

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
March 8, 1994; Designation List 257  
LP-1844

**(Former) ST. PAUL'S GERMAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH (later 12th Church of Christ, Scientist; now Greater Metropolitan Baptist Church);** 147-149 West 123rd Street, Manhattan.  
Built 1897-98; architects, Schneider & Herter.  
Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1908, Lot 9.

On July 15, 1991, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church (now Greater Metropolitan Baptist Church) and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 11). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Eight speakers were in favor of the designation of this and other items on the calendar at the hearing, but urged the Commission to continue its work in Harlem. A representative of the church has written to the Commission in favor of designation.

## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### Summary

An embodiment of the cultural life of Harlem during the past century, from its period of great urbanization through its physical and demographic changes, the (former) St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church was constructed in 1897-98 by a German-American congregation and for over fifty years has been occupied by two African-American churches of different denominations. The present building replaced St. Paul's earlier frame church on the same site which had been built in the mid-1860s to serve a community of German immigrants settling in the area. In 1940 the building was purchased by the 12th Church of Christ, Scientist, founded in 1927 as the first African-American congregation of the Christian Science faith in New York City. After a long-time presence by that institution, the building was acquired in 1985 by the Greater Metropolitan Baptist Church, which had separated from one of Harlem's oldest African-American congregations, the Metropolitan Baptist Church (founded in 1915). The church building was designed by Ernest W. Schneider and Henry Herter, architects who established their partnership in New York City in about 1887 and developed a thriving practice in residential and commercial buildings, primarily for clients of German descent. Prior to receiving the commission for St. Paul's, Schneider & Herter had designed at least two other religious buildings of note, the Park East Synagogue on East 67th Street (1889-90, a designated New York City Landmark), and the (former) Congregation Col Israel Arshi on Forsyth Street (1892). Faced in bluish-gray Vermont marble, the church building is a distinguished example of late nineteenth-century neo-Gothic church design. The symmetrical tripartite facade, featuring projecting corner towers with prominent spires, is enriched with gabled arches, lancet windows, finials, and an impressive rose window of leaded opalescent glass with jewel work. After nearly a century of use, the church's grandeur and architectural integrity are very much apparent.

### The History of Harlem, 1658-1920s<sup>1</sup>

Harlem, originally called Nieuw Haarlem, takes its name from the Dutch city of Haarlem. The first permanent non-native settlement in Manhattan's northern region, the village was established in 1658 by Gov. Peter Stuyvesant about ten miles north of New Amsterdam along the "Harlem Road" (Boston Post Road), a Lenape Indian trail widened by the enslaved black workers of the Dutch West India Company. Stuyvesant had ordered the Nieuw Haarlem community of farmers, merchants and servants to live close together as a protection from Indian attack. Following the English takeover in 1664, the Harlem village ranked behind New York (formerly New Amsterdam) as the second largest European immigrant community on Manhattan Island. From the colonial period through the nineteenth century the distance from lower Manhattan to Harlem -- a three- to four-hour journey by horse-drawn carriage -- shaped the region's development and prosperity as a farming community of large estates, owned by some of New York's early wealthy families and labored upon by the city's black population.

Harlem suffered economic decline in the 1830s when many of the great farms failed and estates were sold at public auction. The area attracted those who sought cheap property and housing, including speculators and many poor immigrants who made homes in scattered shantytowns. The New York & Harlem Railroad was completed in 1837, but at first service was poor and unreliable.<sup>2</sup> Residential development in Harlem proceeded at a slow pace.

As the population of New York increased after the Civil War, development spread more rapidly. Immigrant Germans, Jews, Irish and Italians became the major groups to settle in Harlem. By 1881 three lines of the elevated railroad along Second, Third and Eighth Avenues, opened new neighborhoods. In 1885, the introduction of electric cable car service on Amsterdam Avenue and along 125th Street made Harlem even more accessible. The Harlem Opera House was inaugurated in 1889 and new buildings were constructed, lining the newly paved avenues and streets. Elegant homes, such as the King Model Houses built in 1891 along 138th and 139th Streets (later known as Striver's Row, located in the St. Nicholas Historic District), helped establish Harlem as a fashionable community.

The character of Harlem again changed dramatically during the early years of the twentieth century. A proposed subway route to Harlem in the late 1890s ignited a new round of real estate speculation, leading to highly inflated market values. Many new residential buildings were constructed and, ultimately, the area was overbuilt; excessive vacancies forced a collapse in the Harlem real estate market prior to the completion of the subway. Taking advantage of the deflated real estate market was Philip Payton, a black realtor who founded the Afro-

American Realty Company in 1904. Promoting easy access to Harlem via the new West Side subway (I.R.T.) to 145th Street, Payton negotiated leases on white-owned properties and rented them to African-Americans. Despite the fact that they were charged higher rents than were whites, New York's black middle class -- long denied access to "better" neighborhoods -- seized the opportunity for new comfortable housing and moved uptown. In 1906, the demolition of homes in the Tenderloin District, a predominantly African-American neighborhood near 34th Street, for the construction of Pennsylvania Station uprooted hundreds of families, sending them north to Harlem where decent housing was plentiful and affordable. Soon black immigrants from the Caribbean and the American South joined the migration to Harlem. By 1914, most of the major African-American churches which were once located in lower Manhattan and midtown had moved northward along with their congregations. By 1925, New York City's black population was over 250,000 and most lived in Harlem.

### The History of St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1865-1940

Massive immigration from Europe transformed the composition of New York's rapidly growing population in the second half of the nineteenth century. Famine in Ireland and political unrest, particularly in Germany, in the 1840s and 1850s brought thousands of newcomers, many of them poor, to this city. By the end of the Civil War, New York's German-born community numbered over 100,000.<sup>3</sup> As the residential development of Harlem took root after 1870, the area became a community for many of the foreign-born who had immigrated during past several decades, as well as for those who had been born in downtown Manhattan.<sup>4</sup> Harlem's residents, including the large German population which concentrated in the area around 125th Street, established and built many churches of a variety of denominations in the late nineteenth century.

