

Landmarks Preservation Commission
April 19, 1966, Number 20
LP-0217

CHURCH OF THE HOLY COMMUNION RECTORY, 47 West 20th Street, Borough of Manhattan
1844: architect Richard Upjohn.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 822, Lot 8.

On March 8, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Church of the Holy Communion Rectory and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 41). Four speakers favored designation, including the Rev. Charles A. Elliot, Rector representing the Church, who urged the Commission to designate the Church. The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Gothic Revival Rectory of the Church of the Holy Communion should be considered as a part of the charming group of buildings, including the church of which it forms a part. Yet, taken by itself and considered as a city residence, it is an extremely interesting little building. Although basically symmetrical, it belongs definitely to the Gothic Revival period of architecture. The handsome gable ends, which terminate the high roof so effectively above the front entrance and at the ends of the building are handsomely capped with stones which are returned to the horizontal at the bottom of the gable and are there carried out on projections to lend emphasis to their terminations. The significance of this small Rectory is to be found in the fact that it is one of the finest masonry town houses of the Gothic Revival period in New York City.

Historically, it should be considered notable as the one-time home of the man who originated the plans which resulted in the establishment of one of the great hospitals of New York City. William Muhlenberg was the scholarly Rector who gave birth to the idea of forming St. Luke's Hospital and whose library formed the basis of the Muhlenberg Branch Library, a part of the Public Library system.

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 Church of the Holy Communion Rectory 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 Rectory of the Church of the Holy Communion is one of the outstanding examples of the Gothic Revival town house remaining in New York today and that it was for many years the home of a scholarly and civic minded rector who gave to New York both a hospital and a library.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 8-A 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 Church of the Holy Communion Rectory, 47 West 20th Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 822, Lot 8, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.