



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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Date: May 6, 2009

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director *CS*

Re: Immaculate Conception Lithuanian Church landmark designation report and recommendation

Attached please find 45 copies, plus the original, of the Final Landmark Designation Study Report for the Immaculate Conception Lithuanian Church and Rectory at 430-432 Windsor Street. On April 2, 2009, the Cambridge Historical Commission voted unanimously to find that the church and rectory meet the criteria in the ordinance for landmark designation and to forward the report to the City Council with a positive recommendation for designation.

If the Council decides to hold an Ordinance Committee hearing on this matter, I can provide the City Clerk's office with the notification list that we have used for Historical Commission hearings on the matter.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

**Final Landmark Designation Study Report
Immaculate Conception Church and Rectory
430-432 Windsor Street, Cambridge, Mass.**



Summary

The Immaculate Conception Church at 430 Windsor Street is an architecturally and historically significant building that represents the expansion of the Roman Catholic Church in the early 20th century through the establishment of parishes based on ethnic group and national origin. One of five Catholic churches constructed in Cambridge in 1905-1910 for ethnic congregations, Immaculate Conception heralded the emergence of the Lithuanian community as a distinct group. The church meets criteria (1) and (2) of the Chapter 2.78, Article III of the Cambridge City Code for landmark designation. The adjoining Rectory, constructed later, is a significant part of the parish complex.

Adaptive reuse of the Immaculate Conception Church and Rectory should respect the buildings' important exterior features, including its clay tile roof, brick masonry walls, windows, and, where appropriate, its religious features. Interior alterations and matters of use would be, as always, beyond the jurisdiction of the Historical Commission.

At a public hearing on April 2, 2009 the Historical Commission determined that the church and rectory meet the criteria for landmark designation provided in the landmark ordinance, Ch. 2.78, Article III of the City Code. The Commission authorized the staff to make factual corrections it deemed appropriate, including the zoning description, and to forward the report to the City Council with a recommendation for designation.

Cambridge Historical Commission
May 6, 2009

Immaculate Conception Church and Rectory
430-432 Windsor Street, Cambridge, Mass.
Landmark Designation Study Report

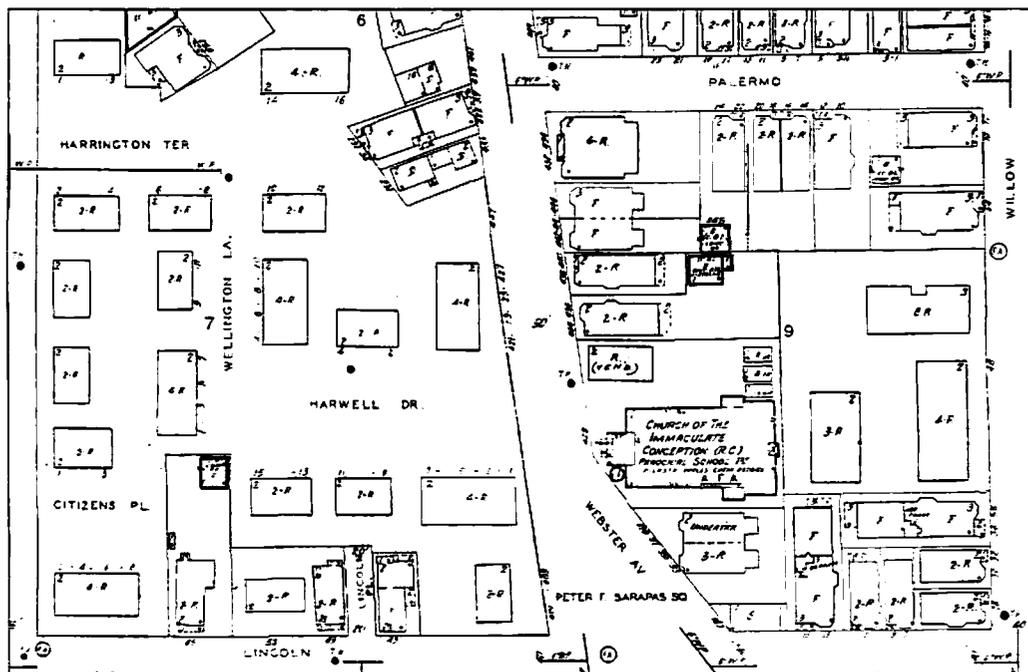
I. Location and Status

A. Address and Zoning

The Immaculate Conception Church and Rectory at 430 and 432 Windsor Street are located on the east side of the street at the intersection with Webster Avenue. The church occupies an irregularly-shaped lot that contains approximately 10,462 square feet (Map 80 / Lot 119), while the rectory occupies a separate, adjoining lot of 5,194 square feet (Map 80 / Lot 86), for a total of 15,656 square feet. The combined lots have a frontage of 81' on Windsor Street and a maximum depth of 141'. The assessed values for the land and buildings according to the FY 2008 Assessor's Department property database totaled \$2,198,200, while the recent sale in August 2007 valued the property at \$1,425,000.

The Immaculate Conception properties are zoned Residence C-1, with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.75 for all permitted uses, which include multifamily residences and dormitories. The C-1 district allows a height limit of 35 feet. The minimum lot area per dwelling unit is 1,500 square feet, allowing up to 29 units per acre. By calculation, the combined lots would accommodate 10 dwelling units as-of-right if the site had no buildings on it. However, Cambridge zoning allows additional floor area and dwelling units for residential reuse of the existing buildings and/or the creation of affordable housing (Secs. 5.28 and 11.200 ff).

According to the Cambridge Assessors online database, the church contains 6,734 square feet of floor area on the ground floor and 6,686 square feet on the second floor. The rectory contains 2,610 square feet of floor area on the first and second floors, and 1,305 in the basement. There are also two galvanized metal garages at the rear of the property.