Among the earliest church congregations to be established in central Harlem, St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized in May, 1864, by a group of German Lutheran immigrants.<sup>5</sup> Within weeks, lots for the construction of a church building were purchased on the north side of West 123rd Street, between Lenox Avenue and Seventh Avenue, for the sum of \$1800.<sup>6</sup> The cornerstone was placed on September 3, 1864, and the church, built at a cost of \$8,325, was finished and dedicated for service to its German-speaking congregation on April 23, 1865. The modest frame church building was characterized by its broad, gabled facade capped by a tall belfry (see illustration). Founded when the region north of 110th Street was still relatively rural, the church assisted many German immigrants as they settled in Harlem.

On January 1, 1866, the Reverend Julius Ehrhart was inducted as pastor of the new church.<sup>7</sup> Serving for thirty years, the Rev. Ehrhart's "great oratorical ability and personal magnetism" contributed to the church's steady growth. As Harlem's German population expanded in the 1890s, St. Paul's organized a "mission church" at 153rd Street, north of the newly urbanizing region. Needing a larger church to accommodate its own growing congregation, the present stone-fronted building was constructed upon the site of the original edifice. The new church was dedicated on March 20, 1898, at a midweek ceremony conducted in German by the presiding minister, the Reverend John A. W. Haas, assisted by former Pastor Ehrhart.<sup>8</sup>

From the late nineteenth century through the first decades of the twentieth century, St. Paul's was both witness to and participant in the many physical and demographic changes taking place in Harlem. Extant church records indicate an internal debate spanning several decades about whether to leave or remain in the changing neighborhood. By the 1920s, many white churches had left Harlem, and for those which remained, the move out of Harlem seemed inevitable. Dwindling white congregations joined together to share facilities. In the mid-1920s, St. Paul's opened up its sanctuary to two other Harlem congregations, one Swedish and one Finnish.<sup>9</sup> The African-American population, which settled first and was largest in the region north of 135th Street, was by then expanding southward to 125th Street. By 1930, a study about racially changing neighborhoods conducted by the New York Federation of Churches concluded that the general demarcation between black and white Harlem at 125th Street was about to be obliterated: "south of 125th Street to 110th Street a rapid change from White to Negro is in progress."<sup>10</sup>

As late as 1932, St. Paul's pastor, the Reverend Frederick H. Bosch, complimented his congregation on its unwillingness to leave the West 123rd Street church. "A few years ago," he wrote, "we were considering the sale of our beautiful church. Thank God we are still here and will remain here until you, the members, decide otherwise." Further advising his congregation against giving up the St. Paul's neighborhood as a "lost cause," the Rev. Bosch added, "this frame of mind, coupled with the prevailing depression, unemployment, hard times, etc., seems to have prompted some to say 'What's the use?' Such an attitude will kill any undertaking...only He [God] can tell us when to quit."<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, the nation's economic difficulties had made life hard for most New Yorkers; however, as the city and nation began to ease back to prosperity, many Depression-era afflictions -- unemployment, poverty and rising crime -- seemed to have taken root in Harlem. In addition, racial unrest intensified. On March 19, 1935, the arrest of a black teenager by white policemen for allegedly stealing

a pocketknife from a Five and Ten Cent store on 125th Street sparked a major riot. Three people were killed and more than 200 injured; property damages were estimated at \$2 million.<sup>12</sup> In the next few years the campaign within the St. Paul's congregation to stay in Harlem began to crumble.

In 1939, the Rev. Bosch and his congregation voted to leave the structure it had occupied since 1898. On October 1st of 1939, the St. Paul's congregation attended its first service at Grace Lutheran Church on West 71st Street, where Bosch's son, Edmund, was pastor.<sup>13</sup>

#### The Design and Construction of St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church<sup>14</sup>

St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church replaced the modest frame church building which had been erected by the congregation in the mid-1860s. Commemorating the demolished building as well as the congregation's German roots, the cornerstone of the present church reads, *Christus Unser Eckstein* [Christ Our Cornerstone]/ 1865 / 1897. Construction was begun in May, 1897, and completed in March of the following year.

Faced in bluish-gray Vermont marble,<sup>15</sup> the symmetrical facade is a distinguished example of neo-Gothic architectural design. A contemporary newspaper account describes the church as "English Gothic,"<sup>16</sup> presumably due in part to the character of its tripartite facade: a gabled central section -- featuring a turret-flanked frontispiece with a single recessed portal and gabled rose window -- is flanked by square end towers containing secondary entrances, several lancet windows, and finial-capped spires. By comparison, French Gothic church facades characteristically display a compartmentalized arrangement of horizontal and vertical elements which unites a tripartite exterior of great height; typically the church is entered through three large portals which are integrally related to this organization.

The Gothic-inspired design and its symmetrical facade reflect trends in New York's religious architecture during the 1890s.<sup>17</sup> Architects began to abandon the formerly popular Romanesque Revival style in favor of the Gothic mode. Several prominent designs of that era are boldly massed and asymmetrical, such as Grace Church Mission Chapel and Dispensary (1894-96, now Immaculate Conception R.C. Church) at 406-414 East 14th Street and Holy Trinity Church (1897-99) at 316 East 88th Street, both by Barney & Chapman.<sup>18</sup> Other contemporary churches, such as St. Paul's, display a more conservative, symmetrical arrangement in keeping with the leading architectural theory of the time which advocated symmetry in church designs for mid-block sites.<sup>19</sup> In buildings with only one unobstructed facade, symmetry -- in lieu of boldly massed designs which addressed corner site conditions -- provided the desired monumentality.

