

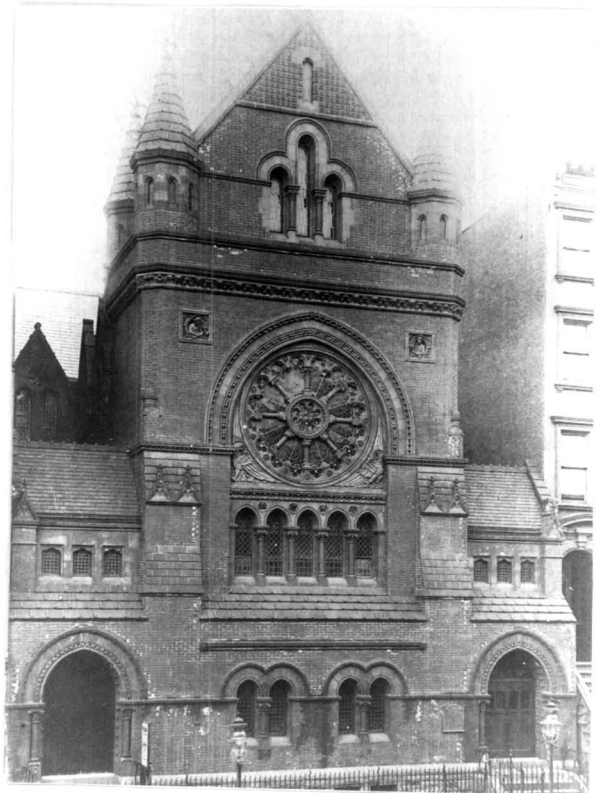
**CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH** (now CHURCH FOR ALL NATIONS),  
417-419 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street, Manhattan. Built 1885-86; Francis H. Kimball, architect; Boston Terra Cotta Co.,  
terra cotta, James Taylor, superintendent.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1067, Lot 24.

On October 31, 2000, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Catholic Apostolic Church (now Church for All Nations) and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 3). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Four people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of the owner, the Historic Districts Council, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, and Community Board 4. In addition, the Commission received a letter in support of designation from the Friends of Terra Cotta. The church was previously heard at public hearing on December 10, 1985 (LP-1577).

#### Summary

The Catholic Apostolic Church, built in 1885-86, was one of architect Francis H. Kimball's earliest independent commissions in New York City. He had previously worked mostly in Hartford, Connecticut, where he supervised the construction of the Collegiate Gothic style buildings at Trinity College designed by English architect-theorist William Burges. The Church's foremost leaders, residents of Hartford, would have known Kimball's work. A Christian pentecostal sect established in England in the 1830s, the Catholic Apostolic Church formed a congregation in New York City in 1851. Kimball's beautiful design, executed in red brick laid in running bond and extensive red terra cotta above a brownstone base, is a sophisticated and original essay in the "muscular" Victorian Gothic style, as influenced by Burges. It was, as well, a masterful solution for a small midblock church, for a congregation with limited resources. The church was widely admired for its design, proportions, color, beauty of materials, vigorous composition built around a central tower form, skilled ornament, and innovative use of terra cotta. Noted critic Montgomery Schuyler called it the most "scholarly Gothic work in New York." Kimball was in the forefront of architects in using exterior architectural terra cotta in New York during this period, and the Catholic Apostolic Church is significant in the history of American terra cotta. It was one of the earliest churches in New York to employ structural terra cotta, which was manufactured by the Boston Terra Cotta Co., the leading East Coast firm at the time. The terra cotta's combed texture indicates the involvement of James Taylor, "the father of American terra cotta" who was then superintendent of the company. The church's facade is dominated by a central rose window within a pointed-arched surround, one of the most complex elements yet attempted in terra cotta in the United States. The sculptural ornament also incorporates iconography of Apostle-Evangelists and angels. Despite dwindling membership, the Catholic Apostolic Church retained its building until 1995. It is currently the Church for All Nations, of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. The virtually unaltered Catholic Apostolic Church building is considered to be one of the finest late-nineteenth-century churches in New York City.



*Historic photo*

## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### The Catholic Apostolic Church in England and New York<sup>1</sup>

A Christian pentecostal sect established in England in the early nineteenth century, the Catholic Apostolic Church had no association with the Roman Catholic Church. Its followers, believers in the impending “second coming” of Christ, started out in yearly prayer meetings, held after 1826 at the estate of Henry Drummond, a wealthy London banker and member of Parliament. Edward Irving (1792-1834), a controversial Scottish Presbyterian minister, became an early leader of this group and also sanctioned speaking in tongues. The sect promoted the concept that the “second coming” must be preceded by a revival of customs and official positions associated with early Christianity. Between 1832 and 1835, twelve men (most associated with the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches) were appointed Apostles of the officially organized Catholic Apostolic Church. Around 1836, these Apostles began embarking as missionaries. European converts to the church were found mostly in England and Germany. The Apostles met with little success farther afield, except in Australia, Canada, and the United States. The Catholic Apostolic Church was led by the original Apostles until the death of Francis V. Woodhouse, the last, in 1901. The church’s elaborate hierarchy also included Angels (bishops in charge of local churches), Coadjutors, Evangelists, prophets, elders, and priests, all appointed by the Apostles, as well as deacons, who were elected by each congregation. The ordination of church officials ended in 1901, thus leaving no succession of leadership. A schism had developed in 1860 over the issue of replacing the Apostles in order to maintain a body of twelve. Coming out of the church in Berlin, this schism led to the creation of the separate New Apostolic Church, which became active in northern Germany and in German-speaking communities in the United States. The Catholic Apostolic Church seriously declined in the twentieth century and some of the congregations affiliated with other Protestant sects.

The organizational center of the Catholic Apostolic Church was its “seven churches in London,” all established in 1832-35, which were seen as a “pattern of the unity of Christendom.”<sup>2</sup> The Central Church (1850-54, John Raphael Brandon) at Gordon Square was a mammoth Gothic Revival style structure.<sup>3</sup> Although the Catholic Apostolics “employed a number of the same architects who were designing Anglican Victorian churches in the neo-Gothic style, such as Brandon, [John L.] Pearson, and

[Augustus W.N.] Pugin, the interiors of their church buildings were designed to meet previously determined liturgical requirements... and to conform to their particular theological principles,”<sup>4</sup> including a highly ritualistic form of worship.

One Catholic Apostolic historian noted that “the beginnings of the movement in the United States are rather obscure”<sup>5</sup> but coincided with a period of religious revivalism that was receptive to the efforts of the Catholic Apostolic evangelistic missionaries, first Francis V. Woodhouse, and after 1860, Nicholas Armstrong. Although “New York [State] has ever been the center”<sup>6</sup> of the Catholic Apostolic movement in the United States, the “three foremost men,”<sup>7</sup> William Watson Andrews, Samuel J. Andrews, and John Sydney Davenport, were all from Hartford, Connecticut. The first American Catholic Apostolic church was established in the 1840s in Potsdam, in far northeastern New York. William Andrews (1810-1897), a former Congregational minister, took over this church from 1849 to 1856; he then became a Catholic Apostolic Evangelist in the United States and Canada. He was called the “head of the Catholic Apostolic Church in this country” by the *New York Times* in 1896.<sup>8</sup> His brother, Samuel Andrews, became a Catholic Apostolic priest in Hartford. Davenport (1808-1900), a nephew of Hudson River Railroad president James Boorman, was an Episcopal priest until he was deposed for accepting Catholic Apostolicism. He became Evangelist with the Apostles, in charge of instruction and supervision of all American Evangelists.

In New York City, a Catholic Apostolic congregation was established in 1851. Prior to that, an informal group had met in Greenwich Village, but had disbanded. Woodhouse, the Apostle, called on John Canfield Sterling in 1850 to organize a meeting. Woodhouse commented in 1854 that the congregation, meeting for the last three years, had recently purchased a building and was conducting services under two Episcopal priests “by commission from the Apostles.”<sup>9</sup> Conveyance records indicate that in 1854 James Rintoul, on behalf of the church, purchased a Congregational church building that had originally been a German Evangelical church (c. 1844) at 126 West 16<sup>th</sup> Street. By 1885, the congregation had reached the point where it was able to commission a new building.<sup>10</sup> Francis H. Kimball was hired as architect for the proposed Catholic Apostolic Church. He probably received this commission due to his previous work in Hartford, including Trinity College and other Episcopal Church-related buildings, which

would have been well known by the Catholic Apostolic Church leaders who resided in that city.

### The Architect <sup>11</sup>

Born in Maine, Francis Hatch Kimball (1845-1919) worked as a teenager in a relative's building firm, served in the Navy during the Civil War, and in 1867 entered the firm of the Boston architect Louis P. Rogers (who later joined with Gridley J.F. Bryant). In 1869, Kimball became supervisor of this firm's work in Hartford, and in 1873 was appointed superintending architect of the buildings at Trinity College (1875-82) designed by English architect and theorist William Burges. Kimball worked directly with Burges in London from the end of 1873 to the fall of 1874. The Trinity College buildings are considered the earliest examples of the Collegiate Gothic style in the United States. Kimball also received independent commissions in Hartford, including the Orphan Asylum (1876-78, demolished) and Theological Seminary (1879). He moved to New York City to work on the remodelling of the Madison Square Theater in 1879 and soon formed a partnership with the English-born architect Thomas Wisedell, which lasted until the latter's death in 1884. Their firm was responsible for the Goodwin Building (1881), Hartford, and the Moorish style Casino Theater (1881-82, demolished), 1400 Broadway. Kimball practiced alone<sup>12</sup> until 1892, producing designs in a variety of styles and executed with notable terra-cotta ornament, including: the Catholic Apostolic Church (1885-86); Emmanuel Baptist Church (1886-87), 279 Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn; Corbin Building (1888-89), 11 John Street; Montauk Club (1889-91), 1925 Eighth Avenue, Brooklyn; Harrigan's (later Garrick) Theater (1890-91, demolished), 65 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street; the exterior of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad Terminal headhouse (1891-93), Philadelphia; and the New York Architectural Terra Cotta Co. Building (1892), 42-10--42-16 Vernon Boulevard, Long Island City, Queens. Another church commission was the picturesque Riverdale Presbyterian Chapel (1888-89; later Edgehill Church of Spuyten Duyvil), 2550 Independence Avenue, the Bronx.<sup>13</sup> In the iron-and-steel-framed Fifth Avenue Theater (1891-92, demolished), 1185 Broadway, Kimball developed a technique for constructing foundations with concrete cylinders sunk by mechanical means that was a precursor of the later pneumatic caisson system of skyscraper foundation construction.