1. Detail of 430-432 Windsor Street from 2002 Sanborn Map Co., plate 6

B. Ownership and Occupancy

The Immaculate Conception complex is owned by the Just A Start Corporation (JAS), a non-profit community development corporation which focuses on “program activities for the benefit of low- and moderate-income people: the stabilization of occupied housing, education/training/placement, and the development and operation of affordable housing” (<http://www.justastart.org/about.shtml>). JAS develops affordable housing for first-time homebuyers in new and renovated buildings, and owns over 500 units of affordable rental housing in Cambridge.

JAS acquired the Immaculate Conception property from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston in August, 2007 with the intent of converting the buildings to 16 units of affordable housing. The deed from the Archdiocese, which was recorded in book 49975, page 508 at the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds, transferred the properties to JAS subject to the conditions that the premises are to be used “only for residential housing” and that they are not to be used for a “church, chapel, or other house of religious worship,” an abortion clinic or counseling service, or an embryonic stem cell research facility. These use restrictions are binding on all succeeding owners, and do not expire until 2097.

C. Area Description

The Immaculate Conception complex stands on the east side of Windsor Street at the junction of Webster Avenue, in a dense residential section of Cambridgeport just south of Cambridge Street and west of Donnelly Field. The area is characterized by a variety of one-, two- and multi-family residential buildings, ranging in age from the mid-19th century to the 1970s. While the Cambridge Street corridor developed with mixed-use two to four story buildings in the late 19th century, the remainder of the Immaculate Conception neighborhood is now almost all residential; the industries, garages, scrap yards, and stores that were present until the 1960s have almost all closed or been redeveloped.

South of Lincoln Street, the houses date from two waves of construction: single-family houses in the 1850s followed by three deckers in the 1890s. The blocks between Windsor Street and Willow Street came on the market about 1890 and almost immediately filled up with single and double three-deckers, while the mixed-use area west of Windsor Street was cleared in the 1960s and redeveloped with one, two, and four-family buildings designed by the firm of Huygens & Tappé and constructed by the Wellington-Harrington Development Corp. in 1971. A 15-unit family housing project in three buildings abuts the Immaculate Conception site on the east; constructed under the Model Cities program in 1970, it is now administered by the Cambridge Housing Authority.

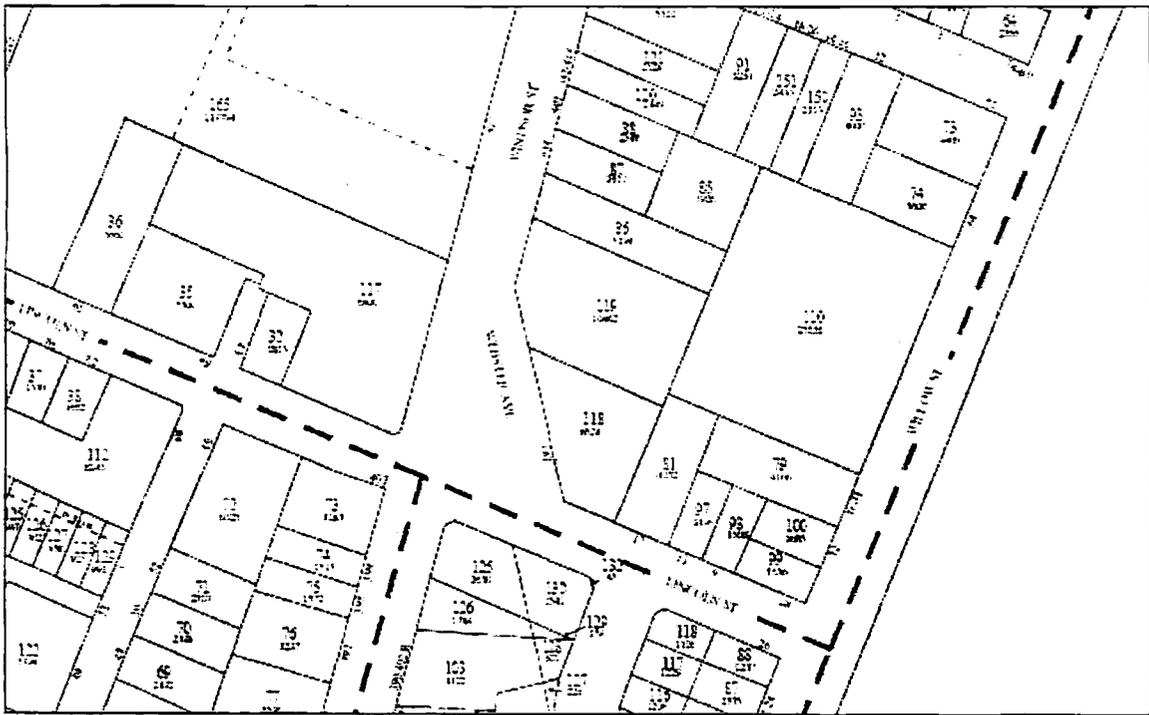
Other prominent features of the area include St. Patrick’s Church, built in 1909 and converted to affordable housing in 1991, Roosevelt Towers, a 228-unit public housing project built in 1950. Donnelly Field, which originally comprised twelve acres of public open space, now accommodates a municipal swimming pool (1948), the King Open (formerly Harrington) Elementary School (1959), and the Frisoli Youth Center (1996); it retains about half its former area for recreation fields.

While the zoning in the neighborhood is uniformly Residence C-1, the prevailing density is probably somewhat greater; few buildings appear to comply with setback regulations (except across the street in the Wellington-Harrington development). The Immaculate Conception complex benefits from the broad intersection of Windsor, Webster and Lincoln Streets, which brings light and air to the site, as well as from the expanse of Donnelly Field nearby.