Among the Gothic-inspired details of St. Paul's Church is the impressive stained glass. The rose window of opalescent glass with jewel work was given by the young people of the church and other memorial windows were imported from Munich. The masonry walls, strengthened by brick buttresses, are spanned by steel trusses and beams which in turn support the roof. A sixteen-foot-high basement was built to accommodate classrooms and meeting rooms.<sup>20</sup>

#### Schneider & Herter<sup>21</sup>

The architects of the new church, Ernest W. Schneider and Henry Herter, formed their partnership in New York City around 1887. The firm worked repeatedly for a group of German-Jewish clients with ethnic backgrounds similar to theirs, the most prominent of whom were the real estate developers Jonas Weil and Bernard Mayer. This association led to the firm's commission for the Park East Synagogue, 163 East 67th Street (1889-90, a designated New York City Landmark), which Weil financed and led as president of the congregation. Schneider & Herter also designed Congregation Kol Israel Arshi at 20-22, now 27 Forsyth Street (1892, now owned by the Hellenic Orthodox Community); fashionable residences such as Nos. 854, 856, and 858 West End Avenue and 254 West 102nd Street (1892-93, all New York City Landmarks); and a number of tenements, flats, and industrial buildings, primarily on the Lower East Side. While much of the firm's work displays an "idiosyncratic and mannerist aesthetic,"<sup>22</sup> its design for St. Paul's is a fairly straightforward example of neo-Gothic architecture.

#### 12th Church of Christ, Scientist, 1940-1985

Following the departure of the St. Paul's congregation in the autumn of 1939, the church building became home to a church of another denomination, the 12th Church of Christ, Scientist (Colored).<sup>23</sup> A branch of Mary Baker Eddy's First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Mass., the 12th Church was among the denomination's early black congregations and the first such group in New York City when it was founded in 1927. Seeking larger quarters in the former St. Paul's Church, the incoming congregation moved from its previous place of worship at 200 West 135th Street.

Witnessing decades of seemingly insurmountable urban decline, the 12th Church of Christ, Scientist, fought a constant battle against the many problems in its community: unemployment, poverty, crime, and building abandonment and destruction. Indeed, in the opinion of one resident who lived near the church, its very presence as one of the few stable local African-American institutions during the 1950s, '60s and '70s aided the neighborhood's relative resiliency to the total devastation which had hit some nearby communities in Central

Harlem. The church -- a denomination whose congregations have no individual pastors -- conducted services on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, and maintained a public reading room at the 123rd Street address for forty-five years.<sup>24</sup> In 1985, the congregation moved to smaller quarters at 2315 Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard at 136th Street.

#### Greater Metropolitan Baptist Church, 1985-present

In 1985, the church that formerly housed Lutheran and Christian Science congregations became home to a Baptist assembly. It was the first permanent residence of the Greater Metropolitan Baptist Church, which had broken off from the Metropolitan Baptist Church at 151 West 128th Street (which occupies the former New York Presbyterian Church, a designated New York City Landmark designed by John R. Thomas in 1884-85; additions by Richard R. Davis, 1889-90). Founded in 1915 and established at its present quarters in 1918, the Metropolitan Baptist Church was among the first African-American churches in Harlem.

A split within the church led to the formation of this congregation.<sup>25</sup> In 1978, the Reverend Connie See Stamps left Metropolitan Baptist with some 200 members to form the new assembly, incorporating in 1979 as the Greater Metropolitan Baptist Church. The new church rented and shared locations in Harlem for the next seven years. On June 18, 1985, under the direction of the Reverend Wardell J. Stamps, son of the late founding pastor, the West 123rd Street edifice was purchased.

"Hope measured with some frustration" is the Rev. Stamps's general assessment of Greater Metropolitan's influence, both within the church itself and in the surrounding neighborhood which he feels has shown marked signs of stabilization and improvement after many years of debilitation.<sup>26</sup> However, the church's architectural and physical grandeur are clearly visible on the exterior after nearly a century's wear.

#### Description

The symmetrical front of St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church comprises a gabled central portion and mirror-image square towers. The central portion, of rock-faced ashlar, features a gabled frontispiece with finial-capped side turrets. At the lower level, its pointed-arch portal surrounds paneled doors beneath wood transoms bearing blind arches. The doors and transoms are red-painted wood. The tympanum contains gray wood tracery and leaded glass (now covered by a metal screen). A simple light fixture projects above the doorway. The low steps, covered with carpet, are surrounded by a non-historic six-foot-high wrought-iron fence. At the upper level, the frontispiece bears a blind arcade surmounted by a row of lancet windows and a rose window, all wood-framed. A carved spandrel fills in the

gable of the frontispiece. Flanking the frontispiece are pointed-arch openings with drip moldings; each opening is divided by a wooden spandrel decorated with blind arches. At the basement level are three double-hung sash windows with metal grates to the west of the frontispiece; at the east side the corresponding section is boarded up.

At the rock-faced ashlar base of each tower is a pointed-arch entrance with metal doors and a red-painted surround. Above are located three lancet openings in a stepped arrangement. The upper section of each tower, primarily of smooth ashlar, features a pointed-arch opening with a wood-framed bifurcated window of stained and leaded glass, resting on a blind arcade of painted wood and surmounted by a gable. Finial-crowned corner turrets, which combine both smooth and rock-faced ashlar, surround each of the stone spires.

The original bluish-gray Vermont marble surface of the front is in fair condition. The base has been painted blue-gray and some of the facade's details have been lost due to the deterioration of the marble. The larger window openings are protected by outer layers of glass while the tower lancets are covered with protective sheets of plexiglass.

Other elements on the facade include downspouts, which are composed of copper sections at the upper facade

and aluminum replacement sections below. An illuminated cruciform sign, with the name of the current congregation, extends over the east entrance. The gabled roof, originally slate-covered, has been resurfaced with asphalt shingles; three roof-top vents are visible from the street.

The exposed east elevation has an approximately ten-foot return of facade marble corresponding to the side of the tower; otherwise, its surface is stuccoed brick. Each of the four bays is defined by a pointed-arch opening, containing stained and leaded glass, flanked by buttresses. The two southern windows are decorated with a diamond-shaped pattern; the two northern windows have representational images. Still visible are original stringcourses and a corbel table at the top of the wall. Changes include, at the northern end of the elevation, a stuccoed two-story extension with double-hung sash windows at the basement level and, scattered across this elevation, wooden tie-rod end plates.

