

Christ Our Shepherd Church, 801 North Carolina Avenue, SE

By Beth Purcell

June 2, 2015

History of the church building

The North Carolina Avenue Methodist Protestant Church, founded in 1871, built a frame church at 801 North Carolina Avenue in the 1870s. The congregation grew and by 1896, the original building was too small. The church engaged architects Stutz & Pease to design a new church, on the same site, at an estimated cost of \$25,000. The new church would be brick, clad in rock-faced Potomac blue stone, with Indiana limestone trim. The arcade entrance with clustered columns lead to a vestibule. The tower had a Richardsonian Romanesque lantern, a green slate roof, with a metal turret, cresting, and finial at each corner. The church's design is one of many built in the 1880s-1890s inspired by Henry Hobson Richardson's churches, including his Trinity Church in Boston (1872-1877), image attached.

The interior plans evolved. In 1896, the plans called for a first story to house the Sunday school, infants' school room, church office, pantry, and lavatory, and on the second story the main auditorium, gallery and parlor separated by a moveable partition (sometimes called an Akron plan, allowing flexible division of space in a church auditorium) designed to seat 700 people. In 1897, the plans changed. On the first story was the main auditorium (seating 550) and Sunday school (seating 600), (probably also an Akron plan) and on the second story were galleries on the north and west side, and the pulpit and organ on the south side. In both plans, there was kitchen in the basement. In the intervening years, the design of the interior was altered. The church was dedicated in 1901.¹

Louis F. Stutz (active 1878-1903, d. 1903/1904) and Frank W. Pease (active 1876-1910) worked for much of their careers as architects for the federal government, including the Treasury Department, where they probably met. They practiced as Stutz and Pease between 1895 and 1898. Stutz was a member of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Washington as of 1876, which would have provided him an introduction to Lutheran congregations.² The firm got off to a strong start and obtained commissions for a number of religious buildings. In 1896, Stutz & Pease designed the Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church at 13th and Corcoran Streets, NW and won a competition to design the new synagogue for the Washington Hebrew Congregation. The next year they designed the Keller Memorial Lutheran Church at 907 Maryland Avenue, NE, and won a competition against four other architects to design the First Evangelical Lutheran Church,

¹ "Outgrown Their Old Church," *Washington Post*, 8 June 1896, 4. "A New Church Edifice," *Washington Post*, 28 Aug. 1896, 7. "Laid With Masonic Rites," *Washington Post*, 26 Feb. 1897, 10. "New Church Dedicated," *Washington Post*, 7 Jan. 1901, 10. Jeanne Halgren Kilde, *When Church Became Theatre: The Transformation of Evangelical Architecture and Worship in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2002, 176-179).

² "Loyal to Their Faith," *Washington Post* 2 Aug. 1902, 10, indicating that L.F. Stutz was an officer in the congregation in 1876.

in Butler, Penn. (1897, estimated cost: \$40,000).³ An 1896 newspaper article described the firm as "well known architects of this city." Pease was interviewed on siting and landscaping houses. Stutz was a member of the American Institute of Architects.⁴

Christ Our Shepherd Church acquired the building in 1998.⁵

³ Pamela Scott, *A Directory of Distinct of Columbia Architects 1822-1960* (Washington, D.C., 1999, 150, 189). Stutz was a member of the American Institute of Architects between 1896 and 1902. www.aia.org; Internet; accessed 5 Mar. 2015. "Will of Louis F. Stutz," *Washington Post*, 9 Jan. 1904, 12. "The New Hebrew Temple," *Washington Post*, 12 Dec. 1896, 7. "The Churches," *Washington Evening Star*, 27 Feb. 1897, 15. "Real Estate Market," *Washington Post*, 11 Apr. 1897, 14. Email from Pat Collins, Executive Directory, Butler County Historical Society, 16 Mar. 2015. In 1898, Stutz and Pease also designed an addition to the Abner and Drury Brewery at 23rd and F Streets, NW. "Enlargement of Brewery Plant," *Washington Post*, 6 Feb. 1898, 17. Stutz's work on Capitol Hill included a large brick house for Mrs. Barbara T. Juenemann, at 510 C Street, NE, north of Stanton Park (1888). *Boyd's City Directory 1900-1901*. "More Buildings Going Up," *Washington Post*, 24 June 1888, 5.

⁴ "The New Hebrew Temple," *Washington Post*, 12 Dec. 1896, 7. "Buildings Lack Art," *Washington Post*, 1 Nov. 1896, 10. www.aia.org; Internet; accessed 5 Mar. 2015.

⁵ DC Real Property Tax records.