D. Planning Issues

Planning concerns for the Immaculate Conception complex relate to its intended use for residential housing. The church is nonconforming because of its height, but construction of more than ten units requires a special permit from the Planning Board, for which the regulatory threshold is lower than for a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeal. The proposed project is close to meeting the open space requirement, and parking will be accommodated on-site.

The Commission has heard objections to the project based on perceptions of the high residential density of the neighborhood, as well as the large number of affordable housing units in the immediate area. The Community Development Department prepared residential density information for the Planning Board's review. No information on the prevalence of affordable housing units is available except for Cambridge Housing Authority projects cited above.



2. Property Map of 430-432 Windsor Street (Parcels 119 and 86), City of Cambridge Assessing Dept.

E. Status

The Immaculate Conception Church and Rectory are temporarily protected as landmarks while the Cambridge Historical Commission (CHC) prepares a recommendation to the City Council concerning permanent designation.

The Archdiocese of Boston sold the Immaculate Conception property to Just A Start on August 10, 2007. On August 20, the Cambridge Historical Commission (CHC) received a petition

from 80 Cambridge residents requesting initiation of a landmark designation study: the petition was accepted and the study was initiated on September 6, bringing the property under the Commission's jurisdiction for one year. (Meanwhile, plans for the reuse had been approved by the Massachusetts Historical Commission on August 22, 2007.) In January, 2008 the CHC issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed adaptive reuse, as described below and in the Appendix. JAS received a Special Permit from the Cambridge Planning Board at about the same time. This permit was appealed to the Superior Court in early 2008, and the case is still pending. In September, 2008, with the consent of the owner, the Cambridge Historical Commission voted to extend the study period for one additional year, until September 2009.

II. Description

The former Immaculate Conception Church was built in 1910-1913 to accommodate school-rooms and offices on the first floor and a sanctuary on the second. The rectory was built in 1972 as a residence for the parish priest. Both buildings remain in their original configuration.

A. Physical Description and Condition

The former Immaculate Conception Church is a brick bearing wall structure with a mixture of wood, steel, and cast iron framing. Cast iron columns support the second floor and the balcony; brick pilasters support steel trusses that provide a clear span over the sanctuary.

The gable end and bell tower face the street, and the building is entered through double doors at grade level which lead into a vestibule under the bell tower. The entry doors are surmounted by large transoms with mullions in a cross pattern; over them is a ceramic half-round relief that features the Virgin Mary, surrounded by other sculptural figures and a Lithuanian inscription. The entrance is sheltered by a projecting half-round pressed-tin arch, supported by heavy brackets and surmounted by a three-dimensional pressed metal cross.

The exterior walls of the church are dark red brick, laid in a running bond except on the face of the bell tower. Here the brick is plain running bond up to the second floor window sills, above which six projecting belt courses accent the windows. Above the belt courses clinker bricks project from the wall in a diamond pattern. Windows almost all have round, segmented arch tops and granite sills. The masonry appears to be in excellent condition, apart from some small inexpert repairs.

The steeply sloping pitched roof is covered with red clay 'Spanish' style pan-and-cover barrel tiles and has only a few penetrations for copper ventilating structures. The bell tower projects above the roof and is surmounted by a cross-gabled tile roof with exposed rafter ends, supported by curved wooden brackets; cross-gabled haunches on the bell tower feature the same tiles. The tower is still topped by a large gold cross, but the bell has been removed. The roof and metalwork appear to be in excellent condition.

Except for those in the sanctuary, all the windows of the church are heavy, double-hung wood windows with true divided lights; most appear operable and in good condition. The sanctuary windows have steel frames with frosted glass and provisions for stained glass inserts. These windows are deteriorated and probably could not be easily restored. The stained glass panels were removed prior to the initiation of the landmark study, and there is little information on their original appearance.

The rectory is a 1½-story residence with a red brick veneer and a gable roof covered in asphalt shingles. It has few distinguishing features apart from an arched entry and a folk-art crest at the peak of the gable. Two pressed-metal garages sit at the back of the asphalt parking lot; these are not considered significant.

The landscaping is simple. The front yard of the church is enclosed with a heavy wrought iron fence, supplemented with chain link in front of the rectory. Both the front and south side yards have many mature shrubs. Asphalt paving covers most of the open space north of the church.

B. Photographs



3. Immaculate Conception Church,
432 Windsor Street. Dec. 28, 2007



4. Immaculate Conception Church belfry 5. Immaculate Conception Church entrance



6. Immaculate Conception Rectory,
430 Windsor Street. Dec. 28, 2007

III. History of the Property

A. Cambridgeport Development Patterns

For a hundred and fifty years after the settlement of Cambridge, its eastern reaches remained lightly inhabited; at the time of the Revolution there were only three farms east of today's Quincy Street. With the construction of the West Boston Bridge in 1793 (where the Longfellow Bridge now stands), there was direct access from present-day Kendall Square to Boston. Much of Cambridgeport developed as a residential suburb and as a commercial link between Boston and the long-standing farming communities that surrounded it.

Cambridgeport was declared a United States port of delivery in 1805. Two major thoroughfares, Broadway and Hampshire Street, connected the active port area to the inland towns. However, Cambridgeport failed to live up to its potential as a great commercial city, and subsequently evolved into a Boston-oriented commercial suburb, thanks in part to a boom in manufacturing activity.

Like many towns in the Boston area, late-19th century industrialization changed the face of Cambridgeport. Street railway service, the elimination of bridge tolls, and the advent of the steam railroad all had an impact on industrial growth. With an abundance of cheap land and immigrant labor, along with better transportation, Cambridgeport became a popular destination for large industrial firms and skilled laborers. A population boom soon followed, adding an average of 10,000 new residents every ten years after 1855.