Report prepared by  
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#### NOTES

1. For the overall history of Harlem: James Riker, *Revised History of Harlem: Its Origins and Early Annals* (New York: New York-Harlem Publishing Co. 1904), 185-187; I.N. Phelps Stokes, *New York Past and Present 1524-1939* (New York: Plantin Press, 1940), 78-85; Berthold Fernow, ed., *The Records of New Amsterdam* (Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1976), vol. 6, 296; John Romeyn Brodhead, ed., *History of the State of New York: 1609-1664* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1853), vol. 1, 641; James Weldon Johnson, *Black Manhattan* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1930), 281-284; and Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).
2. Richard Brooks, ed., *The Diary of Michael Floy, Jr. 1833-1837* (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1941). Floy lived in the Bowery village (near 11th Street and Broadway) and traveled regularly to the family farm in Harlem, normally making the long trip by carriage. On July 22, 1836, he lamented his decision to return home by train, "the nine miles have not so much work in them as nine yards in some parts of the Harlem Railroad." On May 19, 1834, Floy wrote about a full day of "Spring planting" of potatoes, lima beans and scarlet runners.
3. Oscar Handlin, *The Newcomers* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), 11-12, 134 (table 6). In the 1850s many of Germany's urban dwellers lost their jobs and thousands in rural communities were forced from large estates, prompting thousands of emigrants to North America. German political turmoil in the 1840s also led many Germans to the United States.
4. Osofsky, 79.
5. *St. Paul's Church Directory 1932-1933* (New York: St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1933), 8. Regarding the decision to create St. Paul's, a church historian writes, "to Mr. Christoph Weid, a gardener residing in 114th Street between 7th and 8th Avenue belongs the credit of taking the first steps towards the organization of our church." Weid is listed among St. Paul's three founding elders.

6. Ibid., 8, provides the \$1800 purchase price. However, existing public archival materials indicate that the land was purchased in 1864 by nearby St. Paul's Dutch Reformed Church of Harlem for \$1800 and sold to the newly created Lutheran Church on May 11, 1866, for one dollar. See New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Block Indices, and Mortgages [Liber 967, p. 455]. Whether the full sum was ever re-paid has not been determined, though the favorable cost suggests a plausible reason for naming the fledgling Lutheran church after its generous or *saintly* Protestant neighbor, St. Paul's.
7. *St. Paul's Church Directory 1932-1933*, 8. The church's founding pastor was the Reverend Henry Buettner "who took charge in the beginning of May, 1864, but soon severed connection with the congregation."
8. "A New Lutheran Church," *New York Times*, Mar. 21, 1898.
9. Trinity Swedish Lutheran Church, founded in 1894 as the Harlem Swedish Church, held services at St. Paul's from 1923 until 1932. Betania Finnish Lutheran Church had a similar arrangement with St. Paul's from 1924 to 1930.
10. George Hobart, *The Negro Churches of Manhattan* (New York: The Greater New York Federation of Churches, 1930). Churches moving from one part of the city to another was not a phenomenon known only to Harlem, nor was it always that black congregations took over empty white churches. In the 1800s the migratory trend was often the reverse; immigrant European congregations sometimes occupied buildings which had once served those of African-Americans. At 149-151 Sullivan Street, the Bethesda Congregational Church (black) was purchased in 1866 by the Church of St. Anthony of Padua, the first Italian Roman Catholic congregation in New York City. The church was later destroyed and St. Anthony's existing edifice was built at the neighboring corner of Houston Street. In 1827, on Lafayette Street (south of Canal Street), B'nai Jeshurun, the city's first European (Ashkenazic) Jewish synagogue was dedicated in the building which once housed the African Presbyterian Church. An examination of interchanging churches is contained within Henry B. Hoffman, "Transformations of New York Churches," *New-York Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin* 22 (Jan., 1936).
11. *St. Paul's Church Directory 1932-33*, 9.
12. "The Harlem Riot of 1935: Publication of the New York City Mayor's Commission Report," *Amsterdam News*, April 1, 1935.
13. On September 20, 1944, the United Lutheran Synod of New York brought St. Paul's term as an independent church to a close, approving the merger of the two church bodies as Grace and St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Manhattan. Grace and St. Paul's Lutheran Church, *Souvenir Journal: 75th Anniversary 1886-1961* (New York: Grace and St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 1961).
14. New York City, Department of Buildings, Plans, Permits and Dockets, Manhattan [Block 1908, Lot 9], NB 59-1897. The estimated cost was given as \$85,000. "A New Lutheran Church," *NYT*, Jan. 29, 1897, p. 12; "For St. Paul's New Church," *NYT*, May 31, 1897, p. 5; "St. Paul's Lutheran Church," *NYT*, Sept. 4, 1897, p.5; "A New Lutheran Church," *NYT*, Mar. 21, 1898, p. 10. A photograph of the facade, taken in 1932, is published in New York Public Library, *Photographic Views of New York City 1870s-1970s* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1981), fiche 0643/E2.
15. The New Building Application indicated that Indiana limestone was to be used for the facade, but later newspaper accounts and current conditions reveal that marble was employed instead.
16. "For St. Paul's New Church," p. 5.
17. See Montgomery Schuyler, "Recent Church Building in New York," *Architectural Record* 13 (June, 1903), 508-534, and Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, and John Massengale, *New York 1900* (New York, 1983), 109-115.
18. Both churches are designated New York City Landmarks.
19. Schuyler, 522.

