

Landmarks Preservation Commission
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LP-0162

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD, 228 North 12th Street, Borough of Brooklyn. Begun 1916, completed 1921, architect Louis Allmendinger.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 2292, Lot 6.

On February 8, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Transfiguration of Our Lord and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 63). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. One witness spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. In a letter to the Commission, the Very Rev. Igor Tkachuk, Rector of the Cathedral, said, "This, of course, is a great honor for us and we are certainly proud to have been so designated."

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Monumental in scale and impressive in appearance, the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Transfiguration of Our Lord is designed in the Byzantine style of Russia, with a strong Renaissance flavor. The onion-shaped domes, with which it is crowned, are particularly characteristic of that style. This striking example of derivative ecclesiastical architecture of the early twentieth century presents a dramatic and colorful picture.

The plan of the church is in the form of the Greek cross with short arms on each side. The filling in of the corner angles makes the building almost square. Above the roof, at each of the four corners, are octagonal belfries surmounted by copper domes with Russian crosses. Rising from the square central crossing is a drum serving as a clerestory. Above this an enormous onion-shaped, copper-covered dome, surmounted by a large Russian cross, dominates the church.

The exterior is of yellow brick combined with a minimum of stone trim. Window and door openings are predominately round-arched with brick coursing forming the arches. At the front a flight of steps leads to arched doorways. Centered in the gable wall above them is a large arched window. A wide cornice follows the rake of the central gable and returns on itself at the ends to form caps for paneled brick pilasters. The same cornice follows the contours of the main roof all around the building.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Transfiguration of Our Lord has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Transfiguration of Our Lord is an outstanding example of an early twentieth century church executed in a Russian version of the Byzantine style, that it is well sited and monumental in scale, and that with its onion-shaped domes silhouetted against the sky, it adds drama and color to the local scene.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 63 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Transfiguration of Our Lord, 228 North 12th Street, Borough of Brooklyn and designates Tax Map Block 2292, Lot 6, Borough of Brooklyn, as its Landmark Site.