Kimball emerged in the forefront of early skyscraper design in New York City during his collaboration from 1892 to 1898 with George Kramer Thompson (1859-1935). Kimball & Thompson's

seminal seventeen-story (plus tower) Manhattan Life Insurance Co. Building (1893-94, demolished), 64-66 Broadway, was the tallest building constructed in the city at that time and is credited with being the first New York skyscraper with a full iron and steel frame, set on pneumatic concrete caissons.<sup>14</sup> Among the firm's other commissions were the Gertrude Rhineland Waldo Mansion (1895-98), 867 Madison Avenue; the Standard Oil Building addition (1896-97), 26 Broadway; and the Empire Building (1897-98), 71 Broadway.<sup>15</sup> Kimball's later skyscrapers, designed in a variety of styles, include the Trinity and U.S. Realty Buildings (1904-07), 111 and 115 Broadway; J. & W. Seligman & Co. Building (1906-07, with Julian C. Levi), 1 William Street;<sup>16</sup> Trust Co. of America Building (1906-07), 39 Wall Street; City Investing Co. Building (1906-08, demolished), Broadway and Cortlandt Street; and Adams Express Co. Building (1912-16), 61 Broadway. Kimball also designed two early automobile-related structures, the A.T. Demarest & Co. and Peerless Motor Car Co. Buildings (1909), 1770 and 1760 Broadway.<sup>17</sup> He formed a partnership with Frederick H. Roosa in 1915, but a petition was filed against the firm in 1917 that apparently led to involuntary bankruptcy. Upon his death in 1919, the *New York Times* referred to Kimball as "the father of the skyscraper,"<sup>18</sup> reflecting his technical innovations and involvement with many fine early skyscrapers.

### Construction and Design of the Catholic Apostolic Church <sup>19</sup>

In May 1885, two lots on the north side of West 57<sup>th</sup> Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues were conveyed for \$25,000 to prominent Catholic Apostolic Church members David M. Fackler and Stephen R. Rintoul. Rev. David Morris Fackler (1811-1895), a former Episcopal priest who had converted to Catholic Apostolicism during Apostle Woodhouse's 1850 visit, was ordained a priest (1859) and an Angel and "served prominently in the history and development of the Church in New York."<sup>20</sup> Stephen R. Rintoul was later a priest and an Angel of this church. Other members involved in the construction of the new church on this site were John S. Davenport, then a lawyer residing in New York and serving on the building committee, and Rev. Charles A.G. Brigham, apparently the first priest in this church. Construction of the Catholic Apostolic Church commenced at the beginning of June 1885 and was completed at the end of March 1886. The property was transferred to the Church Building Trust Association in November 1886.

The English Catholic Apostolics had no distinct architectural tradition, but appear to have favored the Gothic style. The Catholic Apostolic Church in New

York was designed in the Victorian Gothic style, which originated in England and was most closely associated with ecclesiastical architecture, but also with public buildings, in the second half of the nineteenth century. The style, also popular for similar building types in the United States in the late nineteenth century, was characterized by an eclectic use of medieval forms (including pointed arches) in an original manner, simple massing and sculptural composition, complex rooflines, and the bold use of contrast, color, texture, and material. Churches in the Victorian Gothic mode have sometimes been referred to as “muscular Gothic.”<sup>21</sup> Kimball’s Catholic Apostolic Church is a sophisticated and original essay in the “muscular” Victorian Gothic style. Despite its small size and midblock location, the church attracts notice due to its vigorous and complex yet symmetrical composition built around a central tower form; the beauty and color of its materials (brownstone, red brick, red terra cotta, and leaded glass) and ornament, especially the rose window; and its technical solutions to practical considerations, such as providing natural light to the interior. The design was influenced by the churches of Burges, such as the Church of Christ the Consoler (1871-76), Skelton-on-Ure. In particular, the rose window and the figures of the winged lion and the eagle below it, representing the Apostle-Evangelists St. Mark and St. John, were clearly inspired by the similar rose window and “Four Evangelistic Beasts” sculptures carved on Burges’ St. Fin Barre’s Cathedral, Cork, Ireland (1863-79).<sup>22</sup> Kimball’s church can also be seen as related to the work of a number of noted contemporary American architects, such as [Frank] Furness & [George W.] Hewitt’s Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1871-76), Philadelphia, and Edward T. Potter’s Church of the Holy Innocents (1872-74), Hoboken. It has been suggested that the presence of two side entrances on the Catholic Apostolic Church, rather than the usual major central entrance, may have been influenced by other architects’ designs for “non-conformist” religions.<sup>23</sup>

Kimball’s design for the Catholic Apostolic Church received favorable critical comment. The *Real Estate Record & Guide* in 1888 called the church “one of the most artistic of recent buildings in New York, and the architect and his clients are to be heartily congratulated upon it.” The journal further remarked that it

*especially deserves to be better known because, apart from being a very pretty and effective bit of street architecture, it presents a solution of a problem that most architects who have attempted it have found very*

*untraversable. The problem is that of a city church on an “inside lot,” that is to say, in such a situation that it can be lighted only from the ends, or even from one end, and from a clerestory so arranged as not to be deprived of its light by towering buildings alongside. So far as a view of the exterior can enable one to say the solution is highly successful, and the means to its practical success are also the means of giving architectural force and character to the building.*<sup>24</sup>

The congregation itself was quite pleased with Kimball’s work. John S. Davenport, writing in response to the *Real Estate Record & Guide*’s article, enthused that

*we are entitled to the congratulations you speak of for Mr. Kimball’s success in the architectural treatment of the building, but for the additional reason that we are conscious that Mr. Kimball was equally successful in the exceedingly economical and advantageous manner in which he applied the limited amount of money which we were able to furnish him for the purpose.*<sup>25</sup>

Noted critic Montgomery Schuyler wrote in 1898 that “the arrangement is expressed in a clear and edifying way, of which the effect is immensely heightened by the excellence of the detail in design, and its perfect adaptation in scale. There is no more scholarly Gothic work in New York.”<sup>26</sup> In 1899, *Brickbuilder* referred to the church as “an interesting composition in brick and terra cotta” in which “that most admirable rose window” was “the distinguishing feature.”<sup>27</sup>

#### Architectural Terra Cotta in New York City in the 1880s<sup>28</sup>

While a number of buildings in the late 1840s and 1850s employed terra cotta for architectural ornament in New York City and elsewhere,<sup>29</sup> it was after the Chicago and Boston fires of 1871-72 that terra cotta was revived as a significant interior and exterior building material in the United States. Walter Geer observed that “by these fires it was conclusively demonstrated that fire-proof buildings could not be made of unprotected stone or iron, and that only brick and terra-cotta walls were practically fire-proof. This increased use of brick work, and of terra-cotta as a constructive and decorative material in connection with brick work, revived the demand for the manufacture of this material in or near New York.”<sup>30</sup> Advantages seen in terra cotta for both exterior architectural ornament and interior fireproofing



included its fireproof properties, strength, durability, lower cost and weight in shipping and handling, the relative ease with which elaborate decoration could be molded, and the retention over time of crisp ornamental profiles compared to stone. In the 1870s and early 1880s, architectural terra cotta was often a color that matched stone (commonly brownstone, buff or red) that could be pleasantly juxtaposed with brick, or used as a substitute for brownstone. The *Real Estate Record & Guide* noted that during this period “terra cotta is most generally used for the trimming and ornamentation of buildings, taking the form of panels, courses, friezes, small tiles, roofing tiles and paving blocks.”<sup>31</sup>

At this time, George B. Post was the leader in the use of exterior terra cotta in New York City, including the Braem House (1878-80, demolished), 15 East 37<sup>th</sup> Street; Long Island Historical Society (1878-81), 128 Pierrepont Street, Brooklyn, for which a contemporary said “the material has been employed, for the first time in the United States, both for the building material and for all decorative details”;<sup>32</sup> New York Produce Exchange (1881-84, demolished), 2 Broadway; and Mills Building (1881-83, demolished), 59 Exchange Place. Among other contemporary architects who employed terra cotta were Silliman & Farnsworth, in the Morse Building (1878-80), 140 Nassau Street, then considered the first prominent New York office building to employ exterior terra cotta (though it was used sparingly for architectural details, in conjunction with molded red and black brick), and Temple Court Building (1881-83), 3-9 Beekman Street;<sup>33</sup> Kimball & Wisedell, in the Goodwin Building, Hartford, and the Casino Theater, an early New York building having highly intricate, exotic terra-cotta ornament (the terra cotta on both buildings was by the Boston Terra Cotta Co.); and Kimball, in many of his early independent commissions.