20. "St. Paul's Lutheran Church." Within the building, the main sanctuary was built in "churchly Lutheran style" with carved oak furniture; a modern organ was provided as a gift of the Ladies Aid Society. The interior of the church is not subject to this designation.
21. This section is based on the corresponding section of LPC, *856 West End Avenue House Designation Report* (LP-1620), report prepared by Betsy Bradley, (New York: City of New York, 1990). See also Dennis S. Francis, *Architects in Practice in New York City 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records [COPAR], 1979), 39, 68. James Ward, *Architects in Practice in New York City 1900-1940* (New York: COPAR, 1989), 68, indicates that the firm was listed in business directories only until 1905.
22. LPC, *856 West End Avenue Designation Report*, 6.
23. The transfer of the property was recorded in New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, on June 5, 1940 [Liber 4063, p. 474], however, the incoming congregation was responsible for making interior changes to the building prior to the official recording of the deed (see Note 24). Incorporated in New York City on June 28, 1927, as the Twelfth Church of Christ, Scientist (Colored), the congregation dropped the racial appellation when a *Certificate of Change of Name* was filed with the New York County Clerk on June 10, 1946, and the official name became Twelfth Church of Christ, Scientist. The church name today is commonly written with the numeric designation, "12th."
24. The congregation of the 12th Church of Christ, Scientist, made interior alterations to the building to provide a reading room, in keeping with the needs prescribed by its doctrine. A Building Notice filed in 1939 (see NYC, Department of Buildings, Plans, Permits, and Dockets, Manhattan [BN 2849-1939]) states that work proposed was to "Erect new stud and sheet rock partitions and new wood doors in Auditorium to create reading room at west side" at a cost of \$300.00. A newspaper article of 1940 reports that "extensive changes" were being carried out on the building, which apparently refers to the contemporary interior renovations. The article in *NYT*, Mar., 1940, is quoted in the caption of New York Public Library, *Photographic...*, fiche 0643/E2. <sup>24</sup>
25. In a year-end review of the conflict, the *Amsterdam News* reported: "A five year old internal dispute at Metropolitan Baptist Church . . . resulted [in April] in a serious split within the body. The church has since been divided into two bodies: an upstairs and downstairs group. All operating within the same building at the same time each Sunday but under separate leadership." In August, 1977, the Rev. Connie Stamps had forcibly been reinstated as pastor of the church by action of the New York State Supreme Court. *Amsterdam News*, Dec. 31, 1977.
26. In 1987 stones falling from one of the church's two stone peaks required repair and cautionary maintenance for both spires.

#### OTHER SOURCES CONSULTED

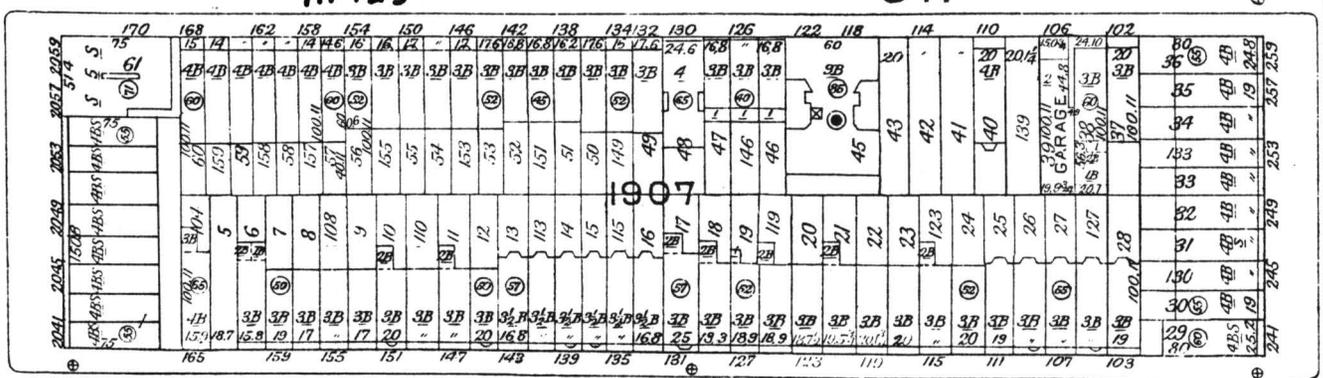
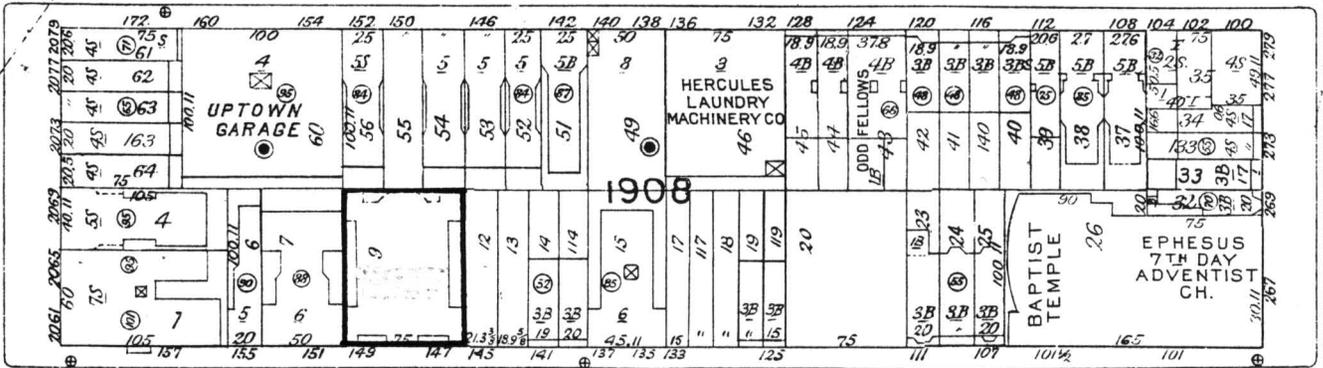
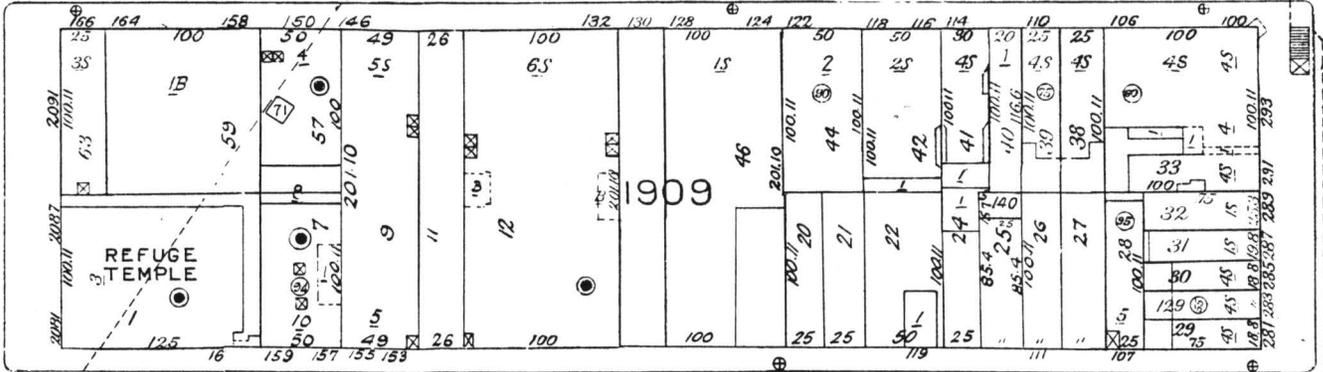
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- O'Dell, Carolyn, Research Director. *Harlem: Church and Community*. Vols. I and II. Compiled by the Protestant Council of the City of New York, 1962.
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- Valentine, David. *Manual of the Corporation of the City of New York*. (New York: F.P. Harper, 1900).

## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and the other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the (former) St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church (later 12th Church of Christ, Scientist; now Greater Metropolitan Baptist Church) has a special character, special historic 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 (former) St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church was constructed in 1897-98 by a German-American congregation and for over fifty years has been occupied by two African-American churches of different denominations; that the church building is an embodiment of the cultural life of Harlem during the past century, from its period of great urbanization through its physical and demographic changes; that the present building replaced St. Paul's earlier frame church on the same site which had been built in the mid-1860s to serve a community of German immigrants settling in the area; that in 1940 the building was purchased by the 12th Church of Christ, Scientist, founded in 1927 as the first African-American congregation of the Christian Science faith in New York City; that in 1985 the church was acquired by the Greater Metropolitan Baptist Church, which had separated from the historic Metropolitan Baptist Church; that the church was designed by Ernest W. Schneider and Henry Herter, New York architects who had a thriving practice in residential and commercial buildings, primarily for clients of German descent; that the church building is a distinguished example of late nineteenth-century neo-Gothic church design; that the symmetrical tripartite facade of bluish-gray Vermont marble features projecting corner towers with prominent spires and is enriched with gabled arches, lancet windows, finials, and an impressive rose window of leaded opalescent glass with jewel work; and that after nearly a century of use, the church's grandeur and architectural integrity are very much apparent.

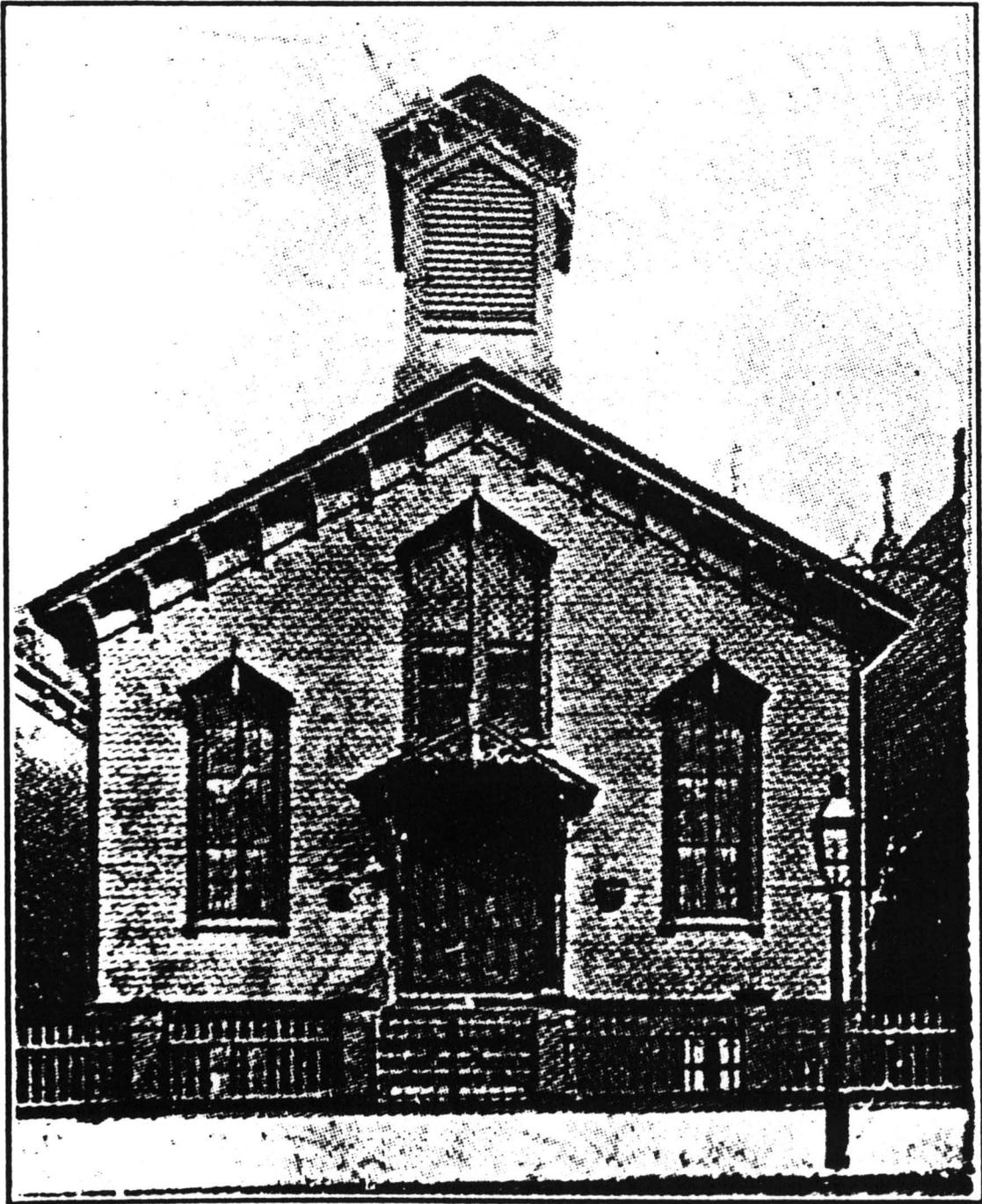
Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the (former) St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church (later 12th Church of Christ, Scientist; now Greater Metropolitan Baptist Church), 147-149 West 123rd Street, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Tax Map Block 1908, Lot 9, Borough of Manhattan, as its related Landmark Site.



