

ST. PHILIP'S PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

210-216 West 134th Street, Borough of Manhattan.

Built 1910-11; architects Vertner W. Tandy and George W. Foster, Jr.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1939, Lot 40.

On July 15, 1991, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the St. Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 13). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A representative of the owner testified in favor of designation. Eight additional speakers were in favor of the designation of this and the other items on the calendar at the hearing but urged the Commission to continue its work in Harlem. Numerous letters have been received expressing the same sentiments. Representatives of the church have indicated their support for this designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Summary

St. Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church, built in 1910-11, is the fourth home of New York City's first African-American congregation of Protestant Episcopalians. From its beginnings as the African Episcopal Catechetical Institution in the City of New York shortly after the American Revolution, St. Philip's was established as its own parish in 1818 under the leadership of Bishop John Henry Hobart and the Reverend Peter Williams, Jr. St. Philip's long and inspiring chronicle of religious and social activism adds a depth to our national history not generally acknowledged. The movement of St. Philip's congregation northward, beginning in lower Manhattan, to the present location in Harlem, reflects the residential patterns of New York City's African-American population. When the Reverend Hutchens Chew Bishop purchased residential property in Harlem in 1908 on behalf of St. Philip's and the church building was constructed at its present location, St. Philip's became one of the first institutions to attract African-Americans to Harlem. St. Philip's Church building was designed in the neo-Gothic style by the firm of Tandy & Foster. The design of the facade, a response to certain liturgical requirements, incorporates fourteenth-century English, or Perpendicular, Gothic elements in contrasting orange Roman brick and cast-stone aggregate. Vertner W. Tandy was the first African-American architect to be registered in the State of New York and George Washington Foster, Jr., was among the first African-Americans to practice within the architectural profession in the United States. St. Philip's has continued its nearly two hundred-year tradition of service to its congregation and community, addressing the spiritual needs of its members and providing a variety of social programs.

History of Harlem 1658-1920s¹

Harlem, originally called Nieuw Haarlem, takes its name from the Dutch city of Haarlem. In 1658 the village was established by Peter Stuyvesant about ten miles north of New Amsterdam along the "Harlem Road," a Lenape Indian trail widened by the enslaved black workers of the Dutch West India Company. From the colonial period through the nineteenth century Harlem's distance from lower Manhattan -- 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 families, including the Delanceys, Beekmans, Bleeckers, Rikers and Hamiltons.

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 newly arrived and poor immigrants who made homes in scattered shantytowns. However, despite the completion of the New York & Harlem railroad in 1837, development of the Harlem area for residential use was slow. By the Civil War, Harlem's appeal for downtowners was as a favorite rural spot close enough to the city for day trips and picnics.

As the population of New York increased after the War, residential development spread more rapidly. 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 West 138th and West 139th Streets (later known as "Strivers' Row," located in the St. Nicholas Historic District) helped establish Harlem as a fashionable community.

The character of Harlem changed even more 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; however, excessive vacancies forced a collapse in the Harlem real estate market prior to the completion of the subway.

Philip Payton, a black realtor who founded the Afro-American Realty Company in 1904, recognized the possibilities the deflated real-estate market and the finished subway offered. Promoting the easy access to Harlem via the new West Side subway (I.R.T) to 145th Street, Payton negotiated leases on properties owned by whites and rented them to blacks. By 1907 Thomas Nail, another black realtor, was encouraging religious institutions like St. Philip's not only to establish themselves in Harlem but to buy existing improved properties. Despite the fact that they were often charged higher rents than were whites, New York's black middle class -- long denied access to "better" neighborhoods -- took advantage of the opportunity for new, comfortable housing and moved uptown. With the introduction of the Seventh Avenue subway and the construction of Pennsylvania Station in 1906, intense real-estate speculation ensued; twelve- and fifteen-story loft buildings began to rise on the streets ten blocks north and south of the new station site where once there had been three- and four-story rowhouses. In the Tenderloin District, a predominantly black neighborhood near 34th Street, these changes displaced many families, sending them north to Harlem where good 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 black churches which were once located in lower Manhattan had moved northward along with their congregations. By 1925, New York City's black population was over 250,000 and most lived in Harlem.

Early History of Saint Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church²

The origins of St. Philip's Church can be found in the London-based Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, organized in 1702. In 1704, under the Society's auspices, a conforming French Protestant, Elias Neau, opened what, in 1922, was described as "a School for Negroes."³

Following Neau's death in 1772, this school, still under the Society's sponsorship, was directed by a succession of assistant ministers of Trinity Parish up until the Revolution.⁴ Following the Revolution, Trinity Parish became responsible for the school and its name was changed, c. 1800, to the "African Episcopal Catechetical Institution in the City of New York." The Institution first met on Sunday afternoons for religious instruction and worship at Trinity Church, Broadway at Wall Street, but in 1809 withdrew from Trinity to move as the Free African Church of St. Philip to various rented spaces.⁵

Saint Philip's Church was officially established during the tenure of John Henry Hobart (1775-1830) as the third Episcopal Bishop of New York (1816-1830). Following the American Revolution the former Church of England had to adjust to the standards of the new republic: sections of the liturgy were changed; the laity took an equal share with the clergy in church government; and the church took steps to proselytize and convert. It is to Hobart, an able administrator and inspired evangelist, that much of the credit for consolidating the Protestant Episcopal Church in New York is given. Hobart had been called to Trinity Parish as an assistant minister in 1801. It is likely that, among his other duties in that capacity, he served as a spiritual guide to the African Episcopal Catechetical Institution. Subsequently, as the eighth rector of Trinity, he established the General Theological Seminary (1806) and the Protestant Episcopal Tract Society (1810), and as Bishop, the Protestant Episcopal Press and the New York Sunday School Society, both in 1817. The *Anniversary Book of St. Philip's Church*, bolstered by evidence of continued appropriations entered in the transactions of the Wardens and Vestry of Trinity Parish, demonstrates that Hobart had an abiding interest in and concern for this fledgling, urban congregation.⁶

