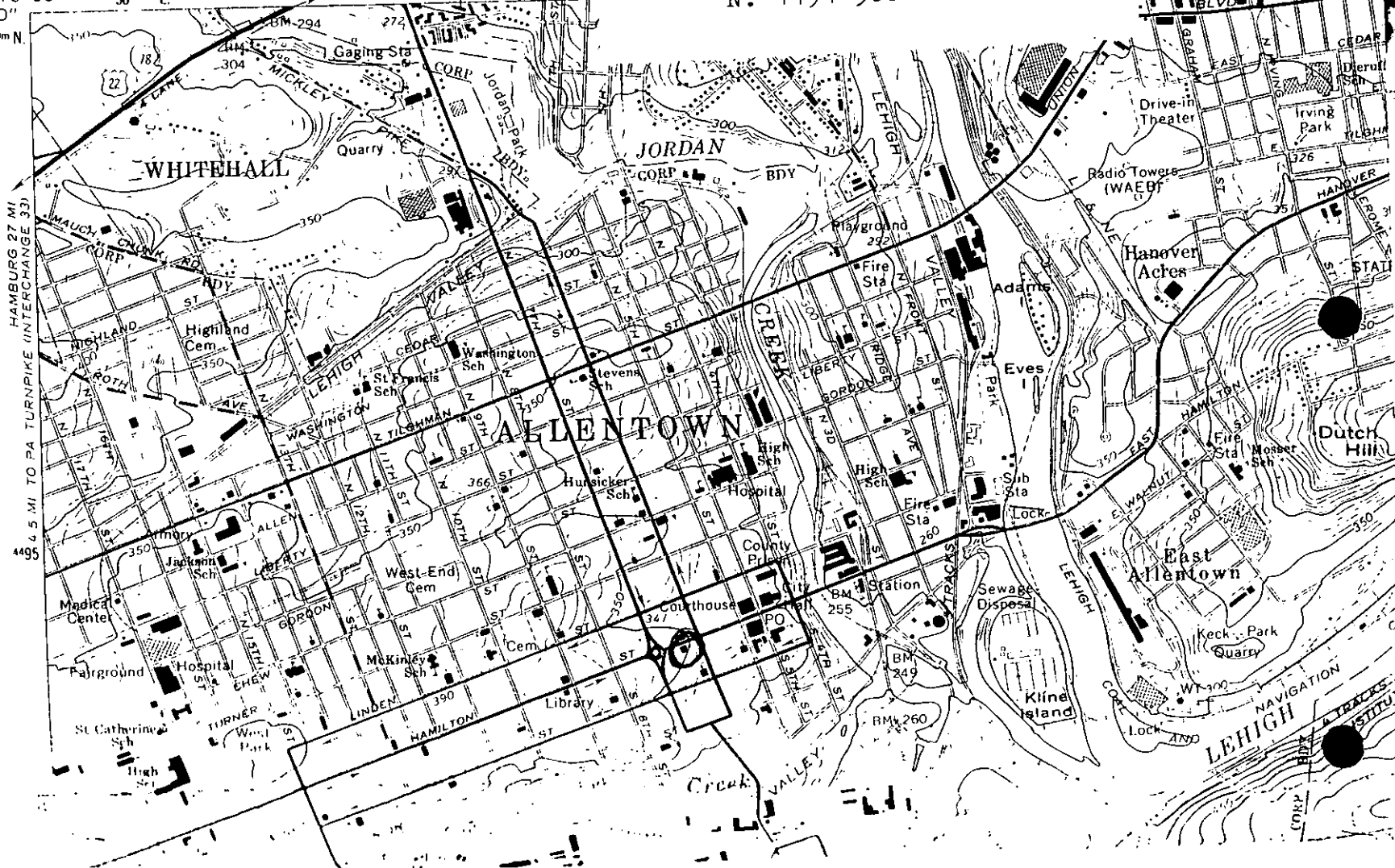
Zion Reformed Church  
Lehigh County (PA)  
Zone: 18  
E. 461 200  
N. 4494 500

STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
TOPOGRAPHIC AND  
ENGINEERING

75° 30'  
40° 37' 30"  
4497000m N

458000m E  
EASTON (U.S. 611) 16 MI.  
FULLERTON 0.9 MI 0.4 MI. TO IN

5965  
ICATAS  
ROUTE 78 & U.S. 22



HAMBURG 27 MI  
TO PA TURNPIKE INTERCHANGE 33)  
4.5 MI TO PA TURNPIKE INTERCHANGE 33)  
4495

LEHIGH VALLEY  
NAVIGATION  
LEHIGH RIVER  
LOCK AND DAM  
RAILROADS  
TRUCKS