#### James Taylor, the Boston Terra Cotta Co., and the Catholic Apostolic Church<sup>34</sup>

The terra cotta employed by Kimball on the Catholic Apostolic Church was manufactured by the Boston Terra Cotta Co.,<sup>35</sup> the leading East Coast terra cotta firm at the time. James Taylor (1839-1898), called “the father of American terra cotta,”<sup>36</sup> was superintendent of the Boston company during construction of the church. Formerly superintendent of the J[ohn]. M[arriott]. Blashfield & Co. terra cotta works in Stamford, England, Taylor emigrated to superintend the Chicago Terra Cotta Works in 1870-77, the period during which the Chicago firm was the dominant center of American terra cotta manufacturing.<sup>37</sup> After 1878, the Chicago firm

collaborated with the Boston Fire Brick Co. to meet the demand for terra cotta on the East Coast; the latter plant became the Boston Terra Cotta Co. in 1880 and Taylor became superintendent there until 1886. The Boston Terra Cotta Co. produced the exterior terra cotta for many significant buildings in New York City until its demise in 1893. Extant buildings ornamented with Boston terra cotta include Nos. 19 and 21 East 17<sup>th</sup> Street (1881-82, Silliman & Farnsworth); No. 746-750 Broadway (1881-83, Starkweather & Gibbs), for Orlando B. Potter; Grace M.E. Church (1882-83, Parfitt Brothers), 29-35 Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn; Chelsea Apartments (1883-85, Hubert, Pirsson & Co.), 222 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street; Potter Building (1883-86, N.G. Starkweather), 35-38 Park Row, for Orlando Potter; YMCA Institute Building (1884-85, Bradford L. Gilbert), 222 Bowery; and Mercantile Exchange (1885, Thomas R. Jackson), 2-6 Harrison Street.<sup>38</sup> Orlando Potter decided to organize his own firm,<sup>39</sup> the New York Architectural Terra Cotta Co., which was launched in January 1886 with Walter Geer and his father, Asahel Clarke Geer. Taylor was superintendent until he retired in 1893. The company, the only major architectural terra cotta firm in New York City, became one of the largest such manufacturers in the United States, remaining in business until its bankruptcy in 1932.

The *Real Estate Record & Guide* in 1888 noted of the Catholic Apostolic Church that

*the material of the church is baked clay throughout – red brick with wrought work of terra cotta in a slightly different tint. An effective texture is given to the terra cotta by roughening the mould so as to produce something the effect of bush-hammering in stone work. The mouldings are throughout artistic in form and successfully adjusted in scale. The ornament is copious, as there is no excuse for its not being in terra cotta, but it is nowhere overloaded, though this is rather a matter of design and disposition than of quantity. ... This ornament is so well placed and detailed that it emphasizes and nowhere confuses the effect of the admirable arrangement and proportion to which the little church mainly owes its success.*<sup>40</sup>

The combed texture of the terra cotta on the church is a “signature” indicating the involvement of James Taylor. Taylor later transferred the use of this texture to his next firm. The New York Architectural Terra Cotta Co. Building has a similar textured effect, as does a fireplace located inside that is signed “Jas. Taylor.”<sup>41</sup> Taylor wrote in 1892 that Kimball was

one of the first architects in the United States to employ “highly ornamental work in terra cotta” and to demonstrate that

*terra cotta was capable of elaborate decoration at moderate cost. This capability has been constantly put before the public by F.H. Kimball in various buildings which he has designed, viz., the Catholic Apostolic Church... which has an elaborate rose window, in which several features were introduced that had not before been attempted in America,*<sup>42</sup>

presumably a reference to the complexity of its design. Montgomery Schuyler remarked of the church in 1898 that

*the charm of it is heightened by the fact that, although the ornament is in terra cotta, and is or might be a substitute for stone-carving, there is yet in some of it, as in the main offset of the front and the gabled offsets of the buttresses, a recognition in design of the material which adds the raciness of idiom to scholarly diction.*<sup>43</sup>

*Brickbuilder* in 1899 referred to the Catholic Apostolic Church as “the first church, and one of the first buildings of importance on which structural terra-cotta was used in New York... and, though one of the least pretentious, is considered one of [Kimball’s] happiest efforts.” This publication was also impressed by the manner in which the design and manufacture of the terra cotta on this building was able “to obtain the maximum of merit at a minimum cost.”<sup>44</sup> The use of the term “structural” here refers to the manner in which the terra cotta was fully integrated into the exterior brick bearing walls, in contrast to the use of low relief terra-cotta panels found typically on contemporary buildings.<sup>45</sup>

The Catholic Apostolic Church is a significant building in the history of terra cotta in the United States, employing extensive and notable 1880s exterior architectural terra cotta. Today the building, virtually unaltered, is a relatively rare survivor of that period of development of terra cotta in New York, by one of the most significant East Coast terra cotta companies of the period. The red, matt-glazed terra-cotta ornament on the church, some of the most complex elements yet attempted in the United States, incorporates religious iconography referring to Catholic Apostolic beliefs: a winged lion and an eagle, representing two of the four Apostle-Evangelists, St. Mark and St. John; two angels, one playing a musical instrument and one bearing a censer; and cherubs. There are also many foliate and floral motifs employed in moldings,

capitals, reveals, diaperwork, and rondels.<sup>46</sup>

#### Later History<sup>47</sup>

*King’s Handbook* in 1893 stated that there were about 400 members of the Catholic Apostolic Church in New York.<sup>48</sup> That same year, the *New York Times* reported that this church was

*the only one in New York. It has dependencies in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago, San Francisco, and smaller places, but they have not a completely ordered priesthood. The New-York church has as its head the Angel, and under him a long list of elders, priests, deacons, sub-deacons, and deaconesses. The latter officiate in acts of charity and render assistance particularly to the women of the parish.*<sup>49</sup>

In 1893, however, a small, one-story German Apostolic Church (William J. Bower, builder; demolished) had been built for a German immigrant congregation at 202 West 114<sup>th</sup> Street in Harlem.<sup>50</sup> A church census in 1936 identified seven Catholic Apostolic churches in the United States. The Church then had about 2,577 members nationally, with the other churches located in New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and California. In 1946, a church history referred to the 57<sup>th</sup> Street church as “the oldest Church in the country.”<sup>51</sup> The German Apostolic and Catholic Apostolic congregations merged in 1947 and the Harlem building was sold to the Church of the Good Shepherd.

The last “Angel in Charge of the Catholic Apostolic Church” in New York and other Eastern states, since 1919, was Henry Ogden DuBois (c.1855-1949). An Episcopal priest who was ordained an Angel in the Church in 1890, he later served as Coadjutor to the Inducted Angel prior to 1919.<sup>52</sup> The congregation continued in this building for another 45 years after his death under the leadership of a deacon, despite the rapid decrease in membership. The handful of remaining members “became greatly concerned that the building be preserved as a sanctuary for a Biblically faithful Christian ministry. Thus, they began a careful study of other denominations.”<sup>53</sup> The Catholic Apostolic Church donated the property in 1995 to the Atlantic District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. After a restoration of the building, the Church for All Nations opened in 1997.

#### Description

The midblock Catholic Apostolic Church has a

complex shape due to its cruciform plan, with a square central tower crowned by a peaked roof at the front of the nave, flanked by low side (aisle) wings; a peaked-roof nave with a gable-dormered clerestory behind the tower; a peaked-roof transept with a gable-dormered clerestory; and a peaked-roof chancel. Built with masonry bearing walls and timber framing, the church is clad in red brick laid in running bond and extensive red terra-cotta ornament, above a rusticated brownstone base. The terra cotta has a combed texture. Between 1995 and 1997, the church was cleaned and re-pointed and some small elements of deteriorated terra cotta were replicated (using cast stone, from molds based on the original terra cotta), including on the rose window and eastern entrance. The roofs were originally covered with gray slate shingles; they are currently covered with asphalt shingles with terra-cotta ridge caps. Windows currently have protective plastic coverings.

**Tower** The ground-story level has two sets of paired arched windows, with squat columns having stylized floral capitals, capped by a stringcourse with end corbels in the shape of heads. The tower is dominated by an elaborate central rose window, set above a winged lion and an eagle and placed within a molded, pointed-arched surround. The rose window surmounts an arcade of windows, with columns having stylized floral capitals and floral rondels, surmounting a setback covered with terra-cotta tiles. The arcade and setback are flanked by buttresses ornamented with gablets and terra-cotta-tiled steps. Flanking the rose window are plaques ornamented with angels (the western angel originally played a musical instrument (which has been removed); the eastern angel bears a censer) and chamfered corners. The gable of the tower, rising above a wide, molded band course that continues along both sides of the tower, is ornamented by a tripartite arcaded window group and, at the peak, floral diaperwork with a small blind arch. All

windows are leaded glass. The tower has four polygonal corner turrets with blind arches and steeply peaked roofs covered with terra-cotta tiles. Original finials are missing. The ridge of the front gable is coped with terra cotta with crockets and a Celtic-type cross. The ridge of the rear gable is coped with copper.

**Side (aisle) Wings** Each wing has an entrance with a molded, pointed-arched surround springing from squat columns with stylized floral capitals; stone steps with historic wrought-iron railings and gates; double, paneled wooden doors with wooden tympanum ornamented with quatrefoils; and reveals ornamented with terra-cotta blocks with floral and cherub motifs. Each entrance is surmounted by a setback covered with terra-cotta tiles, in turn surmounted by a triple band of windows with leaded glass and a gabled buttress on the outer end. The shed roof of each wing is covered with red tile shingles and has a terra-cotta ridge cap.

**Clerestory gable dormers** The two gable dormers on the eastern and western facades of the nave, and the gable dormer at each end of the transept, have double arched windows capped by a quatrefoil.

**Areaway** The areaway is bordered by an historic wrought-iron fence and gate. Stone steps at the west end lead to a basement entrance, which has a non-historic metal door and awning. There are currently an air conditioning unit and wooden church sign installed within the areaway. Basement windows on the church have historic wrought-iron grilles.