An 1807 entry in the Trinity Parish records indicates that Trinity Church gave land on Chrystie Street, near Stanton, to be used as a burying ground for African-American worshippers within Trinity Parish but retained supervision with the proviso only that in the event an Episcopal Church for "colored people" was organized, this burying

ground would become this church's property.⁷ Then, in 1812 Peter Williams, Jr. (1780-1840), who had been a member of the Catechetical Institution, was appointed lay reader of the growing flock within the Free African Church of St. Philip, numbering among them men and women 'in service,' free tradesmen, and skilled laborers. In 1818 Hobart recognized the Free African Church as a distinct Protestant Episcopal parish, the tenth in New York City, and confirmed its dedication to Saint Philip.⁸ The new church's first child, Samuel Saltus Thomas, son of William and Elsie Thomas, was baptized on July 19. The tobacconist George Lorillard, a Trinity parishioner, leased a lot on Collect Street (now Centre) to the new church with the stipulation that at the end of the lease this property become the church's. Another Trinity parishioner, Jacob Sherred, had bequeathed St. Philip's enough money to construct a frame building; the cornerstone was laid on August 6, 1818.⁹ Two years later Bishop Hobart raised Peter Williams to the diaconate in a ceremony held within the new St. Philip's. Following a fire in December, 1821, a new brick church building was consecrated on December 31, 1822. In May, 1826, Deacon Williams presented 115 persons to the bishop for confirmation,¹⁰ and two months later Williams was ordained a priest and appointed as St. Philip's first rector. The following year the Chrystie Street burying ground was conveyed to St. Philip's by Trinity Church.

In the decade that followed, the Reverend Williams addressed matters of particular importance to this African-American congregation: the issue of slavery; the training of qualified younger men to carry the Protestant Episcopal Church's message not only to other African-Americans but to ensuing generations; and representation within the Protestant Episcopal Convention. But Hobart's successor to the bishop's chair, Benjamin Tredwell Onderdonck (1791-1861), appointed in 1830, was more conservative and opportunities for parish participation within the diocese were not fostered. In 1834 Williams was advised by the bishop to resign from the Anti-Slavery Society.¹¹ Onderdonck refused the admission of African-Americans Isaiah G. DeGrasse (1813-1841) and

Alexander Crummell (1819-?) to the General Theological Seminary in 1836 and in 1839 respectively.¹² Both were sons of Saint Philip's parish and both were sponsored by Peter Williams. When, just before his death in 1840, Williams had sought admission for St. Philip's to the Protestant Episcopal Convention of the New York diocese, he was refused.¹³ It was fitting yet ironic that Onderdonck, as presiding bishop, administered the last rites at Williams' funeral service.

The responsibility of carrying on a ministry at St. Philip's, as well as the management of the church's affairs, fell to the dedicated wardens and vestrymen whom Williams had nurtured and trained. Touchingly evident, as recorded throughout the Minutes of the Vestry, was the congregation's desire for a suitable rector of their own race.¹⁴ It was not until 1853 that the parish was finally admitted to the Diocesan Convention. The vestry acknowledged John Jay (1817-1894), lawyer, diplomat and grandson of the United States Supreme Court Chief-Justice, and counsel for many of those subject to the Fugitive-Slave Law (1850), for his support in winning this representation.¹⁵ Selling the church's former home on Centre Street, St. Philip's vestry purchased a larger church building, formerly St. Paul's Methodist Church, on Mulberry Street in 1857. Alterations to fit the chancel to Protestant Episcopal usage were completed two years later.

Horatio Potter (1802-1887) succeeded Bishop Onderdonck, first as the provisional bishop in 1854 and after Onderdonck's death, as bishop. In 1860 William Johnston Alston (1827-1874) was called as officiating minister of St. Philip's. Ordained by Potter that same year, Alston cut short his three-year appointment by one year to accept the rectorate of Saint Thomas' Church in Philadelphia.¹⁶ It fell to the vestry to guide the congregation through the Draft Riots of July, 1863, a reign of terror in which African-Americans were a particular target.¹⁷ Rioting erupted in disparate sections of the city, among them Mulberry Street. New York was subjected to martial law and soldiers used St. Philip's as a barracks. Although the United States government paid a rent of \$333.33 and the City remitted \$1,100. for damages, St. Philip's vestry had to make up the \$1,000. difference for the interior

renovation that this occupation necessitated. In 1872 Alston returned to St. Philip's as rector but he died two years later. His successor, Joseph Sandford Atwell, was installed as rector on October 10, 1875, by Bishop Potter.¹⁸ Atwell's administration was an active one: he initiated a Sinking Fund toward the eventual retirement of the church's mortgage; he extended the chancel and had its interior frescoed;¹⁹ he organized a boys' choir and he established a church library. But his rectorate was also short; he died in 1881.

In September, 1883, the "First Convocation of the Colored Clergy of the Protestant-Episcopal Church in the United States of America" was held at the Church of the Holy Communion, Sixth Avenue and 20th Street at which seasoned African-American churchmen were brought together with their younger colleagues to plan how to promote the church among all African-Americans, especially those in the South.²⁰ Present were representatives from eighteen African-American parishes in cities as far-flung as Brooklyn, New Orleans, Omaha, Pittsburgh, Raleigh, and Richmond. The Reverend John Peterson, a deacon, and several vestrymen represented St. Philip's, New York. Representing St. Mary-the-Virgin, Baltimore, was the Reverend Hutchens Chew Bishop, the recently ordained assistant minister. At this convocation Bishop served on the Committee to Confer with the Sewanee Committee, the Committee on Statistics of all "Colored" Churches in the United States, and the Committee on Sermons (with Alexander Crummell). No stranger to St. Philips, Bishop had trained the boys' choir in the summer of 1879.²¹

