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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

APR 1 1985

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# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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date entered

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

## 1. Name

historic St. Peter's Episcopal Church of Germantown

and or common N/A

USE THIS COPY  
FOR DUPLICATING

## 2. Location

street & number 6000 Wayne Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Philadelphia N/A vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code -42 county Philadelphia code 101

## 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"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: medical clinic

## 4. Owner of Property

name St. Peter's Episcopal Church of Germantown

street & number 6008 Wayne Avenue

city, town Philadelphia N/A vicinity of state Pennsylvania

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Philadelphia City Hall, Department of Records

street & number Broad and Market Streets

city, town Philadelphia state Pennsylvania

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Northwest Philadelphia Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1982 - 1983  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Museum and Historical Commission

city, town Harrisburg state Pennsylvania

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>1914</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal Church complex at the corner of Wayne Avenue and Harvey Street forms one of the Philadelphia region's most impressively picturesque ecclesiastical groupings. Here a bristling array of gable ends and spires mark the differentiated functions of the rectory, parish hall, Sunday school, office and church, while the asymmetrical composition describes this as a work of the high Victorian era. Five buildings form the complex -- the church, an adjacent and contemporary office and gateway, and a flanking Sunday school which are all contemporary and connected to each other. To the east stands a handsome free-standing porch-fronted rectory, erected just after the original building group. Behind the front row of buildings is a later, towered parish house, connected to the office by an arcaded stone walkway that frames the rear courtyard.

The entire group is given unity by the formal device of parallel axes, presenting gabled ends to the street, by adherence to the forms of Gothic architecture derived from English parish design, and by the use of the local Wissahickon schist as the principal building stone, and grey Pennsylvania slate for the roofs. Of the group, the church, as would be expected, is the most imposing with its gabled roof apse, nave gable, and tall slate roofed spire, forming the principal focus of the streetscape.

The church itself is an interesting combination of high church elongated form and low church open plan. Its nave is one broad aisle roofed by wood trusses, and carried on massive stone walls. Pews in regular rows mark the center and side aisles. Plastered wall surfaces are accented by regularly spaced leaded memorial windows by such masters as Willets and Tiffany. The apse is by contrast a richer and more embellished space, indicating its later alterations by T.P. Chandler; that work includes the triumphal arch, the stone reredos and altar, and the multi-rierned vaults replacing the original wood truss as well as the main leaded glass window.

On the exterior, the apse alteration is indicated by the shift from Victorian crazy quilt masonry of the main volume to the more historically accurate ledgerstone with limestone trim. With the exception of the spire, the remainder is relatively severe -- a simple nave volume with paired pointed arched windows marking each bay. The spire is the church's glory with a complex roof going from a four-sided to an octagonal spire, accented at the transition by slender columns carrying a Furness-like chamfered head and pediment.

Adjacent to the church is a handsome office and litchgate that spans the carriage drive, and forms a porte cochere, while also providing a covered passage to the Sunday school. Its roof is crowned by another exuberant

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spire -- a sort of country belfry capped by a slender four-sided slate roof. The adjacent polygonal apse with its pairs of windows in each face repeat themes of the main church. To the east is the Sunday school, now the chapel, which follows the proportions and angles of the church. Its crazy quilt schist stonework is given a Ruskinian coloristic accent by green serpentine stone in the tympanum of the enframing arch that spans the three lancets that give light to the large hall of the chapel. The interior of the chapel/Sunday school was, like the main church, carried on wood trusses with gothic detail. Stained dark, with dark tongue and groove sheathing, it adds a somber note to the complex. Leaded glass windows here primarily date from the 1950s, but are in keeping with the building. One half of the chapel has been subdivided by partition to make a health facility for the church. The vestry room is in the polygonal end of the office and follows the pattern of the English chapter room, with open work, cusped timbers carrying the roof. Both spaces survive with a high degree of integrity.