Report prepared by  
JAY SHOCKLEY  
Research Department

## NOTES

1. Plato E. Shaw, *The Catholic Apostolic Church, Sometimes Called Irvingite: A Historical Study* (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Pr., 1972), reprt. of 1946 edit.; Rowland A. Davenport, *Albury Apostles: The Story of the Body Known as the Catholic Apostolic Church* (Great Britain: United Writers, 1970); John Krawchuk, "The Catholic Apostolic Church in New York City: a Study of the Congregation and Francis Kimball's Masterpiece on 57<sup>th</sup> Street" (Columbia Univ., 1995); "An Angel at its Head," *New York Times* (NYT), Dec. 4, 1893, 9; "One of the Oldest Preachers," NYT, April 12, 1896, 28; "William Watson Andrews," *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (NCAB) 21 (N.Y.: James T. White & Co., 1931), 251-252; New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances; Bureau of the Census, "Census of Religious Bodies 1936: Catholic Apostolic Church" (Washington: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1936).

2. Shaw, 199.
3. See: Gavin Stamp and Colin Avery, *Victorian Buildings of London 1837-1887: An Illustrated Guide* (London: Architectural Pr., 1980), 40-41. The other churches were: Bishopsgate, Mare Street Hackney (1874); Southwark, Camberwell New Road (1876-77, John Belcher); Chelsea, College Street (1833); Islington, Duncan Street (1835); Paddington, Maida Avenue (1891-94, John L. Pearson); and Westminster, near Victoria Street. Davenport, 370-373; Alastair Service, *The Architects of London* (London: Architectural Pr., 1979), 158.
4. Columbia G. Flegg, *"Gathered Under the Apostles": A Study of the Catholic Apostolic Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Pr., 1992), 273.
5. Davenport, 184.
6. Shaw, 148.
7. Shaw, 135.
8. *NYT*, Apr. 12, 1896.
9. Cited in Shaw, 132. They had previously met in a room at New York University on University Place.
10. The West 16<sup>th</sup> Street church was sold by Stephen R. Rintoul, representing the congregation, in May 1885 to L'Eglise Evangelique Francaise de New-York. The church was given a new facade in 1886, possibly influenced by the new Catholic Apostolic Church, to the design of Alfred D.F. Hamlin (Alt. 1181-1886).
11. Montgomery Schuyler, "The Works of Francis H. Kimball," *Architectural Record* (Apr.-June 1898), 479-518; "Francis H. Kimball," *NCAB* 15 (1916), 79; Record and Guide, *A History of Real Estate, Building and Architecture in New York* (N.Y.: Arno Pr., 1967), reprinted of 1898 edit., 698-699; LPC, architects files, *Trinity Building Designation Report* (LP-1557) (N.Y.: City of New York, 1988), prepared by Elisa Urbanelli, and J. & W. Seligman & Co. *Building Designation Report* (LP-1943) and *Empire Building Designation Report* (LP-1933) (N.Y.: City of New York, 1996), both prepared by Jay Shockley; "F.H. Kimball A Bankrupt," *NYT*, Apr. 4, 1917, 20; Christopher D. Armstrong, "Qui Transtulit Sustinet: William Burges, Francis Kimball, and the Architecture of Hartford's Trinity College," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (June 2000), 194-215.
12. This was aside from a brief partnership with Henry S. Ihnen in 1886. Their firm designed a notable warehouse at 135 Hudson Street for Edward M. Cary in 1886-87, now located within the Tribeca West Historic District.
13. Emmanuel Baptist Church, New York Architectural Terra Cotta Co. Building, and Riverdale Presbyterian Chapel are designated New York City Landmarks. The Montauk Club is located within the Park Slope Historic District.
14. The building was designed as the result of a competition during which they formed their partnership.
15. The Waldo Mansion and Standard Oil and Empire Buildings are designated New York City Landmarks. A portion of the firm's design for Standard Oil is still visible on the New Street elevation.
16. The Trinity and U.S. Realty and Seligman Co. Buildings are designated New York City Landmarks.
17. These buildings were later combined as the General Motors Corp. Building, which is a designated New York City Landmark.
18. Kimball obit., *NYT*, Dec. 29, 1919, 9.
19. New York County; New York City, Dept. of Buildings, Manhattan, Plans, Permits and Dockets (NB 511-1885); Krawchuk; "Corner-Stone of the Apostolic Church," undated 1885 newspaper clipping, cited in Krawchuk, 11; "The Catholic Apostolic Church," *Real Estate Record & Guide (REMG)*, Jan. 7, 1888, 2, and Jan. 14, 1888, 36; *NYT*, Dec. 4, 1893; Thomas Cusack, "Church Architecture in Materials of Clay," *Brickbuilder* (Mar. 1899), 48-49; *New York City Directories* (1885-95); "David M. Fackler," *Amherst College Biographical Record, Centennial Edition (1821-1921)*, [www.amherst.edu](http://www.amherst.edu) website; Robert A.M. Stern, Thomas Mellins, and David Fishman, *New York 1880: Architecture and Urbanism in the Gilded Age* (N.Y.: Monacelli



- Pr., 1999), 306; Peter and Linda Murray, *Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture* (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1996), 171-172; Jennifer Speake, *Dent Dictionary of Symbols in Christian Art* (London: Orion Publ. Group, 1994), 7 and 27.
20. Shaw, 136.
  21. See: C.M. Smart, Jr., *Muscular Churches: Ecclesiastical Architecture of the High Victorian Period* (Fayetteville: Univ. of Arkansas Pr., 1989).
  22. See: Ibid, 152 and 154. According to J. Mordaunt Cook, in *William Burges and the High Victorian Dream* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Pr., 1981), 201-202, Burges "took particular trouble" over the design of the "Four Evangelistic Beasts." He and the sculptor, Thomas Nicholls, were partially inspired by reliefs in the British Museum. Drawings of the figures, taken from Richard P. Pullen, *Architectural Designs of the Late William Burges*, were published in the *English Building News* (June 22, 1883), 856 and pl. Kimball's use of only two of the four beasts is considered unusual.
  23. These architects included George Birdlake and James Cubitt in England. See Krawchuk.
  24. *REG*, Jan. 7, 1888.
  25. *REG*, Jan. 14, 1888.
  26. Schuyler, 493.
  27. Cusack, 49.
  28. This section was adapted from: LPC, *Potter Building Designation Report* (LP-1948)(N.Y.: City of New York, 1996), prepared by Jay Shockley. Boston Terra Cotta Co., *Catalogue* (Boston: P.H. Foster & Co., 1884 and 1885); Walter Geer, *Terra-Cotta in Architecture* (N.Y.: Gazlay Bros., 1891) and *The Story of Terra Cotta* (N.Y.: Tobias A. Wright, 1920); "The Use of Terra Cotta in Building," *REG*, Mar. 3, 1883, 85; Charles T. Davis, "Architectural Terra Cotta - I," *American Architect and Building News*, June 6, 1885, 267; Michael Stratton, *The Terra Cotta Revival* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1993); Robert C. Mack, "The Manufacture and Use of Architectural Terra Cotta in the United States," *The Technology of Historic American Buildings: Studies of the Materials, Craft Processes, and the Mechanization of Building Construction*, H. Ward Jandl, ed. (Washington: Fdn. for Pres. Technol., 1983), 117-119; Susan Tunick, "Architectural Terra Cotta: Its Impact on New York," *Sites* 18 (1986); Record and Guide, ["A Review of Architectural Terra-cotta," James Taylor], 509-528; James Taylor, "The History of Terra Cotta in New York City," *Architectural Record* 2 (Oct.-Dec. 1892), 137-148; "Artistic Brickwork -- The Morse Building," *Carpentry and Building* 1 (June and July 1879), 101-103 and 121-123.
  29. Historians of terra cotta credit the Trinity Building (1851-53, Richard Upjohn, demolished), 111 Broadway, and the St. Denis Hotel (1853, James Renwick, altered), 797 Broadway, as two of the first structures in New York City to employ terra cotta for exterior architectural ornament.
  30. Geer, *Terra-Cotta ...*, 20.
  31. *REG*, Mar. 3, 1883.
  32. Davis. The building (now the Brooklyn Historical Society) is located within the Brooklyn Heights Historic District and is a designated New York City Interior Landmark.
  33. The Temple Court Building, and its Annex (1889-90, James M. Farnsworth), is a designated New York City Landmark.
  34. LPC, *Potter Building...*; Boston Terra Cotta Co. (1885); Susan Tunick, *Terra-Cotta Skyline* (N.Y. Princeton Archl. Pr., 1997); Nancy K. Jones, "American Terra Cotta and the Boston Terra Cotta Company, 1880-1893" (thesis, Tufts Univ., 2000).
  35. Boston Terra Cotta Co. (1885), 8a.
  36. Tunick, *Terra-Cotta ...*, 6.