Hutchens Chew Bishop (1858-1937), born in Baltimore, the son of William Hutchens and Elizabeth Chew Bishop, was christened at Saint James, the first African-American Protestant Episcopal church in Baltimore. As his parents had supported Saint James, his brothers and sisters became leaders in the organization of Baltimore's second African-American congregation, the Anglo-Catholic Chapel of Saint Mary-the-Virgin in the Parish of Mount Calvary. It was at Saint Mary-the-Virgin that H. C. Bishop served successively as choir boy and acolyte and there that he was confirmed. He entered the General Theological Seminary in 1878 with the Class of 1881.²²

Hutchens Chew Bishop was the Seminary's first African-American graduate. Though Bishop was introduced to Saint Philip's while at the Seminary, his early training disposed him toward the Anglo-Catholic litany followed at the Church of Saint Mary-the-Virgin (New York), where he served both as chorister and acolyte. Bishop prepared for ordination at the Chapel of Saint Mary-the-Virgin in Baltimore, where he served as an assistant minister, but transferred to the diocese of Albany to be elevated to the priesthood by Bishop William Creswell Doane in 1883.²³ Immediately following the historic "First Convocation" he was married to Estelle Gilliam, the daughter of early members of St. Philip's Parish, and they traveled to South Carolina where Bishop had been called as assistant minister of Saint Mark's Church in Charleston. Meanwhile, the Minutes reveal that St. Philip's vestry, concerned about its own vacant rectorate, was considering three candidates. After meeting with Henry Codman Potter, then Assistant Bishop of the New York diocese, to discuss the three, St. Philip's warden Philip A. White returned to the vestry with Potter's recommendation, Dr. H. C. Bishop. In October, 1885, Bishop was called as rector to St. Philip's; he accepted the call in late November and took charge of the parish on January 1, 1886.²⁴

Dr. Bishop's dynamic, forty-seven year tenure as rector was an epoch in St. Philip's history comparable in significance to the church's earliest decades. His inclination to build was exercised immediately. The Mulberry Street church was sold and comparable space uptown was sought.²⁵ St. Philip's re-located where its presence could be most effective, first renting a church building at 161 West 25th Street from the United Presbyterian Church in 1886, then purchasing this building the following year. Many of its members had moved to the West Twenties and the church already owned property on West 30th Street.²⁶ Three architects were asked to submit plans for the building's alteration: William A. Potter, Herman Kreitler and William Halsey Wood; Kreitler was chosen and the alterations were carried out in 1888.²⁷ Invited to advise the rector and vestry in 1893, Halstead Parker Fowler of the architectural firm of Fowler & Hough opined that there was

sufficient space on West 25th Street to add a parish house and guild hall to the church itself. Instead he was commissioned the following year to design a new parish house on the church property at 127 West 30th Street, flanked by five-story tenement buildings at 125 and 129 West 30th Street. The parish house was dedicated on November 23, 1895, by Bishop H. C. Potter.²⁸

In October, 1907, St. Philip's vestry authorized Dr. Bishop to organize a "mission" in the neighborhood of 134th Street. The pressure to establish a presence in Harlem was twofold: first, the introduction of the Seventh Avenue subway and its linkage with the new Pennsylvania Station created developmental pressure; second, many African-Americans, displaced by the changes brought on by the escalating land values in this area, were moving uptown. For the two preceding years the vestry had been besieged with offers to purchase both the church, No. 159-165 West 25th Street, and the buildings on West 30th Street. Throughout 1908 Dr. Bishop, on behalf of St. Philip's, purchased tenement and rowhouse blocks along West 133rd, 134th and 135th Streets between Seventh and Eighth Avenues (now Frederick Douglass and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevards). In April, 1909, Dr. Bishop agreed upon the sale of the West 30th Street parcel; at the end of November he accepted an offer on the church parcel.²⁹ On December 12, the vestry's newly-formed building committee reported that a contract had been signed with Messrs. Tandy & Foster, Architects, to draw plans for the new church and parish house to be located at No. 204-216 West 134th Street.

The New Church and its Architects³⁰

The building's progress was reported regularly in the Minutes of the Vestry. The cornerstone was laid on June 18, 1910, by the Right Reverend Dr. Partridge, Bishop of Kyoto, Japan.³¹ The parish house was practically finished in December. The construction of the church was finished in time for its dedication by Bishop H. C. Potter on March 25, 1911, the Feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary.

The principals in the architectural firm of Tandy & Foster, active between about 1908 and 1915, were Vertner W. Tandy (1885-1949) and

George Washington Foster, Jr. (1866-1923). Born in Lexington, Kentucky, Tandy studied at the Tuskegee Institute and graduated from the School of Architecture, Cornell University in 1908.³² Shortly after, Tandy, the recent graduate, and Foster, almost twenty years his senior, formed their partnership.³³ Foster, born in Newark, New Jersey, was said to have studied architecture at Cooper Union in the late 1880s. He is believed to have worked as a draftsman in the office of Henry Hardenbergh, one of New York City's leading late nineteenth-century architects, as well as for Daniel Burnham & Co. in 1903 on the Flatiron Building.³⁴ How Dr. Bishop, the Vestrymen and Wardens came to award the commission for their new church buildings to Tandy & Foster is unknown. The firm was barely two years old, but Foster was one of the first African-Americans to practice in the architectural profession in this country and Tandy was the first African-American architect registered in the State of New York, credentials enough for St. Philip's Parish with its long history of supporting and encouraging their fellow African-Americans. Foster's late important work was the Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (1923-25) at 140-148 West 137th Street. Tandy's subsequent work included residences in Harlem and Irvington-on-the-Hudson (Villa Lewaro, 1917) for Madame C. J. Walker, cosmetics magnate, as well as Abraham Lincoln House, a state housing project at 135th Street and Lenox Avenue, Delphia Apartments at 21 Hamilton Terrace, and the new school and parish house addition at St. Philip's (1943). He was elected to the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects three years before his death. Tandy, himself, was a resident of "Strivers' Row."