The fourth building of the group is the stone rectory, which shows both spatial features and design motifs which are typical of Furness and Hewitt's domestic work at the outset of their careers. The house is characteristically perverse by seeming to present a front with a gable toward the Wayne Avenue street, while in fact showing the side. Entrance is made from an ample porch with cusped knee braced columns that enframes the side, and reaches around to the projecting entrance on the Harvey Street facade. Strongly formed brackets carry a wood infilled, wall gable while the chimneys suggest the coming Furness fascination with plastic form. The house is instead a center hall plan with parlor on the right, and drawing room on the left, and a dining room in the rear wing at the end of the axis of the hall. The kitchen fills the rear corner, completing a plan in which the front range of rooms seem to have been shifted across the rear recalling such Furness plans as the Lotta Crabtree House, and suggesting that it may have been designed in the 1873 phase when Furness and Hewitt were still partners. Angled cupboards in the dining room give the illusion of a polygonal room, an idea repeated in the second floor sitting room, and intimating the firm's coming mastery of space and form. Handsome wood fireplaces with Dutch tiles, some representing nursery rhymes, were perhaps the work of the Tile Club, and add a note of interest to the rectory.

The last building of the St. Peter's group is the parish hall of 1898 by Chandler. It is carefully sited so that its gothic door is framed by the archway of the litchgate, with the tower forming a distinct focus to the complex. The tower shows the forms of the maturing gothic revival of the

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1890s, with crenellations and a small corner tower enlivening the silhouette. A plaque notes that the building was constructed to celebrate 25 years of Dr. Rumney's pastorate. With its heavy wood door enframed by highly detailed limestone and the honorific device of its cloister-like arcade connecting it to the main group, the parish house points the way to the future of ecclesiastical design in Philadelphia.

## 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 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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1873 1883; 1898 Builder/Architect Furness & Hewitt; Geo. W. Hewitt, T.P. Chandle

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Saint Peter's Episcopal Church group is of importance as the work of the most original Victorian architects of the Quaker City -- Furness and Hewitt, and later of Hewitt alone; for a prominent Philadelphia industrialist and real estate developer Henry Howard Houston, the chief of the freight division of the Pennsylvania Railroad. It was Houston who acquired land along the south side of Chestnut Hill, and then pushed the Pennsylvania Railroad to bring tracks into the region causing the development of the area south of Green Street. St. Peter's Church can be viewed as an inducement to bring wealthy Episcopalians into the region which Houston was developing. Finally, the buildings are important as an example of Victorian suburban picturesque design that remains a prominent landmark on Wayne Avenue.

Though the Houston sponsorship, and the success of the architectural composition of the St. Peter's Episcopal Church complex are of note, it is the architectural firm of Furness and Hewitt that first gives the buildings significance. The church history reported that "Mr. Houston, on his own responsibility, had plans for a church building prepared by Mr. Geo. W. Hewitt, architect. These plans were considered carefully, and, after some alterations, were adopted." (Rumney and Bullock, p. 6)

That Hewitt would be the architect was a logical response to his having succeeded to the practice of architect, John Notman, the designer of St. Mark's, St. Clement's, and Holy Trinity Episcopal churches. It also corresponds to what we know of the practice of Furness and Hewitt -- with Hewitt being assigned to the major ecclesiastical projects, including Rodef Sholom synagogue, the Church of the Holy Comforter, and the Church of the Holy Apostles. The Furness sketchbooks also contain an enumeration of various projects in the office, with "F" and "H" after each, presumably indicating the principal in charge of the design, and listing "H" after "St. Peter's". If it is safe to assume that Hewitt was the partner in charge, it also seems likely that both hands can be seen, with Furness perhaps in charge of the not so subtle spire, and Hewitt responsible for the English Gothic features. The architects would split apart two years later, leaving a legacy of distinguished design that established the values of the English Ruskinian Gothic as the norm for the Philadelphia elite clientele, with the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and a group of churches the most important survivors from the period. The Holy Comforter, Holy Apostles, and the St. Peter's Episcopal churches show similar features of church and adjacent parish hall -- but, the larger suburban site enabled the architects to more closely approximate the English picturesque idea.

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Compositional features alluded to in the Description portion of this nomination suggest that the Furness and Hewitt site plan must have taken the basic form of the existing complex, with the church in the salient position at the inner corner of the site, and the other buildings stepping back as a diagonal toward Harvey Avenue. Their position makes it seem likely that the rectory was always intended, and because its architect was not specifically cited, it is likely that it is also the design of the original architects. This seems especially likely because the plan, and the exterior ornament is closely related to the earliest houses of the office.