(Former) St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church  
 147-149 West 123rd Street

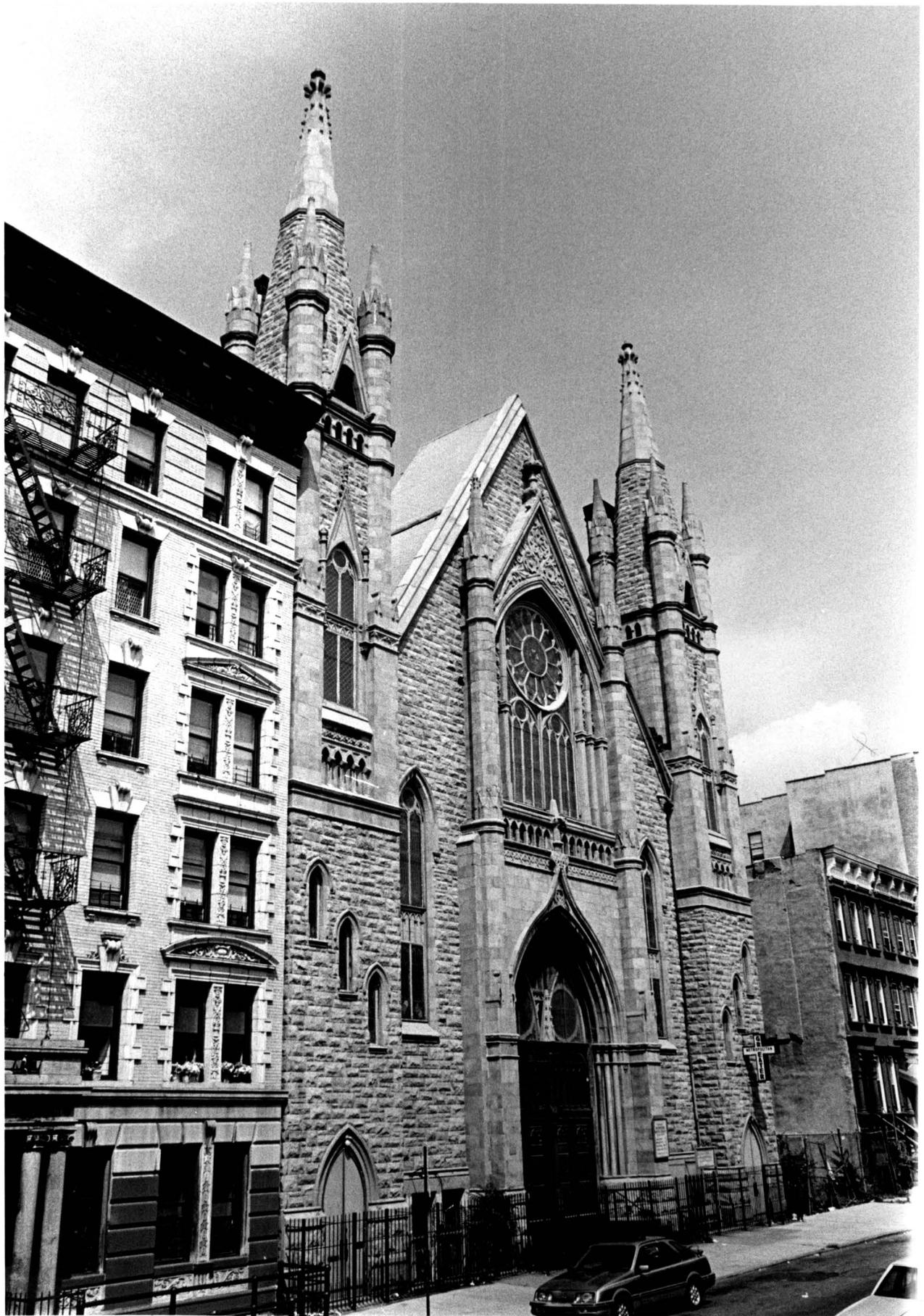
Landmark Site: Manhattan Tax Map Block 1908, Lot 9  
 Graphic Source: Sanborn Manhattan Land Book (1992-93), pl. 140