In plan St. Philip's is a variation of the standard center aisle-side aisle configuration but with chapels adjacent to the side aisles. This plan facilitated circulation, a significant factor in a liturgy in which processions were an important component.³⁵ Unlike the conventional facade of a center aisle-planned church, St. Philip's has no central doorway; the principal doors are at the foot of each of the side aisles. The absence of a central door allowed the formation of processions in the narthex to be uninterrupted by latecomers or

inclement weather.³⁶ A trinitarian reference can be discerned in the tripartite window arrangement and threefold repetition of such architectural elements as pointed arches and gables on St. Philip's facade.

Building Description

The high-gabled, principal, neo-Gothic style facade of St. Philip's Church rises from its granite base at the building line on the south side of West 134th Street. This facade (and only this facade) is of orange Roman brick with trim of cast-stone aggregate.³⁷ The symmetrical composition of this facade is precisely articulated into three horizontal, though interrelated, zones: the gables above the principal doorways in the lowest zone break through the broad paneled frieze separating the lower from the middle zone; the large, pointed-arch window, chief feature of this facade, pushes its drip course, unbroken, up from the middle into the highest zone as a drip molding. Even the cast-stone gable coping and gable-apex paneling of the upper zone thrust the Perpendicular cast-stone cross surmounting the gable into silhouette against the sky.

Below sidewalk level there is a deep areaway between the buttressed principal doorways. Within it the lower story is lit by three one-over-one windows, protected by undecorated iron grilles. Granite steps rise from the sidewalk up between the broad, cast-stone buttresses to each doorway, a three-centered arch containing oak paneled doors and a transom of five graduated pointed lights. The cast stone of the buttresses is laid in alternating wide and narrow courses. These two doorways flank the three hooded and keyed narthex windows. This lower zone is capped by a frieze of low-relief, pointed-arch panels of cast stone. Flanking the central portion of the facade and slightly set back from the building line are one-story brick vestibules, each with a doorway under a hood molding. Each is coped in cast stone. The doors are of oak, vertically butted. The cornerstone, in the base of the buttress to the right of the western principal entrance, carries the inscription, "St. Philip's Church, 1818-1910."

Cast-stone coping stones, keyed into the Roman brick, top the buttresses where the facade's middle zone narrows. The sill of the large,

pointed-arch window rests on the paneled frieze. The window's cast-stone sides are keyed into the Roman brick fabric of the facade. The tracery within the window is in the Perpendicular style appropriate to fourteenth-century English Gothic. Cast-stone gargoyles project from the extreme ends of the drip course. Aside from the head of the arch, the upper zone's chief architectural features are its raking molding, the apex feature of low-relief pointed-arch panels of cast stone, and Geometric cross. Exterior fittings include historic light fixtures with metal shades within the top of each doorway, public address speaker amplifying cones mounted atop the one-story vestibules, and a glazed and pedimented vitrine (for church notices) fixed to the righthand buttress of the eastern doorway.³⁸ A wrought-iron fence runs the width of the facade; gates with decorative post finials are set opposite the church's principal entrances.

The church's side (east and west) and rear (south) elevations, including the chancel, were never designed to be viewed from either West 133rd or West 134th Streets. Consequently, they are not of the orange Roman brick used on the West 134th Street facade but of common red brick laid in American bond. But the demolition of adjacent structures contemporary to and predating the construction of St. Philip's has brought a portion of these other elevations into view. Visible are some of the seven clerestory windows -

- tripled pointed lights -- and some of the five pointed-arch side aisle and chapel windows on both the east and west elevations as well as the two pointed-arch windows that light the chancel. The tracery within these pointed-arch windows is in the Perpendicular style. All of these windows, including those lighting the narthex and the large window above it in West 134th facade, contain stained glass. All of these windows are covered with protective sheets of translucent plastic.

Subsequent History³⁹

In 1933 Dr. Bishop was succeeded as rector by his son the Reverend Shelton Hale Bishop (1889-1962). The Reverend M. Moran Weston, Ph.D., D.D. was called as rector in 1962. St. Philip's most recent rector, Chester Lovelle Talton, was called away to become Suffragan Bishop of Los Angeles. Today St. Philip's houses the Louise Crawford Seniors Program, the St. Nicholas A.A., Cub and Boy Scout Troops, a busy Day Care and Child Development Center and a theatre group, the H.A.D.L.E.Y Players. A tenant, the Community Service Council of Greater Harlem, rents space for a variety of community programs.

*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; James Weldon Johnson, *Black Manhattan* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1930), 281-284; John Henrik Clarke, *Harlem, Community in Transition* (New York, 1969), 57-86; Bertold Fernow, *The Records of New Amsterdam* (Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1976), vol. 6, 296; John Romeyn Brodhead, *History of the State of New York: 1609-1664* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1853), vol. 1, 641; Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).
2. Text in this section is based on the following sources: William Berrian, *An Historical Sketch of Trinity Church, New York* (New York: Trinity Church, 1847); George Freeman Bragg, *History of the Afro-American Group of the Episcopal Church* (Baltimore: Church Advocate Press, 1922); Theodore DuBose Bratton, *Wanted - Leaders* (New York, 1922); Charles Thorley Bridgeman, *A History of the Parish of Trinity Church in the City of New York: Part IV* (New York: Trinity Church, 1962); Powell Wills Dawley, *The Story of the General Theological Seminary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969); Morgan Dix, *A History of the Parish of Trinity Church in The City of New York, Part II* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1898); Philip Hone, *The Diary of Philip Hone*, Allan Nevins, ed. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co.), 1927; Earl Johnson, Jr., "Crummell and Onderdonck: The Early Admission Policy of the General Theological Seminary towards Blacks," unpublished typescript, General Theological Seminary, June 22, 1977; Landmarks Preservation

Commission, *Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Designation Report* (LP-1849), Report prepared by Christopher Moore and Andrew S. Dolkart (New York: City of New York, 1993; Minutes of the Faculty of the General Theological Seminary, vol. 3, 1811-1891; Benjamin Treadwell Onderdonck, *The Change at the Resurrection* [Sermon at the Funeral of Peter Williams] (New York, 1840); *Reaching Out: An Epic of the People of St. Philip's Church* (New York: St. Philips Church, 1986); *The Anniversary Book of Saint Philip's Church, New York* (New York: St. Philip's Church, 1943); Samuel Wilberforce, *A History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America* (London, 1844).