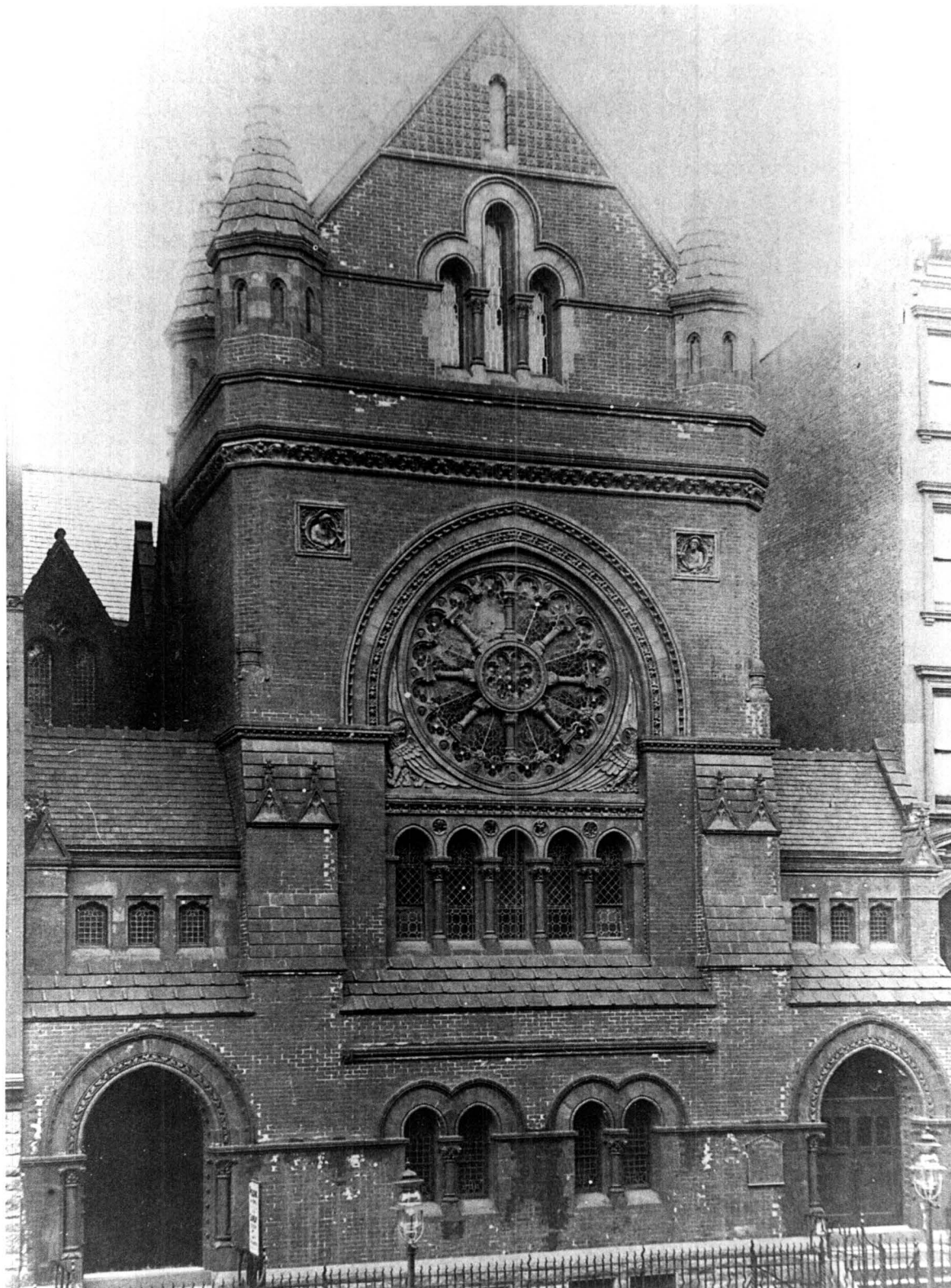
37. Taylor advised the founders of the A. Hall & Sons Fire Brick Works in 1877 (Perth Amboy Terra Cotta Co. after 1879) in New Jersey.
38. Nos. 19 and 21 East 17<sup>th</sup> Street are located within the Ladies Mile Historic District; No. 746-750 Broadway is located within the NoHo Historic District; Grace M.E. Church is located within the Park Slope Historic District; Chelsea Apartments, Potter Building, and YMCA Institute Building are designated New York City Landmarks; and Mercantile Exchange is located within the Tribeca West Historic District.
39. It is not clear whether this resulted from his experience with the Potter Building, realization of the demand for and potential profits from terra cotta, or from being convinced by or convincing Taylor of the need for a company in New York.
40. *RERG*, Jan. 7, 1888.
41. This similarity was noted by Susan Tunick, expert on American terra cotta. For a photograph of the fireplace, see fig. 29, Tunick, *Terra-Cotta ...*, 27. The author would like to thank Ms. Tunick for her comments regarding Taylor's link with this "signature" texture.
42. Taylor, "The History...", 145.
43. Schuyler, 493-494.
44. Cusack, 48-49.
45. This also recalls the statement found in the Boston Terra Cotta Co.'s 1885 catalogue, which declared that the terra cotta on the Potter Building was "used constructively -- fully demonstrating the great bearing strength (when properly set) of the work made by the Boston Terra Cotta Co." Boston Terra Cotta Co. (1885), 92B.
46. The Boston Terra Cotta Co. had two resident sculptors in the 1880s, Truman Howe Bartlett and Stephen Kelly. Jones, 48 and 52. Caspar Buberl, a Bohemian emigre sculptor with a studio in New York after 1882, also sculpted for a number of projects in which the terra cotta was manufactured by the Boston company, notably the Pension Building (1882-85, Montgomery C. Meigs), Washington, and the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch (1884-86, George Keller), Hartford. David F. Ransom, *George Keller, Architect* (Hartford: Stowe-Day Fdtn., 1978); Kathryn A. Jacob, *Testament to Union: Civil War Monuments in Washington, D.C.* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Pr., 1998), 63-68.
47. Christopher Gray, "On West 57<sup>th</sup> Street, a Striking Victorian Sanctuary," *NYT*, July 7, 1996, VIII, 5; Bur. of the Census.
48. Moses King, *King's Handbook of New York City* (Boston: M. King, 1893), 389.
49. *NYT*, Dec. 4, 1893.
50. NYC, Dept. of Bdgs. (NB 313-1893); N.Y. County. The lot had been conveyed to Stephen R. Rintoul and Carl W. Spitzner for this congregation.
51. Shaw, 132.
52. DuBois obit., *NYT*, May 7, 1949, 13.
53. Church for All Nations, "Our Building's History," [www.cfan.net](http://www.cfan.net) website.

## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

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 Catholic Apostolic Church (now Church for All Nations) has a special character and a 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 Catholic Apostolic Church, built in 1885-86, was one of architect Francis H. Kimball's earliest independent commissions in New York City; that Kimball had previously worked mostly in Hartford, Connecticut, where he supervised the construction of the Collegiate Gothic style buildings at Trinity College designed by English architect-theorist William Burges, and where the foremost leaders of the Church were residents and would have known his work; that, a Christian pentecostal sect established in England in the 1830s, the Catholic Apostolic Church formed a congregation in New York City in 1851; that Kimball's beautiful design, executed in red brick laid in running bond and extensive red terra cotta above a brownstone base, is a sophisticated and original essay in the "muscular" Victorian Gothic style, as influenced by Burges, as well as a masterful solution for a small midblock church, for a congregation with limited resources; that the church was widely admired for its design, proportions, color, beauty of materials, vigorous composition built around a central tower form, skilled ornament, and innovative use of terra cotta, and that noted critic Montgomery Schuyler called it the most "scholarly Gothic work in New York"; that Kimball was in the forefront of architects in using exterior architectural terra cotta in New York during this period, and the Catholic Apostolic Church is significant in the history of American terra cotta; that it was one of the earliest churches in New York to employ structural terra cotta, that was manufactured by the Boston Terra Cotta Co., the leading East Coast terra cotta firm at the time, and that the terra cotta's texture indicates the involvement of James Taylor, "the father of American terra cotta" who was then superintendent of the company; that the facade of the church is dominated by a central rose window within a pointed-arched surround, one of the most complex elements yet attempted in terra cotta in the United States, and that the sculptural ornament also incorporates iconography referring to Apostle-Evangelists and angels; that, despite dwindling membership, the Catholic Apostolic Church retained its building until 1995, when it was donated to the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and remains in use as the Church for All Nations; and that the virtually unaltered Catholic Apostolic Church building is considered to be one of the finest late-nineteenth-century churches in New York City.

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 Catholic Apostolic Church (now Church for All Nations), 417-419 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Manhattan Tax Map Block 1067, Lot 24, as its Landmark Site.



**Catholic Apostolic Church** (c. 1886)  
Source: New-York Historical Society



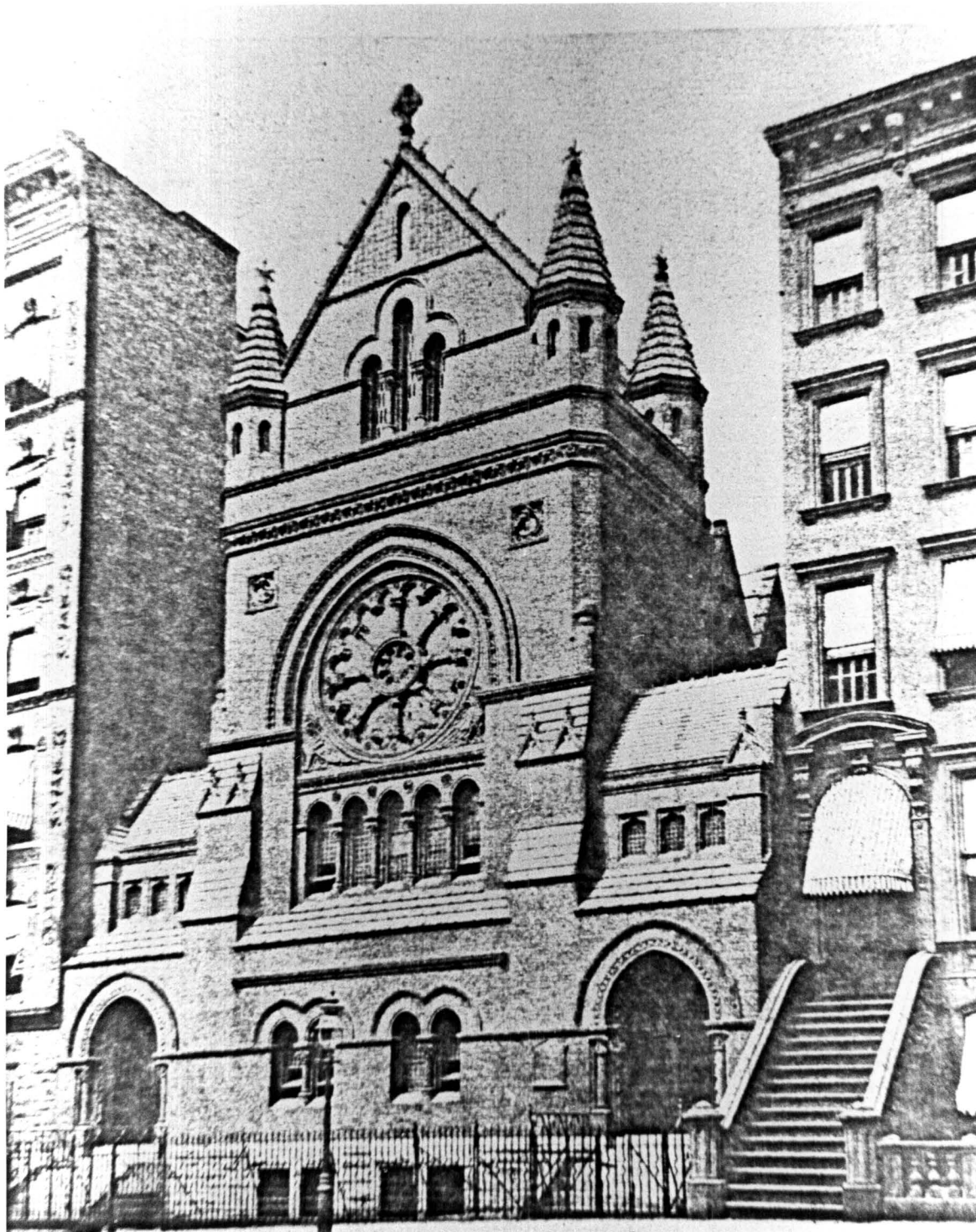


(top) **Francis H. Kimball**, architect

Source: Moses King, *King's Notable New Yorkers* (1899)