By the early 1900s, there were several large soap factories in the vicinity, including the Davis Soap Works and the Lever Brothers factory on Broadway. With other manufacturers taking hold nearby, such as iron foundries, bridge builders, and manufacturers of rubber products, furniture, and piano making, industrial activity flourished along the Grand Junction RR tracks.

The area saw substantial change in the early to mid-20th century. The automobile and subway re-shaped residential patterns in Cambridgeport, while the trucking industry replaced the need for railroad service and helped establish more centralized commercial development. Industrial output and manufacturing employment decreased considerably. Changes in land use impacted the area as well. The construction of public housing projects in the 1930s and 1940s created two superblocks south of Broadway, in an attempt to clear slums and create modern housing for low-income families; another large project, Roosevelt Towers, was built in 1950 north of Cambridge Street on the site of a distillery.

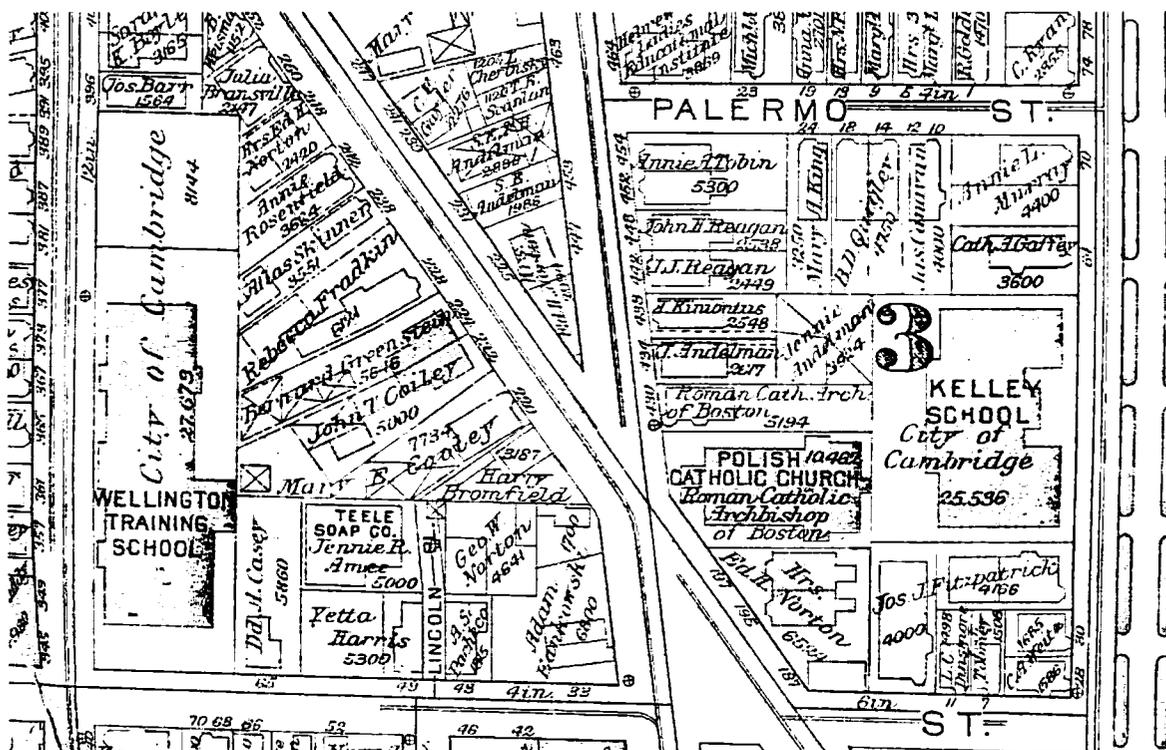
Much of northern and eastern Cambridgeport was considered a blighted area after World War II, and with the passage of the Housing Act of 1949 Federal funds became available for redevelopment. The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) successfully worked with M.I.T. to construct Tech Square on Main Street beginning in 1957, but the proposed Donnelly Field Urban Renewal Area was intensely controversial. As proposed by the CRA, the project would have cleared seven acres of land containing several junkyards and garages (but also 93 two- and three-family houses), displaced over 300 families (15% of the area's population), and resulted in the construction of 142 units of moderate-income apartments. The project was perceived as favoring Irish-American residents over the Lithuanian community, and the proposal was finally defeated by the City Council in 1963.

Uncertainty over the route of the proposed Inner Belt circumferential highway inhibited municipal planning and private investment in eastern Cambridgeport from 1948 until 1972. Meanwhile, in 1968 the City Council accepted a Federal grant to establish a Model Cities program controlled by neighborhood residents. The next five years featured a highly contentious local public process to allocate funds among competing community organizations that was exacerbated by city-wide controversies over institutional expansion, rising rents, and declining employment opportunities. One major accomplishment, however, was the Wellington-Harrington Development Corporation's construction of nineteen two- and four-family, two-story houses between Windsor and Columbia streets, along with street and sidewalk improvements throughout the area.

B. History of the Parcel and Surroundings

The area around Windsor and Webster streets was originally a remote part of mainland Cambridge that was associated with a farm established by Atherton Haugh in 1635 and consolidated by Spencer Phipps beginning in 1706. The area was separated from East Cambridge by a tidal creek and a belt of salt marshes that flooded during spring tides and northeast storms; the adjoining upland was inundated with salt water during a storm in 1815. There were no roads linking the area to the rest of Cambridge until the early 19th century.

With the opening of the West Boston (Longfellow) Bridge in 1793, land in northeastern Cambridgeport became more valuable. Andrew Craigie's purchases of 1795-1807 included not only all of the upland of East Cambridge but also broad tracts of land inland as far as today's Inman Square. This area was among those he transferred to the Lechmere Point Corporation in 1810, and it was still undeveloped when the company dissolved in 1822.