3. Bratton, 144ff, gives 1704 as the year Neau's school began. *The Anniversary Book of Saint Philip's Church, New York*, 9, gives 1702 as the date the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel began to teach Africans in New York. It is assumed that Neau's School and the Society's efforts were the same. The writer of *Reaching Out* cites 1704 also.
4. Many within this succession of assistant ministers were in charge of Trinity's first chapel -- St. George's, Bleecker Street (1752) -- as well; among them was the Rev. Samuel Auchmuty who, himself, became third rector of Trinity Church in 1764. Saint George's was established and endowed as a separate parish church in 1811.
5. "1808 - Appropriation towards the African Catechetical Institute, \$3000.00." Berrian, 372. The Institute or Free Church moved from Trinity to William Steet, from thence to Cliff Street and from Cliff Street to Rose Street near Pearl. This withdrawal has been seen as a reaction to the hypocrisy inherent in the segregation of races within the established churches of the time and a reflection of the earliest separations of African-American Protestants from their parent denominations: the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church from St. John's Methodist Church in 1798, and the Abyssinian Baptist Church from the First Baptist Church in 1808. *Reaching Out*, 8, 14. A "free church" is one where, although the basic tenets and forms of worship of the supporting denomination are observed, its polity has not been recognized by that denomination.
6. This annual appropriation was discontinued in 1910. Minutes of the Vestry, St. Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church, April 23, 1908 - March 11, 1913, 144. That Trinity's vestry assumed the payments of St. Philip's ground rent or remitted an annual allowance is corroborated by Berrian, 381.
7. *Anniversary Book*, 25; Berrian, 379. When burial was prohibited in lower Manhattan in 1823, the Chrystie Street Burial Ground was sold; all interred there were exhumed and removed to Cypress Hills on Long Island (now a part of Queens).
8. St. Philip's would be the oldest African-American congregation in the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, except for a technicality. In 1787 the African-American members of St. George's Methodist Church in Philadelphia, objecting to the mingling of the races, withdrew. Calling themselves the Benevolent Society of Negroes, they bought a lot and erected a building in 1791. Canvassing among themselves, they voted to enter the Protestant Episcopal Church on three conditions: that they be received as a body; that they be guaranteed self-control; and that their leaders come from within their number. In 1794 William White, the Protestant Episcopal bishop of Pennsylvania, accepted them and their conditions and the new parish was dedicated to St. Thomas. Thus, although the congregation was not brought up within the Protestant Episcopal church as were the members of St. Philip's (the Catechetical Institution and the Free African Church were sponsored by Trinity), St. Thomas's is the oldest African-American congregation within the Protestant Episcopal Church in America. This distinction is cited by George Freeman Bragg, D.D., *History of the Afro-American Group of the Episcopal Church* (Baltimore: Church Advocate Press, 1922), 81.

Most likely the St. Philip to whom this parish is dedicated is St. Philip the Evangelist, also known as "the Deacon." He is easily confused with St. Philip the Apostle and his legend is often conflated with that of the Apostle's. He was the second of the seven evangelists to be appointed by the Apostles. Zealous in his preaching, Philip the Evangelist encountered one of the chief officials of the first-century Ethiopian Queen Candace, converted and baptized him. This official, returning home, introduced Christianity to the Ethiopians. Philip the Apostle had no ministry to the Ethiopians.

9. In recognition of Mr. Sherred's gift, Saint Philip's vestry granted free lifetime pew use (pews were rented annually) to his three surviving domestics in 1821. At the death of the last of these persons in 1849, the vestry repossessed this pew and resolved that it be given to the officiating minister.

