

Landmarks Preservation Commission
July 19, 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 dominant 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 doorway 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 aisle. 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 itself, and blends harmoniously with it. The juxtaposition of physical elements 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.