7. Vicinity of 430-432 Windsor Street, 1916. Bromley Atlas of Cambridge, plate 13.

Webster Avenue, which led to the Longfellow Bridge, opened up the area in 1804, and Cambridge Street, which led to the Craigie Bridge, followed in 1809. However, the poor quality of the land – low, badly drained, and infertile – retarded development. Amos Binney, the civilian agent of the Charlestown Navy Yard and one of the largest shareholders in the Lechmere Point Corp., acquired the company's tracts south of Cambridge Street. Totalling about 30 acres, the land was occupied only by a distillery when Binney died in 1833, and was not subdivided by his estate until 1888.

While Binney's executors were laying out streets and house lots, reformers were organizing a parks movement in Cambridge. In 1892, the City Council established a municipal parks commission and took by eminent domain all of the Charles River waterfront and twelve of Binney's 30 acres for park purposes. The estate retained the land between Portland and Berkshire streets and Willow and Windsor streets, where the executors sold house lots to builders who put up three deckers and apartment houses as speculative investments. By 1900, almost all of these lots were occupied, with the conspicuous exception of the future church property.

Edward H. Norton, a retired soap manufacturer who lived next to his factory at the south corner of Windsor Street and Webster Avenue, acquired the lot that would be occupied by the Immaculate Conception Church from the Binney estate. Norton's business had been established by his father early in the 19th century, but by the 1890s the small soap boiling and rendering plants that dotted this part of Cambridge were no longer viable and the land was more valuable for housing Cambridge's burgeoning immigrant population. Norton had put up some tenements for his workers as early as 1857, but began developing real estate in earnest in 1884 with a four-family, two story house on Webster Avenue. More houses followed in 1885, 1889, 1891, and 1892, as well as a store in 1891; all were clustered around the Windsor-Webster-Lincoln streets intersection, and several were built on the grounds of the old soap factory. The future Immaculate Conception lot remained vacant until Norton sold it to the Archdiocese of Boston in 1910. The Archdiocese sold the property to Just A Start Corporation in 2007.

IV. Significance of the Property

A. Historical Significance

The Immaculate Conception Church symbolizes the ascendancy of the Lithuanian immigrant community in Cambridge. People of Lithuanian descent began to emigrate from the Russian Empire in significant numbers in the 1890s. Immigrants to the Boston area first settled in South Boston, but some moved to Cambridgeport late in the 1890s. Thereafter the community grew rapidly, fed by relocations from Boston as well as by direct immigration. The earliest arrivals settled along Main Street, in the Rogers Block and adjoining streets, although South Boston remained the social center. By 1910 there were about 1,200 Lithuanian-Americans living in Cambridge, and the community began to expand northward along Windsor Street.

Members of the Lithuanian community began to organize a church within a very few years of their arrival. In 1910, the *Cambridge Chronicle* announced that the foundations had been completed for a new "Polish" church on Windsor Street with a seating capacity of 400:

The style will be Mission, or similar to St. John's Church in North Cambridge. The construction will be of brick, with concrete trimmings and tile roof. The basement will include four rooms for a parochial school. (*Cambridge Chronicle*, July 9, 1910)



8. Immaculate Conception Parish School. after 1926. Rudy Belliard collection

Four months later, *The Pilot* described the laying of the cornerstone. About 1,000 people (“about half of whom were Lithuanian”) attended, forming on Cambridge Street and marching to the site, where an auxiliary bishop was assisted by five Lithuanian priests from congregations around New England (Oct. 29, 1910). Although the building still had no roof, the priest, Fr. Joseph Krasnickas, hoped to have it completed by Christmas. However, the church was not finished until 1913, when it was dedicated on Memorial Day. It was said to be “the first Lithuanian Catholic church in the state and the second in the country,” although this cannot be independently verified (*Cambridge Chronicle*, June 7, 1913). Two years later, Fr. Krasnickas purchased a three-decker next door for a rectory.



9. Testimonial dinner in honor of Fr. Simeon Saulenas, August 10, 1969. Rudy Belliard collection

Although not all Lithuanians worshipped at Immaculate Conception, it became a cultural center for the immigrant community and a symbol of its identity in America. Fr. Krasnickas’s as-

sistant, Fr. Francis Juskaitis, was appointed pastor in 1922 and served until 1961. Fr. Juskaitis organized a choir in 1918, and in 1926 opened the first Lithuanian school in the Boston archdiocese. Growth of the Lithuanian community was hampered by restrictive immigration statutes beginning in the 1920s, and by the government of the USSR. The congregation received several DP (displaced person) families after WWII, but gradually lost communicants. In 1996, Cardinal Law, the Archbishop of Boston, informed the last pastor, Fr. Simeon Saulenas, that the church would be closed as a separate parish upon his retirement; this occurred in 2006. Parish statistics for 2003 reported 30 baptisms, but 47 funerals.

The Just A Start Corporation purchased the church and rectory from the Archdiocese in August 2007. The closing and sale were met with strong objections and resentment by the community. When St. Peter's Church in South Boston closed in 2004, it meant "the loss of religious rituals rooted in Lithuanian culture;" parishioners recalled memories of churches closing under Soviet occupation (*Boston Globe*, May 31 and December 19, 2004). The Planning Board's 2007 decision to allow conversion of the buildings to accommodate 14 affordable housing units was appealed to the courts after the City Council declined to delay affordable housing construction.

B. Architectural Significance

The Immaculate Conception Church was designed by the prominent Boston firm of Maginnis & Walsh. It is significant as an important example of the Mission Style applied to a church building, but also for the (possibly unintended) associations of this style with the Brick Gothic churches on the Baltic Region.