10. Sources differ as to the number of persons presented: 113 are mentioned by Dix, *A History of the Parish of Trinity Church in the City of New York*, p.427; the 115 are indicated in *The Anniversary Book*, p.10. Such a large number speaks well of Peter William's own evangelizing gifts. Peter Williams, Jr., was the son of the Peter Williams who was the sexton at St. John's Methodist Church, 47 John Street (a designated New York City Landmark), and with James Varick was a founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.
11. Philip Hone recorded the destruction to St. Philip's and to the house of its "respectable pastor, Peter Williams" during the anti-Abolitionist riots of July, 1834, Hone, 1: 135. Onderdonck may have feared the repercussions of such riots when he asked Williams to resign from this abolitionist group. Williams, like other African-Americans of his generation, opposed the American Colonization Society, the movement largely supported by whites to create Liberia, a republic on the African continent with a constitution modeled on that of the United States, to be populated with African-Americans. He and other members of the Anti-Slavery Society did not believe that sending African-Americans back to Africa was the most effective solution to the abolition of slavery. Onderdonck, on the other hand, favored the American Colonization Society.
12. It appears that Onderdonck feared the loss of southern financial support for the Seminary. The denial of these two candidates became a significant issue for Abolitionists: Bishop G. W. Doane of New Jersey, a former pupil of Hobart, protested it; the British prelate Samuel Wilberforce (1805-1873), Bishop of Winchester (Church of England), castigated the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States for its weak attitude toward slavery, calling attention to this particular instance. Instead, both prepared for their ministries under the more sympathetic sponsorship of Bishop Griswold of Massachusetts. DuGrasse, ordained to the diaconate only (1838), subsequently served as a deacon in Jamaica, the West Indies. Alexander Crummell, ordained (1842) and elevated to the priesthood two years later, became a leading evangelist and scholar: he established Christ Church, Providence, R.I.(1843, the first African-American Protestant Episcopal church in New England); he travelled to Cambridge University, England, and held posts at the College of Liberia in Monrovia, West Africa; he founded St. Luke's, Washington, D.C.,(1873), as well as the Negro Academy in Washington. Two other early sons of Saint Philip's aspired to the Episcopalian priesthood: Hezekiah W. Green and Charles L. Reason. Green, a colonist to Liberia, was ordained in Africa by John Payne, first Bishop of the (Anglican) Africa Mission in Monrovia. Reason was unable to secure Onderdonck's sponsorship to the General Theological Seminary and withdrew, Minutes of Saint Philip's Vestry, Sept.- Nov., 1843.
13. Wilberforce, 430.
14. Twice Alexander Crummell was called to St Philip's, first in 1847 as assistant minister when he was officiating at the Church of the Messiah, an apparently short-lived Protestant Episcopal congregation in New York, and then in 1862 as rector, and twice he refused; in 1847 he was about to return to England to raise funds for a new building for the Church of the Messiah and fifteen years later he was preparing to return to Monrovia.
15. In the Diocesan Convention of 1860, John Jay's resolution to condemn the slave trade was tabled, St. Philip's delegation voting against the tabling. Although Jay stated he was proud of his connection with St. Philip's, he declined the vestry's invitation to join St. Philip's delegation to the Convention in 1863, because of disputes over slavery within his own parish of St. Matthew's, Bedford, N. Y. However, Jay served as a delegate from St. Philip's the following year.
16. Alston officiated until November 1862. From Warrenton, N. C., Alston had been the only African-American student at Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio, before the abolition of slavery. The vestry then offered St. Philip's rectorship to James Theodore Holly who regretted; his obligations were first to those emigrants he had led to Haiti. Alston declined a second call to St. Philip's in 1864. Unfortunately, the volume containing the minutes of the vestry, representing the decade, May, 1865 - Feb., 1875, is missing from the collection in the Schomburg Center Archives.
17. The Draft Riots were a response to an unpopular conscription (in the face of the Confederate Army's northernmost thrust to Gettysburgh in July, 1863) which was enforced when voluntary enlistment in the Union Army had declined. The mob consisted predominantly of recent immigrants, ignorant of the critical issues, who saw African-Americans only as the cause of the war. The remembrance of forced military service in their countries of origin also may have prompted their disturbance. See I.N.Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island* (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1918), 3: 738-745.

18. Atwell, a native of the West Indies, had received his early education at Coddington College there. He received his theological education at Divinity Hall, Philadelphia (which became the Philadelphia Divinity School in 1922). Atwell was ordained in 1869 by Bishop Smith of Kentucky. His first charge was St. Stephen's church and school in Petersburg, Virginia, one of the institutions that was founded through the joint efforts of the Episcopal Board of Missions and the Freedmen's Bureau (created in connection with the War Department in 1866 to prepare African-Americans in the South to exercise the rights and duties of citizenship); the vestry of St. Philip's contributed to this cause. Atwell came to St. Philip's from St. Stephen's Church, Savannah, whose rector he had become in 1873. Bratton, 160; Bragg, 87-88, 267.
19. Construction of the chancel was undertaken by Joseph Ten Eyck, a church warden and professional carpenter with the rector as superintendent. Messrs. Cox & Sons, of 13 Bible House, carried out the decoration.
20. The Convocation was held in response to a conference of Southern bishops (July, 1883) at Sewanee, Alabama. The Protestant Episcopal Church in the Southern United States, as Wilberforce had strenuously pointed out, had been lax in observing the Church of England's ancient strictures against slavery. So divided was the Southern Protestant Episcopal Church before and immediately after the Civil War that the onus for educational programs fell upon the Freedmen's Bureau, often operating in conjunction with Episcopal Missions based in the North. The Sewanee conference was, therefore, an important step to repair past oversights. The Reverend Alexander Crummell of Saint Luke's, Washington, D.C., was elected chairman and the Reverend Joshua Bowden Massiah, a former choirmaster and Sunday School Superintendent at St. Philip's, New York and then rector of St. Philip's, Newark, N.J., was the secretary.
21. "Resolved: that a vote of thanks be tendered to Mr. Bishop for his services in training the Boy Choir," Minutes, St. Philip's Church, April 13, 1875 - April 11, 1882, 296. It appears that the proximity of Saint Philip's to the General Theological Seminary offered African-American seminarians an opportunity to participate in parish work.
22. Bishop's admission was conditional upon his making up a deficiency in Greek and Hebrew. Minutes of the Faculty of the General Theological Seminary, vol. 3 [1871-1891].
23. Bragg stated that H. C. Bishop's being ordained in Albany instead of within the Diocese of Maryland was due to a dispute over ritual, Bragg, *History of the Afro-American Group*, 88. Bishop Doane was more tolerant of the Anglo-Catholic emphasis on ritual than was Bishop Whittingham of Maryland.
24. H. C. Bishop's letter accepting Saint Philip's rectorate, was written from Charleston on November 26, 1885. Minutes, May 9, 1882 - June 17, 1888, 257-258. The Reverend Thomas McKee Brown, rector of St. Mary-the-Virgin (New York) where Bishop had labored as a seminarian, expressed satisfaction at the choice.
25. In February, 1886, the vestry, acting upon a letter (most likely from Bishop H. C. Potter) offering to buy the Mulberry Street church and suggesting that St. Philip's move uptown, resolved to have the church appraised for sale. Minutes, May 9, 1882-June 17, 1888, 267-268. At a meeting on April 21, the vestry resolved to sell the Mulberry Street property to Catharine Lorillard Wolfe, granddaughter of St. Philip's early benefactor George Lorillard and herself a major contributor to the Protestant Episcopal Church in New York, for \$45,000.00. Minutes, 285. The Mulberry Street church became the Italian Mission. *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Scribner, 1936), vol. 10, 449-450. In 1892, in a "Great Protestant-Episcopal Revival in New York" sponsored by the rector of St. George's, the Reverend William S. Rainsford, this mission housed the evangelical ministry of the Reverend Algernon Sidney Crapsey. Crapsey recalled that he had received cordial treatment from two of the church's wardens, Messrs. White and Prince. A. S. Crapsey, *The Last of the Heretics* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1924), 164ff. White and Prince were wardens of St. Philip's. It is likely that St. Philip's continued to superintend the activities of this mission after the congregation had moved to West 25th Street.
26. Trinity Parish had assisted St. Philip's in the purchase of a burial ground site on the north side of West 30th Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues before 1843 when the growth of the city curtailed further burial at Chrystie Street. In 1844 water was discovered at a level of three feet below grade at these West 30th Street lots; the vestry began leasing them to tradesmen a year later. From time to time the vestry purchased additional lots. When this parcel was sold in 1911, it comprised Nos. 115-131 West 30th Street, encompassing the Church's parish hall, rectory, and income-producing lease properties.