If the architects are significant, Henry Howard Houston, the man who paid the bills, is equally noteworthy. During the Civil War, Houston had organized the freight division of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and by the 1870s was a vice-president of the state's most important corporation. In the 1870s, Houston had acquired vast property holdings in the underdeveloped land below Wayne Avenue, and extending to Willow Grove Avenue. There in the next decade, he would construct his palatial dwelling "Drum Moir", the Wissahickon Inn, and another Episcopal church, St. Martin's in the Fields, all from the designs of the Hewitt Brothers. In the previous decade, however, he concentrated his efforts near the old commuter suburb in the vicinity of Green and Tulpehocken streets served by the Pennsylvania and Reading Railroad Germantown depot. The Church was presumably intended as a part of the attraction to a wealthy clientele of the new neighborhood, but Houston was also a generous benefactor. The site at Wayne and Harvey streets, valued at \$10,000, was a Houston donation, as was much of the first \$30,000 of construction costs. Houston himself served as Church Warden for nearly a generation, and provided the triplet lancets of the apse as a memorial window to his daughter Eleanor. The rectory was similarly consequent on Houston's generosity for his donation of \$8000 in 1883 largely paid for the vestry room extension to the church office, which was again the work of George W. Hewitt. (Rumney and Bullock, p. 18)

If the church is largely the house that Houston built, its perpetuation has been the result of the support of the Germantown community. The vestry lists have included several generations of the region's most prominent citizens, including Houston, but also Edward A. Crenshaw, Stephen B. Kingston (a resident at Green and Chelton avenues) and Marshall S. Shapleigh. It presumably is not a coincidence that Hewitt designed numerous houses in the immediate vicinity, including the stone house for Henry Lewis directly across Wayne Avenue from St. Peter's Church.

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Finally, the church complex is significant as an imposing landmark that recalls the intentions and values of the region's developers and early residents. Here the anglophile qualities of old Philadelphia, and those who would be a part of it are clearly in evidence. As an important early work of the architectural firm of Furness and Hewitt that established the stylistic norms of the region for the developer/industrialist, Henry Houston, St. Peter's Episcopal Church deserves to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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James F. O'Gorman, George E. Thomas, Hyman Myers, The Architecture of  
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Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point on the northwest side of Harvey Street at a distance of 330 feet 5/8 inches from the intersection of Wayne Avenue and proceeding 224 feet 11 3/4 inches along a line parallel, more or less, to Wayne Avenue. Then proceeding in a generally northeasterly direction, along a line parallel, more or less, to Harvey Street, 398 feet 11 3/8 inches to a point on Wayne Avenue. Then proceeding in a southerly direction along Wayne Avenue 226 feet 10 1/4 inches to the intersection of Harvey Street and place of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

This is the property given by Henry Houston, and containing the five principal buildings and their adjacent lawns.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than an acre

Quadrangle name Germantown Quad

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	1 8	4 8 4 3 0 0	4 4 3 1 3 2 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
E			
G			

D			
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet.

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

state	<u>PA</u>	code	<u>PA</u>	county	<u>PA</u>	code	<u>PA</u>
state	<u>PA</u>	code	<u>PA</u>	county	<u>PA</u>	code	<u>PA</u>

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title George E. Thomas, Ph.D.

organization Clio Group, Inc. date \_\_\_\_\_

street & number 3961 Baltimore Avenue telephone (215) 386 - 6276

city or town Philadelphia state Pennsylvania

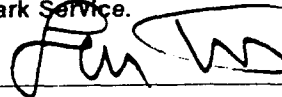
# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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



title Larry E. Tise, State historic Preservation Officer

date 7/11/85

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

WAYNE

AVENUE

W. WALNUT  
LANE

HARVEY  
STREET

ST. PETER'S  
PROTESTANT  
EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH



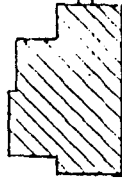
CHURCH



PARISH



PARSONAGE

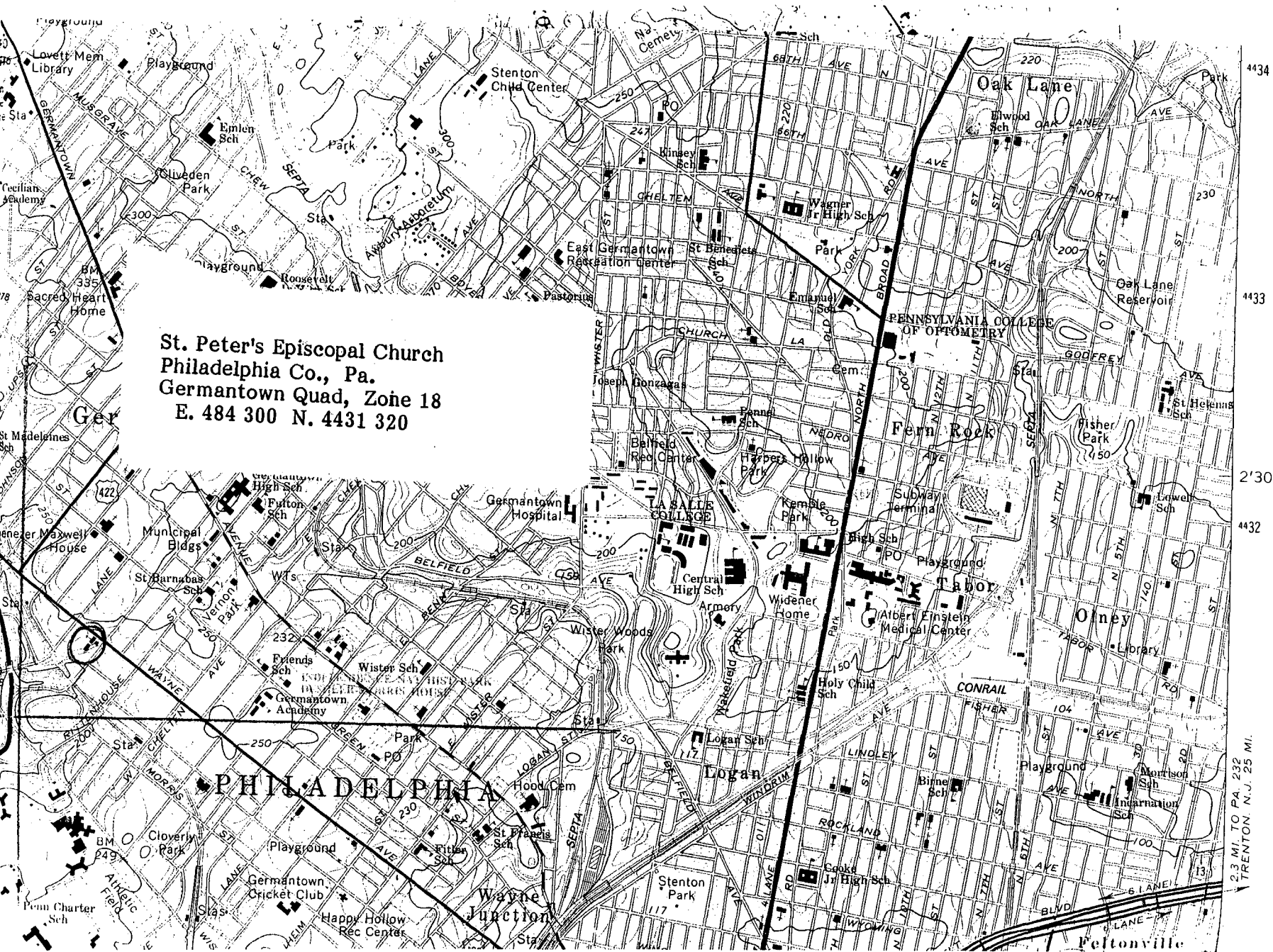


SUNDAY  
SCHOOL

PULASKI AVE

STREET

St. Peter's Episcopal Church  
Philadelphia Co., Pa.  
Germantown Quad, Zone 18  
E. 484 300 N. 4431 320



4434

4433

2'30"

4432

2.3 MI. TO PA. 232 MI.  
TRENTON, N. J. 25 MI.