The Archdiocese of Boston built nineteen churches in the City of Boston alone in the period 1890-1915, and at least as many more in outlying communities. Several architectural firms shared this work, most notably Edward T.P. Graham and Maginnis & Walsh. The latter firm was a partnership of Charles D. Maginnis (1867-1955), a native of Ireland who apprenticed with Edmund Wheelwright in Boston, and Timothy Walsh (1868-1934), a Cambridge native who worked for the Boston firm of Peabody & Stearns. The firm designed more than 115 ecclesiastical buildings for Roman Catholic dioceses all over the United States; their best known work, the Gothic Revival campus buildings of Boston College begun in 1909, won a gold medal from the American Institute of Architects. Their most prominent work in Cambridge is St. John's Church (1904) at 2270 Massachusetts Avenue.

The Mission Style as represented at the Immaculate Conception Church is a skillful amalgam of the California Mission and Arts and Crafts movements in architecture. The design bears a strong resemblance to some prominent features of traditional Lithuanian church architecture, which made it an apt choice for this application.

According to one source, the Mission Style

originated in southern California and was the first style to diffuse eastward *from* the West. The style was considered the "California counterpart" to the Georgian-inspired Colonial Revival popular in Northeast. ... The style includes Mission-shaped dormers and/or roof parapet; wide, overhanging eaves, exposed rafters, red-tiled roof, stucco walls, arched windows/doors on ground level.

(<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~twp/architecture/mission/>)

The Arts and Crafts Movement emphasized coarse textures and exposed construction details. In the hands of a skilled architect, these elements could be given a wide range of expression.

For example, St. Patrick's Church nearby on Berkshire Street, designed in 1909 by the firm of Clough & Wardner, is another expression of the Mission Style, although that building has a stucco exterior. Red brick is not usually associated with the Mission Style in other parts of the country, but was appropriate to the New England setting.

The process of assigning styles to churches in the expansionary days of the Boston Archdiocese is not well understood. There seems to have been little understanding or attention given to the appropriateness of a style to the national group for whom the church was intended; St. Patrick's is clearly an exercise in Spanish Mission Revival, which seems incongruous for an Irish-American congregation. However, the Immaculate Conception Church, by happenstance or intention, echoes certain themes in medieval Lithuanian architecture, which were often Brick Gothic in style.



10. Vytautas' the Great Church of the Accession of The Holy Virgin Mary. Kaunas. Lithuania. Ca. 1400

The Brick Gothic style arose in Hanseatic League cities in the 12th century. The shores of the Baltic Sea lack sources of building stone but are rich in clay, so many major public buildings and churches were built of red brick and roofed with red clay tiles. Styles that originated in ashlar masonry in Western Europe, including the Romanesque and the Gothic, were executed in brick in this region. It is likely that the building committee of the church, if offered a choice of styles, chose the American Mission Style as the closest approximation of the Baltic brick churches of their homeland.

The rectory at 430 Windsor Street was constructed in 1972, replacing a three-decker which had previously served this purpose. It was designed by Eugen Manomaitis (1909-1995) of West Roxbury. Mr. Manomaitis arrived in the U.S. from Europe in 1948 and became a citizen in 1959. His design for the rectory included decorative cresting at the peak of the gable, but has few other distinguishing features.

V. Relationship to Criteria

The enabling ordinance for landmarks states:

The Historical Commission by majority vote may recommend for designation as a landmark any property within the City being or containing a place, structure, feature or object which it determines to be either (1) importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, aesthetic, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth or (2) historically or architecturally significant (in terms of its period, style, method of construction or association with a famous architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of structures . . . (Cambridge City Code, Article III, Chapter 2.78.180a)

The church and rectory are significant under Criterion 1 as the only remaining architectural expression of Lithuanian immigration in Cambridge. The church is also significant under Criterion 2 for its design and its associations with Maginnis & Walsh, one of the most prominent firms associated with Roman Catholic church architecture in New England.

VI. Recommendations

The purpose of landmark designation is contained in the enabling ordinance, which is to:

preserve, conserve and protect the beauty and heritage of the City and to improve the quality of its environment through identification, conservation and maintenance of . . . sites and structures which constitute or reflect distinctive features of the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City; to resist and restrain environmental influences adverse to this purpose; [and] to foster appropriate use and wider public knowledge and appreciation of such . . . structures . . . (Cambridge City Code, Article III, Chapter 2.78.140)

A. Preservation Options

Landmark designation or donation of a preservation restriction are the only options for the permanent long-term protection and preservation of the Immaculate Conception Church and Rectory. The buildings are not designated at the local, state, or federal level, nor are they within the boundaries of a local, state, or national historic district. There are no plans for historic district or neighborhood conservation district studies in the vicinity of the property.

B. Staff Recommendation

The staff recommends that the Commission 1) find that the Immaculate Conception Church and Rectory meet the criteria for landmark designation and 2) vote to recommend that the City Council designate the property as a protected landmark under Article III, Chapter 2.78.

VII. Standards and Criteria

Under Article III, the Historical Commission is charged with reviewing any construction, demolition or alteration that affects the exterior architectural features (other than color) of a designated landmark. This report describes the exterior architectural features that are among the characteristics that led to consideration of the property as a landmark. Except as the order designating or amending the landmark may otherwise provide, the exterior architectural features described in this report should be preserved and/or enhanced in any proposed alteration or construction that affects those features of the landmark. The standards following in paragraphs A

and B of this section provide specific guidelines for the treatment of the landmark described in this report.