27. On February 14, 1888, the vestry voted \$150.00, or \$50.00 each, to secure plans from the three architects. Minutes, 374. The architects' drawings were exhibited in the church vestibule. The estimates from contractors for Kreitler's winning design for a stone front, with or without a steeple, exceeded the vestry's projected budget; he was asked to pare down his design to meet the priorities of remodelling the chancel, altar, clergy stalls, relocating the organ and shifting pews to create a center aisle and side aisles. By early December, 1888, the congregation had moved in. The sign "United Presbyterian Church" was removed from the facade, and the marble tablets dedicated to the memories of Isaiah De Grasse and Peter Williams, Jr., were brought from Mulberry Street and installed inside.
28. Minutes, July 10, 1888 - May 8, 1894, 321; June 12, 1894 - April 10, 1900, 22, 28, 44, 141.
29. Throughout these proceedings St. Philip's was represented by the real estate agent Thomas Nail. Minutes, April 23, 1908 - March 11, 1913, 49, 60, 64, 68, 93, 101. At the vestry meeting of June 15, 1912 it was reported that Nail & Parker, Agents, were hired to manage St. Philip's properties, 107-145 West 135th Street and 219 West 133rd Street. Although Philip A. Payton, Jr., offered to trade property on West 135th Street for the church parcel on West 25th Street, the vestry refused to consider it. Minutes, 72, 76.
30. Sources for this section include: Minutes of the Vestry, April 23, 1908 - March 11, 1913, 143, 151, 158, 171, 186, 192, 196; Schuyler Warmflash, "George Washington Foster, Jr.: An Early Black Architect," *Bergen County Historic Sites Survey* (Paramus, N.J.: Bergen County Office of Cultural & Historic Affairs, 1983), 32A-32F.
31. The contracted builders, Wakemen & Miller, had brought the two walls of the parish house up to the second tier of beams by July; the stairs were in and the roof was on a month later. The stone columns within the church were erected, the side walls were going up and the electricity had been installed. The church roof was on by October, copper - at extra expense - over the organ loft to protect the pipes and parts, and slag, instead of tin, over the rest. The bid of Messrs. J. & R. Lamb to glaze the large front window had been accepted. "The Wisemen presenting gifts to the Babe" was to be the subject depicted. Perhaps this subject was not carried out. The design of this window appears to be contemporary with the building but is more of a geometric pattern than a narrative depiction of scripture.
32. While Henry F. and Elsie R. Withey state that Tandy was born in Lexington, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: Hennesey & Ingalls, 1956), 589, New York City is given as his place of birth in an unidentified source in the LPC research files. Warmflash, as do the Witheys, cites the year of Tandy's graduation from Cornell as 1907 (p. 32D), but the unidentified source gives it as 1908, and the year 1909 is cited in the *AIA Journal* (July, 1976), 166. The unidentified source also states that Tandy, with Wallace Raymond and William Pittman, had taught in the Mechanical Industries Department at Tuskegee.
33. Warmflash dates the partnership from 1908 to 1914; James Ward documents the partnership from 1910-1916, *Architects in Practice New York City 1900-1940* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1989), p.76. Directory listings: the 1910 directory was compiled in 1909; the 1916 directory was compiled in 1915.
34. Very little about Foster's early life and career can be stated with certainty. His descendants believe that he was the son of a carriage striper. During the period when Foster is thought to have worked for Hardenbergh, the Hardenbergh office was responsible for the design of such prominent buildings as the Waldorf (1890-93) and Astoria (1896) hotels on Fifth Avenue between 33rd and 34th streets (both demolished), the American Fine Arts Society Building (1891-92) on West 57th Street, the John Wolfe Building (1894-95; demolished) on Maiden Lane, and the Manhattan Hotel (1895-96; demolished) on East 42nd Street. Early in the twentieth century Foster apparently established his own architectural practice in New Jersey. In 1902, he moved into a house of his own design at 102 Colony Avenue in Park Ridge. In 1908, when New Jersey began registering architects, Foster became one of two black men to be so registered. Foster was registered in New York in 1916. See also Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Designation Report* (LP-1849), report prepared by Christopher Moore and Andrew S. Dolkart (New York: City of New York, 1993).
Well one might wonder that the younger man's name preceded the elder's in the firm's name. Perhaps Foster acceded this preference to Tandy because the younger man possessed a superior academic training. One Tandy authority has divided the work at Saint Philip's between the two partners, attributing the English Late Gothic style church to Tandy and the Queen Anne style parish house (demolished in 1927) to Foster. Warmflash, 32B, 32C, 32D, cites Carson Anderson, an architectural historian and Tandy authority in California. Assigning the design for St. Philip's church to Tandy raises interesting questions about Foster's

design for the Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church at 140-148 West 137th Street thirteen years later. Many of the details of St. Philip's facade are repeated in the facade of Mother Zion. The repetition of the sequence of trefoiled panels, the large, central pointed-arch window, and the stylistic similarity of the English late Gothic style suggest that Foster frankly admired St. Philip's architecture and that neither Foster nor his client sought an original solution.