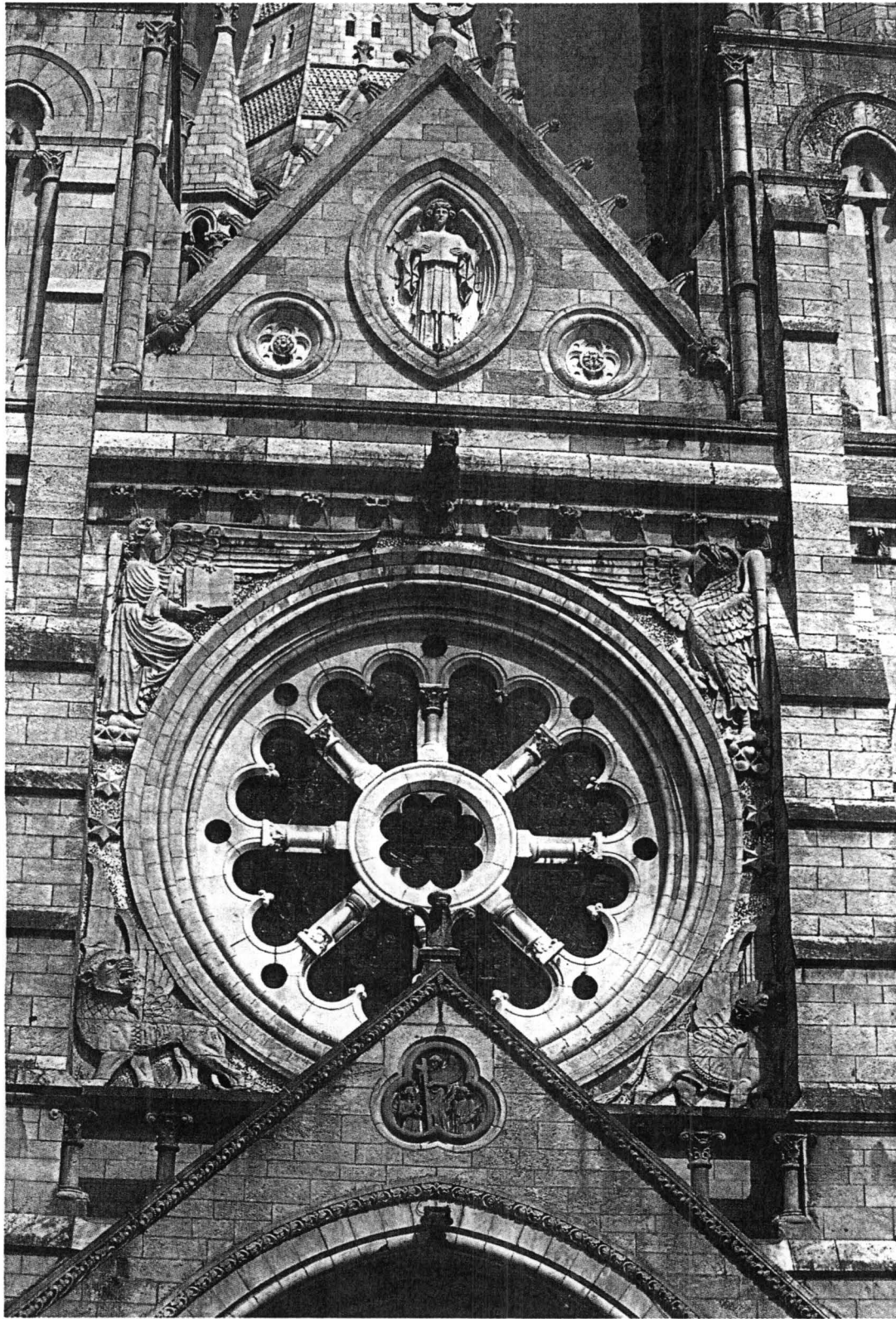
(bottom) **James Taylor** (c. 1885), superintendent, Boston Terra Cotta Co.

Source: Susan Tunick, *Terra-Cotta Skyline*



**Catholic Apostolic Church** (c. 1886)

Source: *Architectural Record*, (Apr.-June 1898)

