

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, Rutherford Place at 16th Street, Borough of Manhattan. Begun 1846, completed 1856 (restored after fire according to original plan, 1867); architects Blesch & Eidlitz.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 897, Lot 53.

On April 12, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of St. George's Church and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 26). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Four witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. In a letter to the Commission, the Vestry of the Church indicated it approved of the proposed designation.

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Many buildings in New York are difficult to encompass fully because they are so often located in blocks facing on narrow streets. In the case of St. George's Church, however, beautifully located on a corner site facing a public square, it is possible to get an uninterrupted view of two sides with no intervening obstructions. This massive exterior radiates solidity and creates an impression of permanence on the west side of Stuyvesant Square.

A fine rose window is a conspicuous feature of the heavily decorated end gable of the nave. The color of the smooth sandstone (brownstone) facing is handsome, as are the two Romanesque towers flanking the three arched entrances with arcade above. Although the towers once had spires, they nonetheless appear satisfactorily complete without them. The high sturdy buttresses along the south side of the Church, placed between the windows of the nave, and the small decorative arches (corbelling) along the edge of the roof are consistently in character with the details of the impressive front.

The cornerstone of St. George's Church was laid in 1846; the Church opened for services in 1848, and the building was completed in 1856. The edifice was built on land donated by Peter Stuyvesant and is adjacent to the park which was named for that benefactor. At the time the Church was built, according to a diarist of 1848, this area was "a howling wilderness". In 1865, the Church was partly destroyed by a fire, rebuilt according to its original plan and reopened in 1867. Originally, beautiful spires, displaying handsome open stone work, adorned the church, but they were declared unsafe in 1888 and removed the following year. In 1964 parts of the exterior and all of the interior surfaces were renovated and restored.

#### 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 St. George's 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. George's Church is one of the great examples of Romanesque Revival architecture in New York, that it has characteristics which may be identified with the sturdy Romanesque architecture of South Germany, that it is notable for its excellent detail and that it makes a significant contribution to the architectural beauty of Stuyvesant Square.

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. George's Church, Rutherford Place at 16th Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 897, Lot 53, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.