

Village of Thomaston

From: Olivia Pinsley <opinsley@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 29, 2024 11:55 AM
To: Village of Thomaston
Subject: Landmark Request

Categories: Landmark 2024

Pursuant to Section 120 of the Village of Thomaston Village Code, I request that the below property be designated as a landmark:

Name: Korean United Methodist Church of Great Neck
Owner: Trustees of Korean United Methodist Church of New York
Address: 715 Northern Boulevard
Built: c. 1872
Architect: Mundell & Teckritz
Alterations: Church building rebuilt in 1951 to a design by Thomas M. Bell

Great Neck's Korean United Methodist Church traces its roots to the efforts of Joseph Spinney, an affluent export merchant who lived on East Shore Road. Spinney, as a local resident, spurned the effort to create the first Methodist-Episcopal church on the Great Neck Peninsula. He purchased a portion of the property of Benjamin Wood at the top of North Hempstead Turnpike and had Mundell & Teckritz of Brooklyn design a worshipping hall which was built by J. S. Carpenter of Great Neck in the Victorian Revival style at a cost of \$21,000. He donated the funds for the church, parish house, and parsonage for the congregation. Spinney would remain a principal benefactor of the church, underwriting their major events and bequeathing \$3,000 in his will to the group.

Under the direction of John Pilkington, there were 50 active members. A decade later, as the congregation grew with the increased populations of North Hempstead, a parish hall was also built with great fanfare in 1881. Local residents like the Skidmore and Warren families contributed, as well as Bloodgood Cutter who wrote a poem just for the occasion. The Sunday school inside of the parish house reached a membership of 175 people in its first year. In 1892, an organ was installed through the efforts of Ethel Henderson Newbold. Their benefactors included the Barnes, Woolsey, Treadwell, and Mason families of significant Great Neck local acclaim.

Pilkington was succeeded by William C. Bennett as Minister of the Great Neck Methodist Episcopal Church. The ministry undertook an ambitious expansion plan in 1945 for \$100,000 to remodel the sanctuary, create a choir room, and establish a minister's study. They also held a nursery with multiple classrooms for youth religious instruction. In 1948, tragedy struck when the main church hall was destroyed by a fire caused by a short circuit from an oil burner. At the time, it was the second-oldest church in Great Neck.

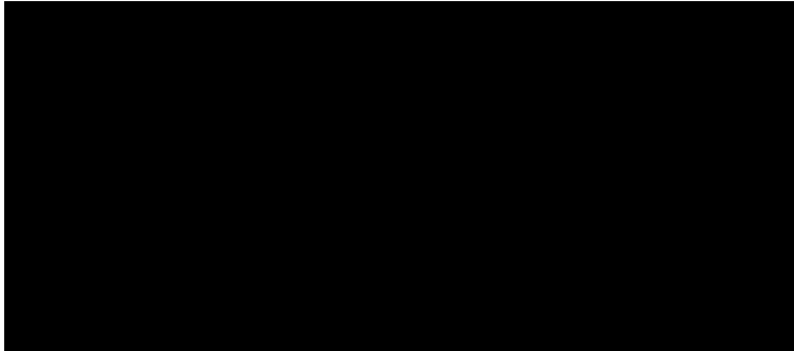
A replacement church hall was designed in 1951 by Thomas M. Bell who had his offices at 101 Park Avenue in New York City. It was purposely deferential to the existing parish house next door and the earlier church which was lost. It is likely that the parishioners and clergy desired a new building which invoked their original structure that had been lost. The spire, now in a verdigris blue, echoes that of the original church.

The architect of the second church building, Thomas M. Bell, was known for ecclesiastical work with the Episcopal and Methodist denominations. He spent most of his career in the architectural office of Hobart Upjohn who was the grandson of famed architect Richard Upjohn, who specialized in religious buildings. After Upjohn retired in the 1940's as consulting architect for the eminent Trinity Church of New York City, Bell began to rise in prominence within the architectural field as a go-to practitioner for any new construction or alteration of religious buildings. Some of his work in New York City included 2 Oliver Street, 399 Greenwich Street, St. Luke's in the Fields School, St. Thomas

Church Choir School, and numerous restoration campaigns for Trinity Church in Lower Manhattan. Outside of his practice, Bell was a member of the Civilian Defense Committee of the New York State Association of Architects.

Today, the Korean Methodist Church remains one of Thomaston's most prominent and significant local sites of note. The parish hall was restored in 2012 by Shung Ho Shin Architect and was subsequently recognized by the Great Neck Historical Society as an exemplary construction project. It remains the last remaining 19th century building along Northern Blvd. in Great Neck. Both the church hall and parish hall deserve recognition for the contribution to the development of religious life in Thomaston and their designs by significant regional architects.

Here is a link to the Biography of the architects, Mundell & Teckritz which was prepared by Andrew Cronson: [Biography of Mundell & Teckritz](#)



Biography of Mundell & Teckritz

Here is a link to Photos and other relevant documents about the property:
[Korean Methodist Church - Google Drive](#)

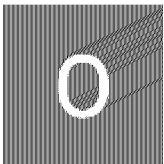


Korean Methodist Church - Google Drive

Thank you for considering this request to designate the Korean United Methodist Church of Great Neck as a Village of Thomaston Landmark.

Olivia Pinsley

2 Attachments • Scanned by Gmail



Great!

Got it.

Very well said.