# OLD ST. PAUL'S



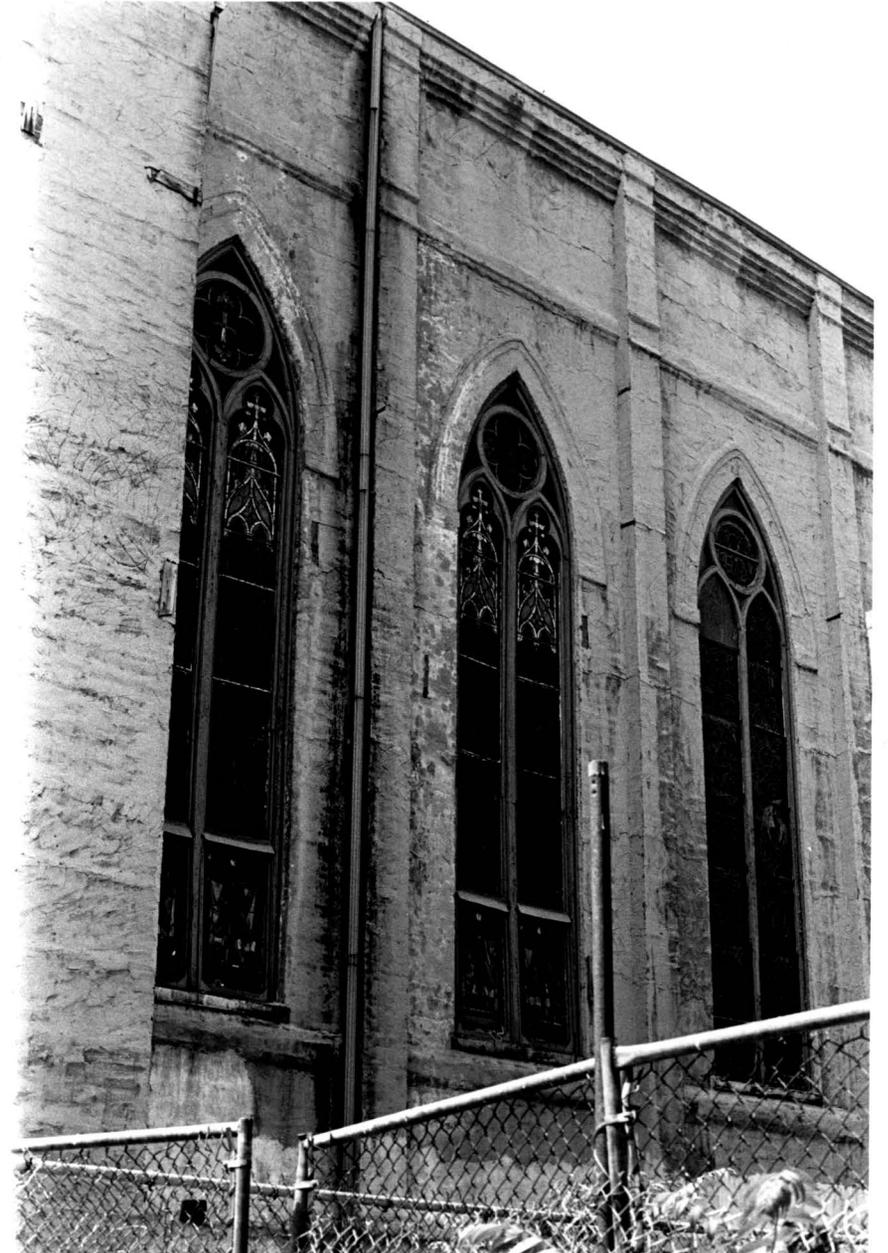
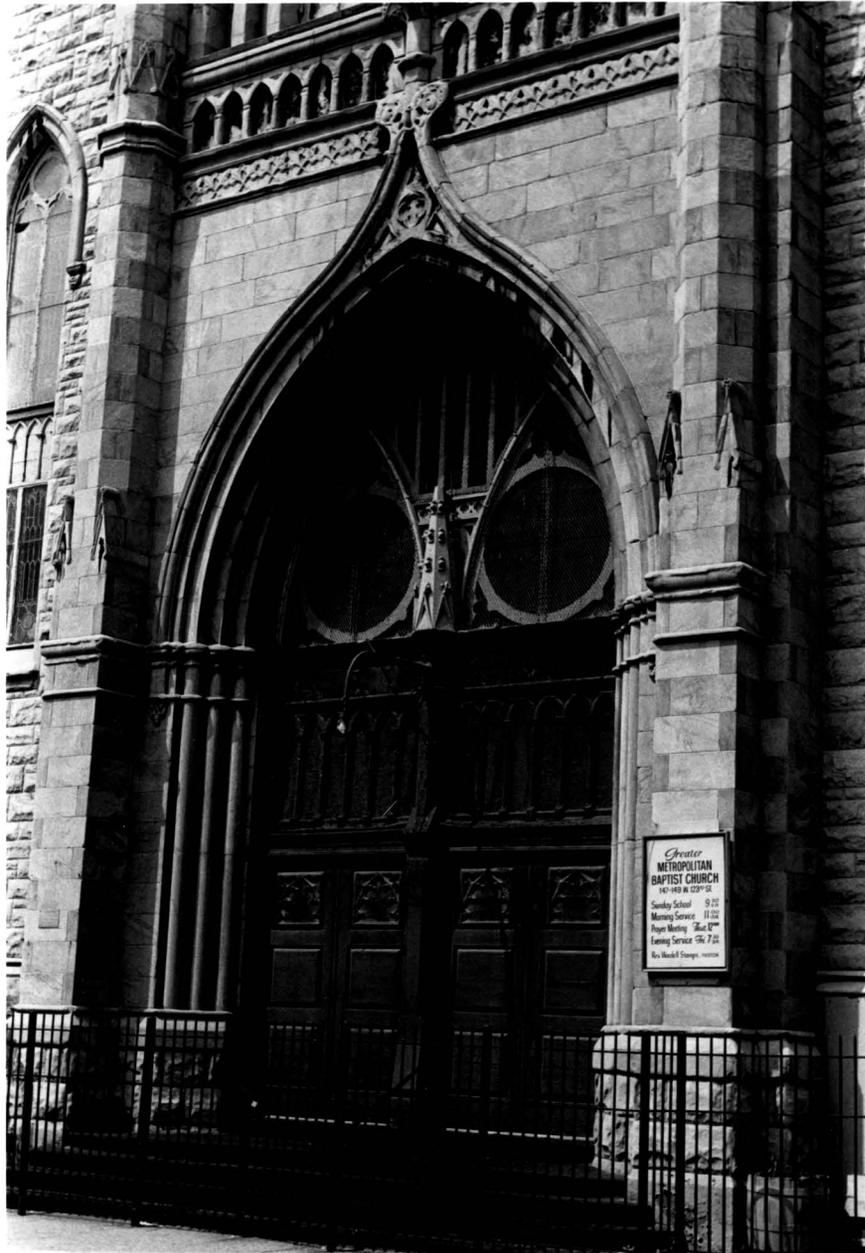
**DEDICATED APRIL 30TH, 1865**

(Former) St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church, 147-149 West 123rd Street  
Photo of church building demolished for present church  
Source: *St. Paul's Church Directory 1932-1933* (1933)



(Former) St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church  
147-149 West 123rd Street

(Photo: DMB)



(Former) St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church, 147-149 West 123rd Street  
Details of main portal and east elevation

(Photos: DMB)