Landmark 5

Preservation Commission
July 30, 1966, Number 8
LP-0293

ST. MARTIN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 230 Lenox Avenue, Borough of Manhattan.
Begun 1887, completed 1888; architect William A. Potter.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1720, Lot 67.

On June 14, 1966 the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public
hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the St. Martin's
Episcopal Church and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site.
(Item No. 25). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the
provisions of law. Two witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were
no speakers in opposition to designation. In a letter to the Commission, The
Rev. David Johnson, Rector of the Church, approved designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The beautiful Romanesque Revival Church of St. Martin's can be seen
from many blocks away as its impressive tower rises above the surrounding
house tops. This high tower with its narrow arched openings, is the domi­
nant focal point of the Church and contains one of the finest carillons in
the city. The copper covered pyramidal steeple is adorned at each corner
by simple square pinnacles. At the base of the tower a handsome arched door­
way leads into the Church. This doorway is paired with another about thirty
feet to the east, the two together defining the gabled end wall of the main
dial. This end wall contains three very grand arched windows which are set
above three square headed windows with heavy stone mullions. This is a
cruciform church with two very fine transept galleries.

The Parish House stands between the west end of the church and Lenox
Avenue and serves as a barrier against the noise of the Avenue. This rugged
two story structure with its steep gables is surfaced with the same rough
rock-faced sand stone blocks and smooth faced stone trim as the Church it­
self, and blends harmoniously with it. The juxtaposition of physical ele­
ments in these two buildings creates a rather unusual plan. An exceedingly
picturesque exterior effect is produced by the massing of gables, roofs,
windows, and other architectural features.

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 St. Martin's Episcopal Church 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, St.
Martin's Episcopal Church is one of the finest Romanesque Revival churches
in Manhattan, that the impressive bell tower contains an outstanding carillon,
that along with the Rectory and Parish House, this ensemble is harmoniously
related in character, style and the quality of its excellent stone masonry
and that its outstanding intrinsic architectural merit enhances the entire
neighborhood and the City.

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
St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 230 Lenox Avenue, Borough of Manhattan and
designates Tax Map Block 1720, Lot 67, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark
Site.