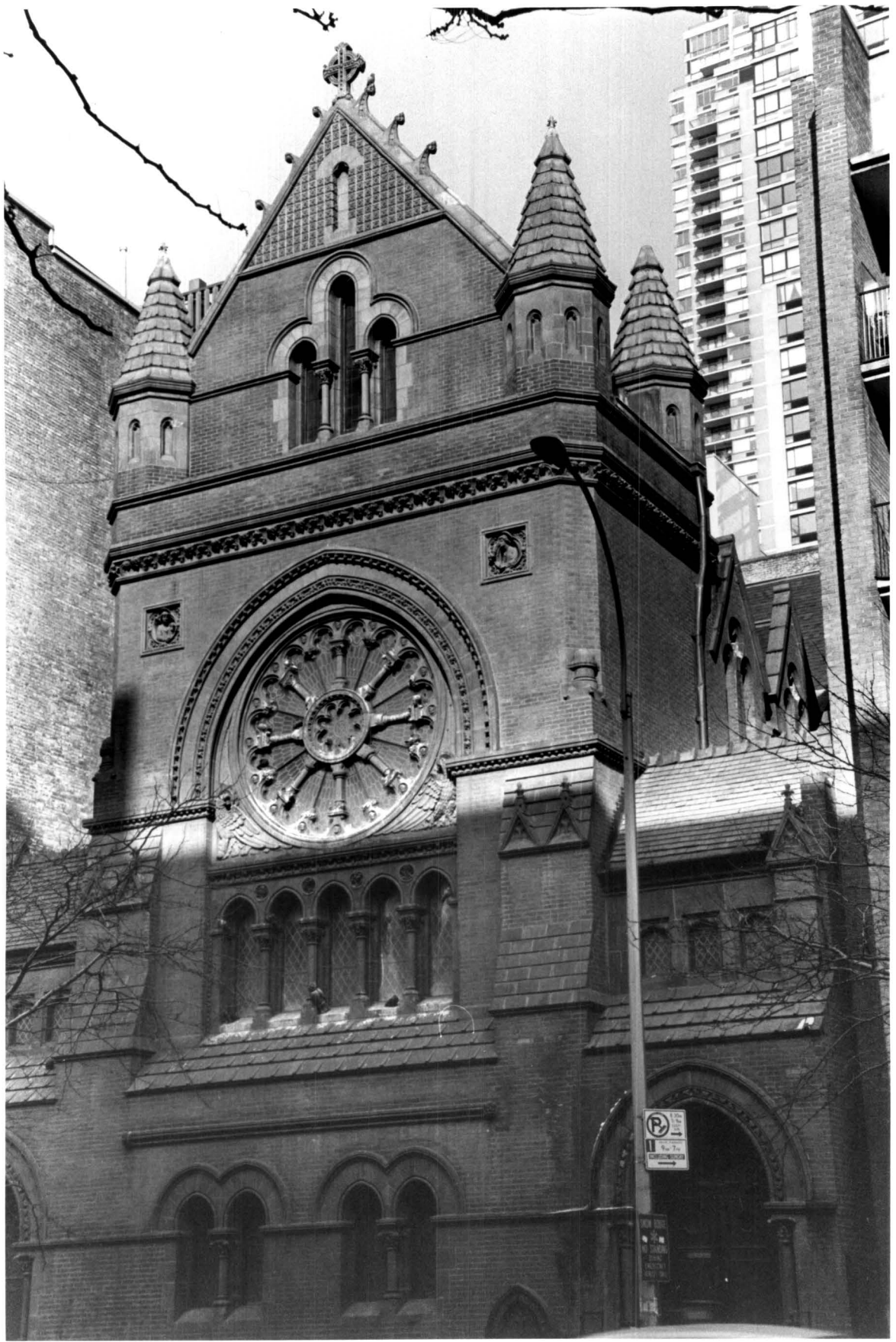


**St. Fin Barre's Cathedral** (1863-79, William Burges), Cork, Ireland

Rose Window and Four Evangelistic Beasts

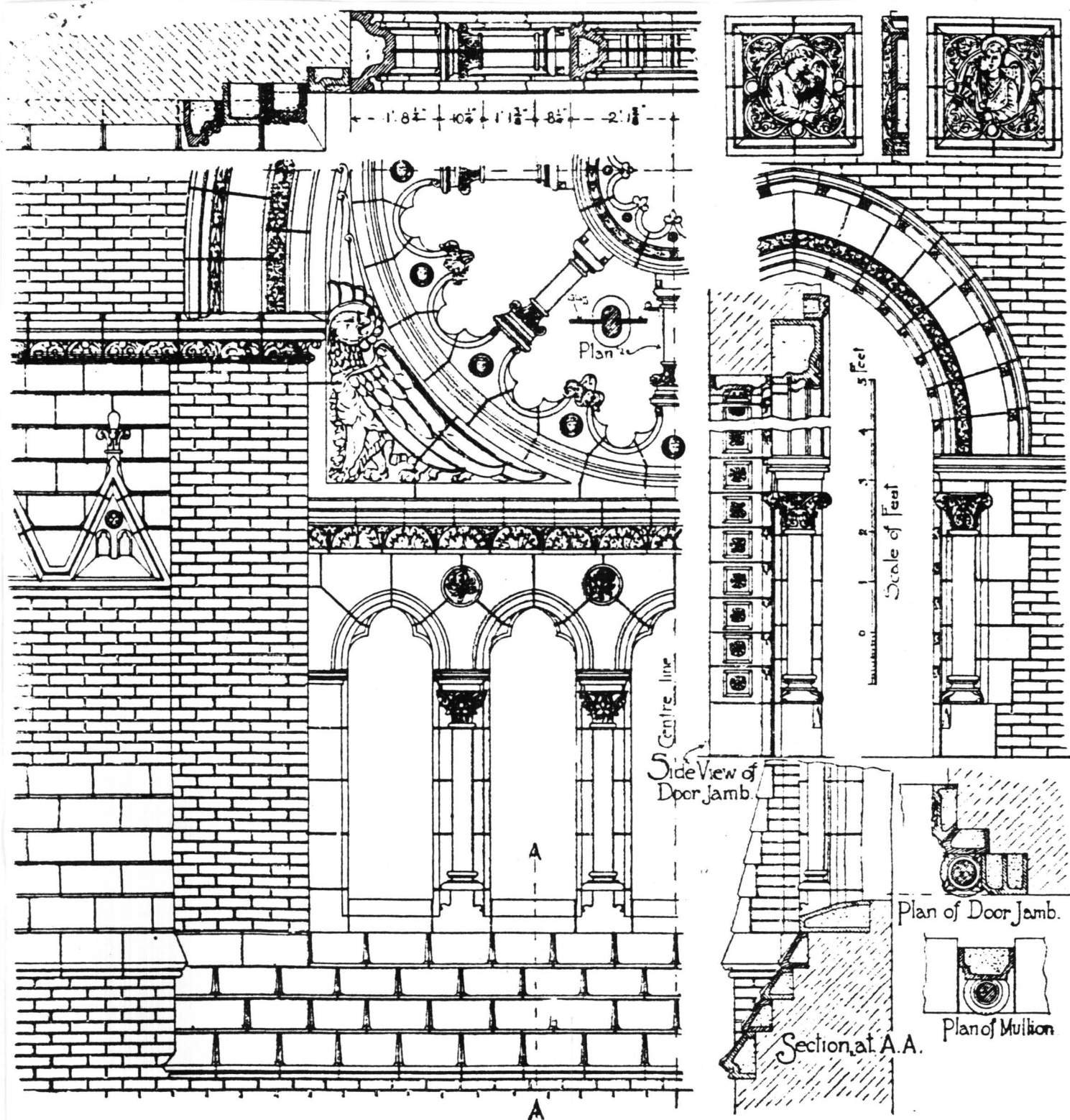
Source: C.M. Smart, Jr., *Muscular Churches: Ecclesiastical Architecture of the High Victorian Period*



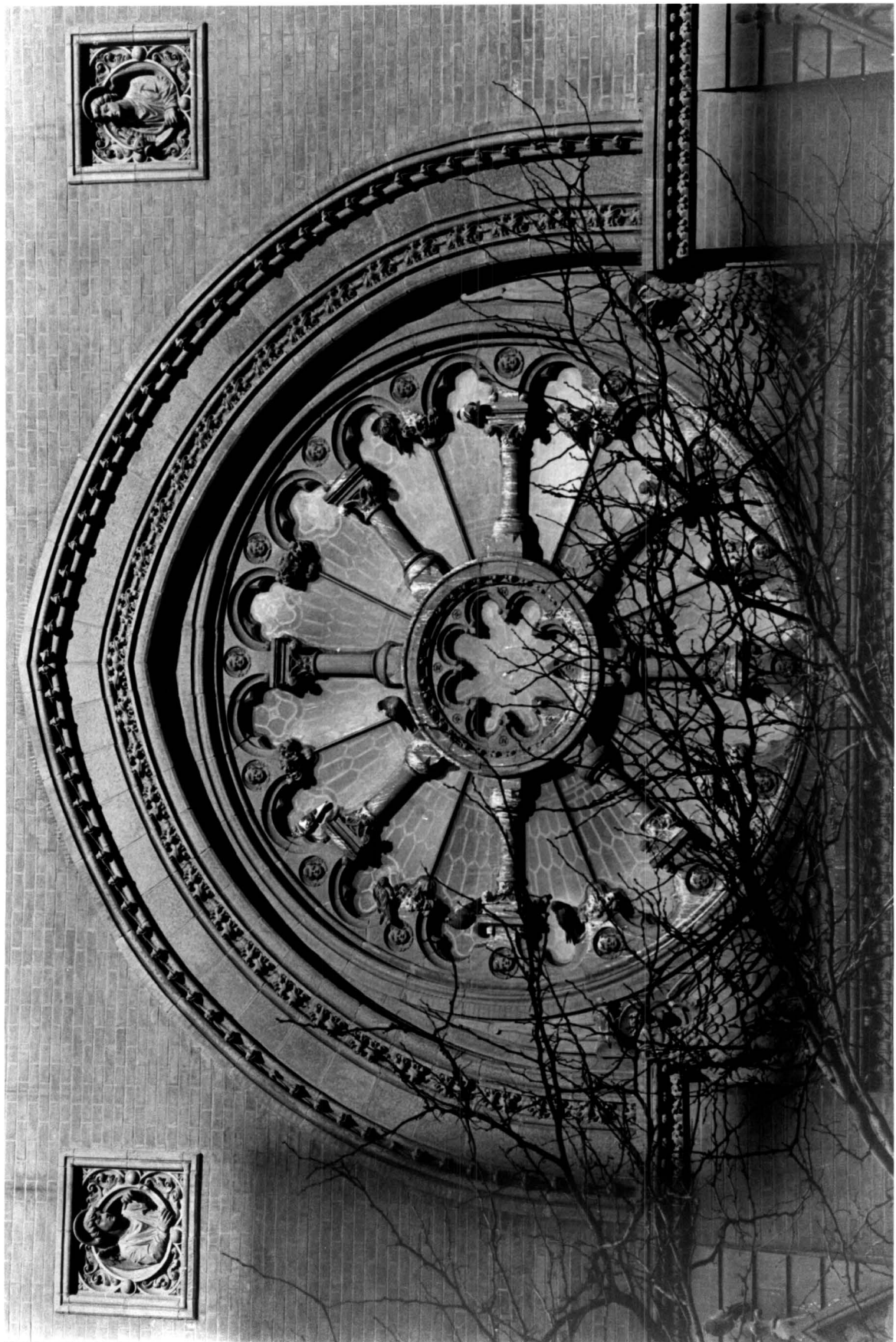


Catholic Apostolic Church  
Photo: Carl Forster





Catholic Apostolic Church, terra-cotta details  
Source: *Brickbuilder* (March 1899)