A. General Standards and Criteria

Subject to the review and approval of exterior architectural features under the terms of this report, the following standards shall apply:

1. Significant historic and architectural features of the landmark shall be preserved.
2. Changes and additions to the landmark, which have taken place over time, are evidence of the history of the property and the neighborhood. These changes to the property may have acquired significance in their own right and, if so, that significance should be recognized and respected.
3. Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced. When replacement of architectural features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
4. New materials should, whenever possible, match the material being replaced in physical properties, design, color, texture, and appearance. The use of imitation replacement materials is discouraged.
5. Surface cleaning of a landmark shall be done by the gentlest possible means. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that damage exterior architectural features shall not be used.
6. Additions should not destroy significant exterior architectural features and should not be incongruous to the historic aspects, architectural significance, or distinct character of the landmark, neighborhood, and environment.
7. Additions should be done in such a way that, if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the landmark would not be impaired.

B. Suggested Review Guidelines for Future Alterations

During the interim protection period, while the commission was studying the potential landmark designation, the Just A Start Corporation applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations to the church and rectory that were associated with their plan to convert the buildings for affordable housing. The Commission followed the general principles listed above to protect the exterior of the church to the greatest extent possible, consistent with the proposed use (see Appendix, Certificate of Appropriateness in Case 2094). The plans approved by the Commission included restoration of existing masonry, roof tiles, and windows (except the steel windows in the sanctuary, from which the stained glass panels had been removed); installation of a garage door opening and roof vents; and removal of two religious symbols, the crosses on the tower and above the entry. The bas-relief of the Virgin above the entry is to remain. The Commission also approved window and door alterations to the rectory. This certificate remains in effect pending resolution of court proceedings.

The Commission would review future applications for Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship or Nonapplicability according to the same standards.

VIII. Proposed Order Designating the Immaculate Conception Church and Rectory as Protected Landmarks

ORDERED:

That the Immaculate Conception Church and Rectory at 430-432 Windsor Street be designated as a protected landmark pursuant to Chapter 2.78, Article III, Section 2.78.180 of the Code of the City of Cambridge, as recommended by vote of the Cambridge Historical Commission on April 2, 2009. The premises so designated are defined as parcels 86 and 119 of assessor's map 80 and are recorded in book 49975, page 508, of the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds.

This designation is justified by the important architectural and historical associations the church embodies as a rare example of the Mission Style, constructed in 1910-1913, and for its associations with the Lithuanian immigrant community in the 20th century. The church is historically and architecturally significant in terms of its period, style and method of construction. The rectory is significant as an associated part of the church complex.

The effect of this designation shall be that review by the Cambridge Historical Commission and the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship or Non-Applicability shall be required before any construction activity can take place within the designated area or any action can be taken affecting the appearance of the buildings at 430-432 Windsor Street that would in either case be visible from a public way. The Commission shall not consider and shall have no jurisdiction over interior features or improvements, nor over any portion of the buildings not visible from a public way. The Commission shall not make any recommendation or requirement except for the purposes of preventing alterations that would appear to be incongruous with the historical aspects or other architectural characteristics of the building.

In making determinations, the Commission shall be guided by the terms of the landmark designation report, and by Section VII, Standards and Criteria, and by the applicable sections of Chapter 2.78, Article III, of the Cambridge Municipal Code.

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- , Boston Archdiocese folder
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- , Cambridgeport: Model Cities folder
- , Cambridgeport: Urban Renewal folder
- , Case 2094 folder
- , Survey files for 430-432 Windsor Street
- , Lithuanians in Cambridge folder
- City of Cambridge building permits
- Massachusetts Historical Commission survey form
- Middlesex South Registry of Deeds, records for 430-432 Windsor Street.

Appendix A: Certificate of Appropriateness, Case 2094**CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

831 Massachusetts Avenue, 2nd Fl., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
 Telephone: 617 349 4683 Fax: 617 349 3116 TTY: 617 349 6112
 E-mail: histcomm@cambridgema.gov URL: <http://www.cambridgema.gov/Historic>

William B. King, *Chair*, Bruce A. Irving, *Vice Chair*, Charles M. Sullivan, *Executive Director*
 Jacob D. Albert, M. Wyllis Bibbins, Robert G. Crocker, Frank Shirley, Jo M. Solet, *Members*
 Sharyn Page Berg, Chandra Harrington, *Alternates*

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Property: 424-430 Windsor Street
 Applicant: Just-A-Start Corporation
 Attention: Beatriz Gomez
 Just-A-Start Corporation
 432 Columbia Street, #12
 Cambridge, MA 02141-0003
 Mark Boyes-Watson
 Boyes Watson Architects
 30 Bow Street
 Somerville, MA 02143

The Cambridge Historical Commission hereby certifies, pursuant to the Massachusetts Historic Districts Act (MGL Ch. 40C) and the Cambridge Historical Buildings and Landmarks Ordinance (Cambridge City Code, Ch. 2.78), that the work described below is not incongruous to the historic aspects or architectural character of the building or district:

- I. Alter paving and fencing and install plantings as described in the sheet A-101 site plan by Boyes Watson Architects titled, "Proposed Site Plan" and dated December 18, 2007 (large drawing set stamped received on December 31, 2007), with the exception of the proposed installation of air conditioning condensers, which were denied as part of the current application.
- II. Alter the exterior of the former church building as described on the sheet A-400 and A-401 elevation drawings by Boyes Watson Architects titled, "#424 - Existing/Proposed Elevations," and dated December 18, 2007 (large drawing set stamped received on December 31, 2007) which includes:
 1. Restore the front doors.
 2. Remove the covered passage to the left side door and restore the existing original door.

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 Certificate of Appropriateness, page 2

3. Remove and replace the steel windows in the sanctuary.
4. Restore all the existing wood windows, except as noted on the drawings referenced above.
5. Alter select window openings as indicated in the drawings referenced above.
6. Install a garage door on the north elevation of the church building and intake and exhaust louvers on the north and south elevations.
7. Install a garage egress door on the south elevation.
8. Install vents on the roof.
9. Restore the front iron fence and remove the gate.
10. Remove the cross above the entry, leaving the round base.
11. Remove the cross on the tower and replace it with a spire.
12. Retain the sculpture panel over the entrance and paint it a single color to match the stone masonry.