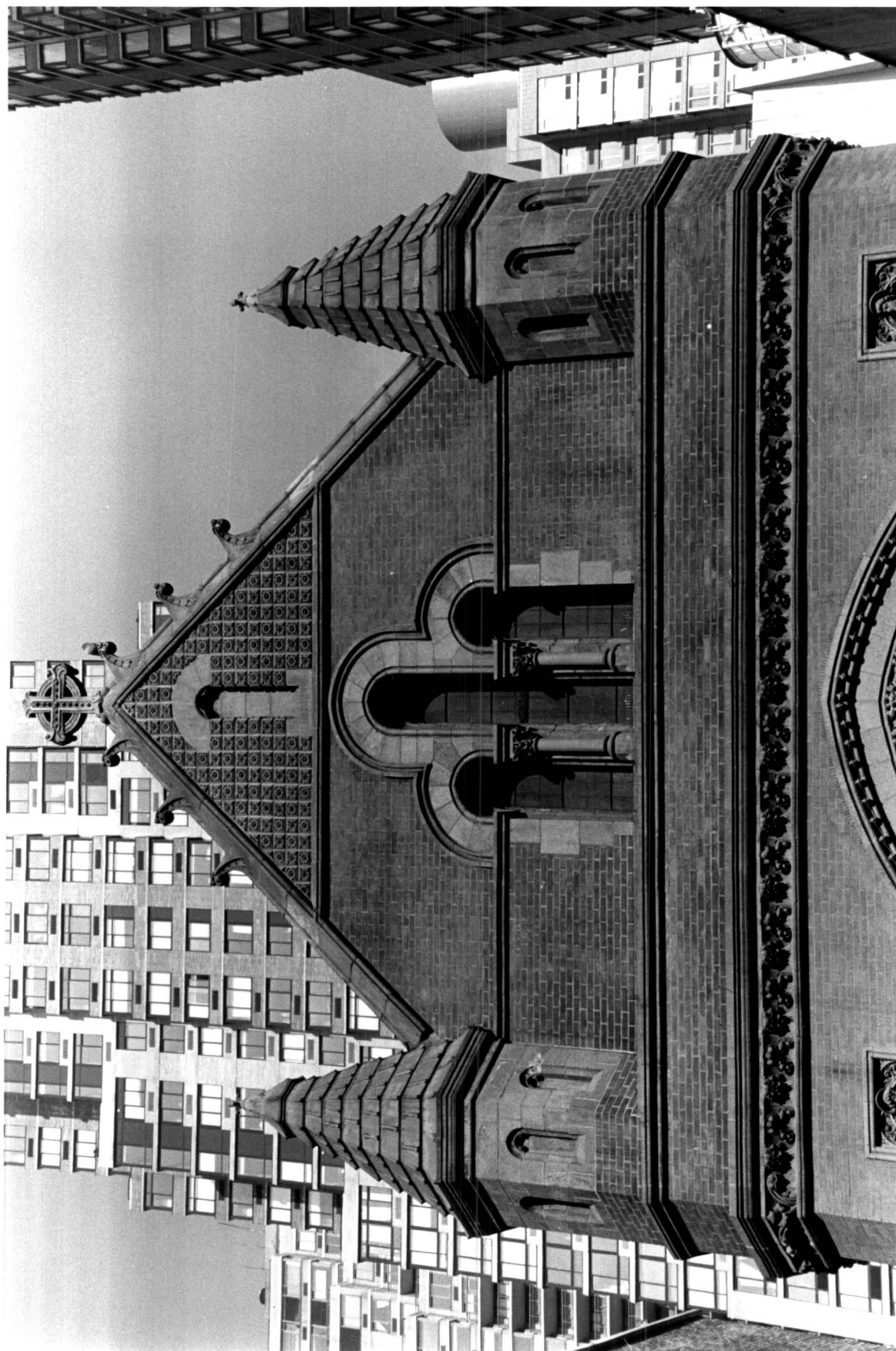


**Catholic Apostolic Church, rose window**  
Photo: Carl Forster



**Catholic Apostolic Church,** gable and turret details  
Photos: Carl Forster





Catholic Apostolic Church, gable  
Photo: Carl Forster





**Catholic Apostolic Church**

terra-cotta eagle, representing Apostle-Evangelist St. John

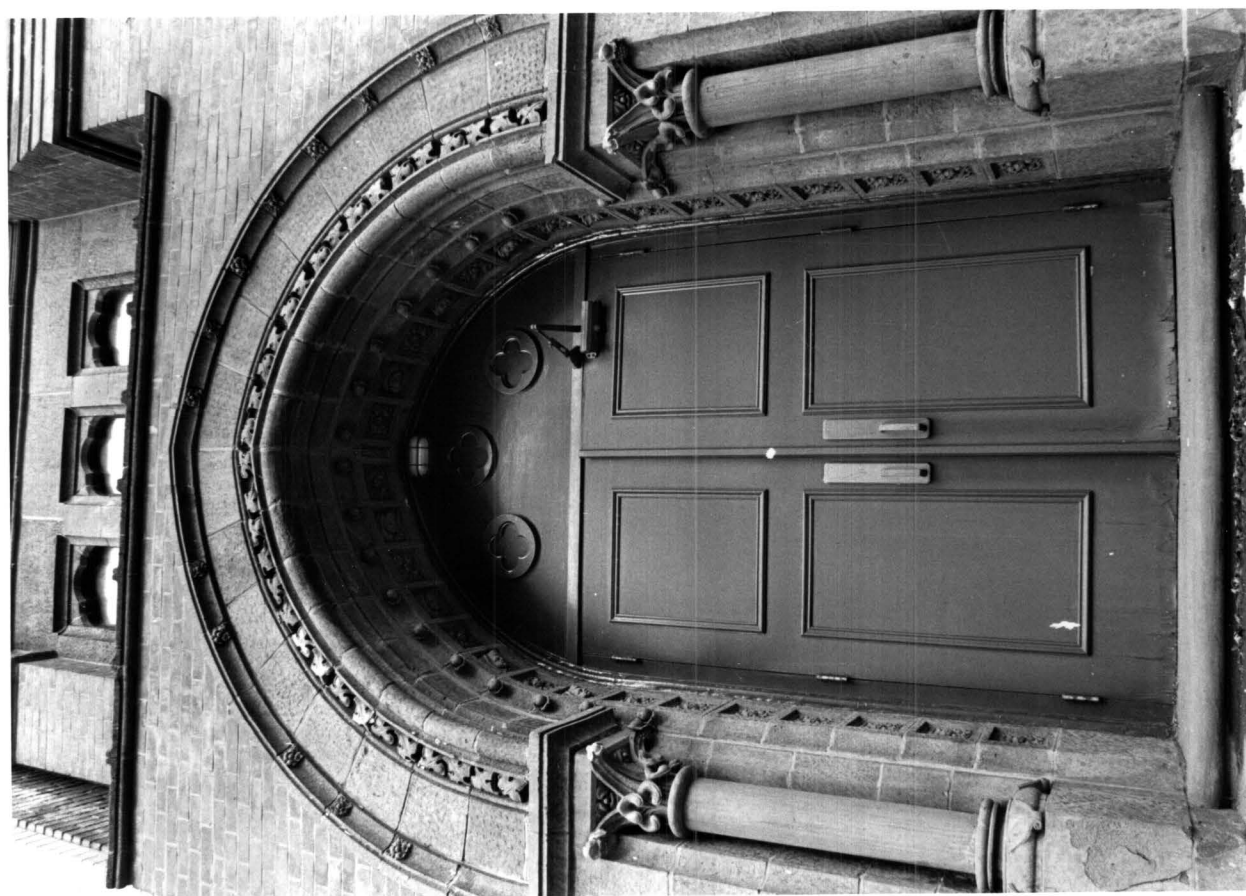
Photo: Carl Forster



**Catholic Apostolic Church**

terra-cotta winged lion, representing Apostle-Evangelist St. Mark

Photo: Carl Forster



**Catholic Apostolic Church**

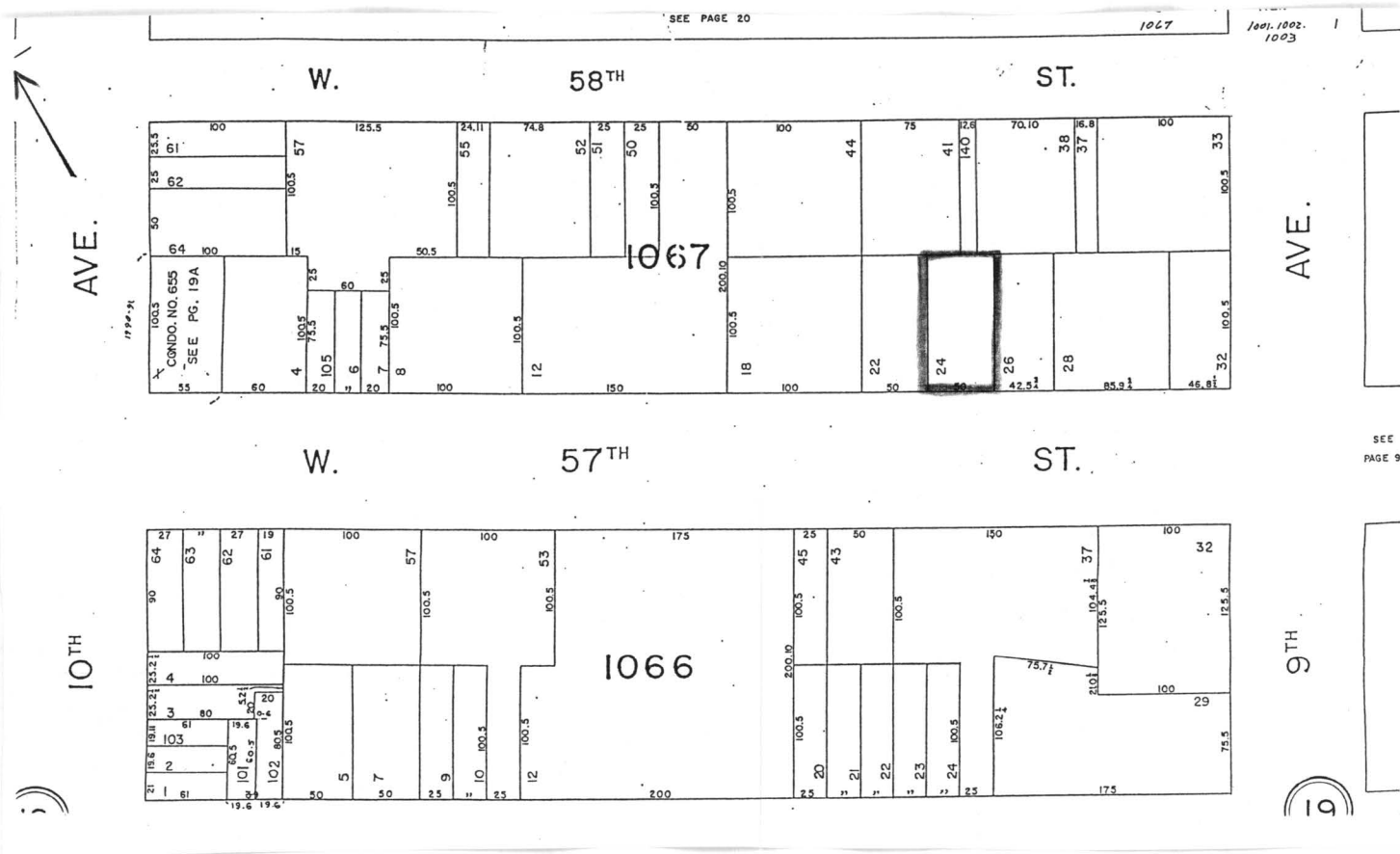
(left) entrance (right) terra-cotta blocks displaying combed texture

Photos: Carl Forster



Catholic Apostolic Church, terra-cotta angel plaques  
Photos: Carl Forster





**Catholic Apostolic Church** (Now Church for All Nations)  
 Landmark Site: Manhattan Tax Map Block 1067, Lot 24  
 Source: Dept. of Finance, City Surveyor, Tax Map