III. Alter the exterior of the former rectory as indicated on the sheet A-410 elevation drawings by Boyes Watson Architects titled, "#430 - Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations," dated November 1, 2007 which includes:

1. Remove the chimney.
2. Alter and add select window openings as indicated on the drawings referenced above.
3. Install two new door openings.
4. Install an accessible ramp at the rear.
5. Retain the decorative panels above the roof at the west gable end.

Approval was granted on the following conditions:

1. That the details of the new sanctuary windows and the garage door be reviewed and approved by the Architects Committee, and
2. That the remaining construction details, including but not limited to masonry restoration and roof penetrations, be reviewed and approved by the staff.

All improvements shall be carried out as shown on the plans and specifications submitted by the applicant, except as modified above. Approved plans and specifications are incorporated by reference into this certificate.

This certificate is granted upon the condition that the work authorized herein is commenced within six months after the date of

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Certificate of Appropriateness, page 2

issue. If the work authorized by this certificate is not commenced within six months after the date of issue, or if such work is suspended in significant part for a period of one year after the time the work is commenced, then this certificate shall expire and be of no further effect; provided that, for cause, one or more extensions of time, for periods not exceeding six months each, may be allowed in writing by the Chair.

Case Number: 2094 Date of Certificate: 1/16/08

Attest: A true and correct copy of decision filed with the offices of the City Clerk and the Cambridge Historical Commission on 1/16/08.

By William B. King, Chair.

Twenty days have elapsed since the filing of this decision.
No appeal has been filed _____. Appeal has been filed _____.
Date _____, City Clerk

Appendix B: Public Testimony, April 2, 2009

**IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
LITHUANIAN CHURCH
1909 - 2009**



**DESERVING A PLACE IN CAMBRIDGE
HISTORY**

**A PRESENTATION TO THE
CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL
COMMITTEE**

The Immaculate Conception Lithuanian Church has a unique place in the history of Cambridge as described herein.

In the late 1800's many Lithuanians fled their homeland which had been forcibly annexed by Czarist Russia. Many including my grandfather did not want to be conscripted into the Russian Army for the mandated 25 year term. He fled when after returning from the Japanese Russian war front and placed in a reserve assignment he was faced with a reactivation to full service once more.

As with many Lithuanians, there was this hunger for freedom, for the basic rights to exist as individuals and they turned their eyes to the United States. Massachusetts and Cambridge became one of the early destination points. The opportunity for employment in East Cambridge industries made places like the Swift meat packing plant, Lever Brothers, Boston Woven Hose, etc. an incentive to reside nearby.

These people were deeply believing Catholics and could not live without their religion, but, not knowing foreign languages, they found it difficult to pray in other churches. Hence, as more Lithuanians came to Cambridge they made attempts to form their own parish and petitioned for permission to do so.

Father Joseph Krasnickas was assigned as the first pastor, and organized this parish in 1909. This new Church was consecrated after the Archbishop Cardinal O'Connell permitted a delegation of over 200 family names to begin their Parish for the Lithuanian immigrants. The second Pastor Father Francis Juskaitis was assigned in 1917 inheriting a debt of \$60,000, when people were earning \$5.00 per week salary. There was a plaque inside the Church containing the names of families who contributed \$100 or more to pay off the debt. Father Juskaitis wrote in Lithuanian – Let their names be always remembered. Pray for them.

The unique architecture included a street level portion of the building built to accommodate an elementary school and it was staffed by an order of Nuns, The Sisters of Jesus Crucified, from Pennsylvania and opened in 1926. Many of the immigrant Lithuanian families transferred their children into the new school and the first graduating class occurred in 1931. In subsequent years the academic excellence of student graduates coupled with the earnings their families attained from local employment saw many matriculating to our local universities like Harvard and MIT.

A second wave of Lithuanian immigrants arrived post World War II. These new arrivals from Lithuania came by way of bombed out cities and displaced persons camps in Germany after the war. The parish continued to flourish as the new arrivals and the second generation of local Lithuanians populated the school and participated in Parish activities.

One of the then Monsignor Juskaitis' curates, Father Anthony Baltrushunas succeeded him as Pastor. Father Anthony, as he was known to most of us refurbished the Church and its school. His greatest contribution as a Priest was made here in Cambridge by his involvement in community action through the Wellington – Harrington Association.

Father Anthony dared to speak out in the City Council chamber for the rights of these citizens for a change in the neighborhood. We saw the eventual overturning of the zoning changes that were there from the depression days. The large garage for trucks across from the Church went down. The Modern Tire Company vulcanizing operation ceased, its chimneys smoked no more, and the junk yard across the street on Webster Avenue moved elsewhere. The neighboring two story factory was demolished to make way for a decent roadway. The continuing changeover in this neighborhood into a city village, was indeed a breath of fresh air, a joy to behold with town house style housing, gardens and appropriate open spacing.

As the younger parishioners and their families sought the American dream of home ownership and the suburban environment, they moved away and the parish membership declined. While the Parish finances enabled it to continue serving its remaining Lithuanian parishioners and other neighbors, the Archdiocese embarked on a program of consolidating Churches. As with many other small ethnic related parishes within the Archdiocese, Immaculate Conception was closed and offered for sale.

The Church is now faced with another zoning change, not necessarily for the better, that will now threaten its very existence. It would be a shame if its century of existence were to go without some recognition of its place in the City's history.

Considering its long history, Immaculate Conception Church richly deserves recognition and a place as one of the city's historical sites. It would be a shame to have this piece of history and heritage disappear from recognition as a historical site.

Submitted by: A former parishioner
and former Cambridge resident

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