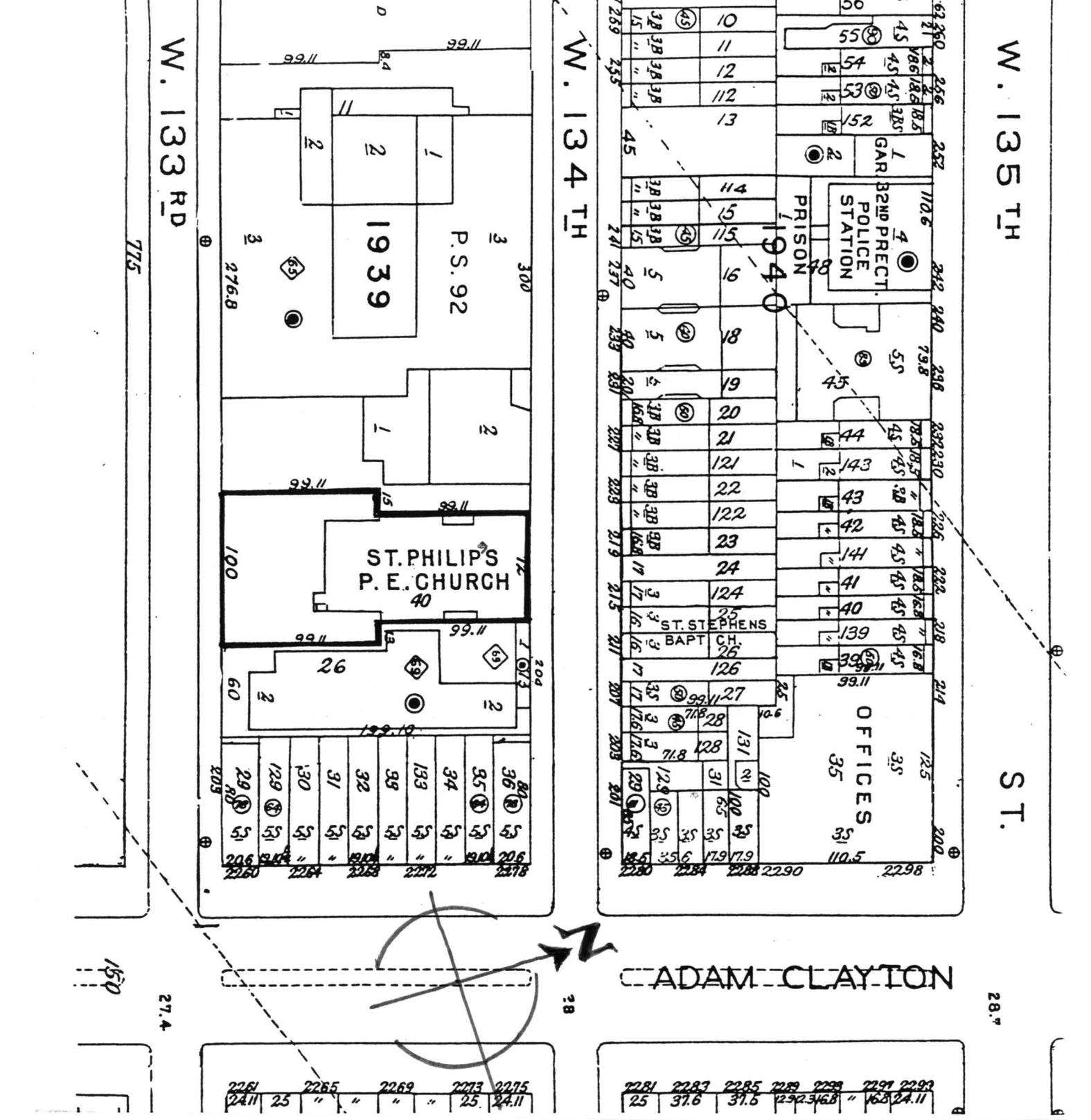
35. In this respect St. Philip's is much like the Free Church of St. Mary-the-Virgin at 133-145 West 46th Street, built in 1894-95. Dr. Bishop's sympathies for the architecture of St. Mary's are evident in St. Philip's plan, the absence of a bell tower, and in the choice of brick color. In his description of St. Mary-the-Virgin, Montgomery Schuyler called this rich orange color "gamboge." "The Work of N. LeBrun & Sons," *Architectural Record* 27 (April, 1910), 371-372.
36. The church interior is not subject to this designation.
37. The gravel within this cast-stone aggregate is of small pebbles just large enough to lend a coarse texture to the cast stone; its purple color enhances the contrast between the trim and the orange Roman brick. Perhaps it is weathering that has made it as rough as it appears today.
38. Metal fixtures and brackets are fixed to the facade in several places: a damaged fixture to the right of the western vestibule doorway; and unused metal brackets projecting from the upper part of the eastern wall of the eastern vestibule. The batter-sided shade is missing from within the western vestibule's doorway.
39. The assistance of St. Philip's Senior Minister, the Reverend Dr. Nathan Wright, Senior Warden Robert H. Wynn, Mrs. Gladys A. Clark, Ms. Emily Frye, Ms. Gail Silver, and the custodian Mr. James Hunter is gratefully acknowledged.

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 Saint Philip's Protestant Episcopal 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 St. Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church, built in 1910-11, is the fourth home of New York's City's first African-American congregation of Protestant Episcopalians; that, established under the leadership of Bishop John Henry Hobart as the African Episcopal Catechetical Institution in the City of New York shortly after the American Revolution, St. Philip's was founded in 1818 and that the Reverend Mr. Peter Williams, Jr., was the first rector; that St. Philip's long and inspiring chronicle of religious and social activism adds a depth to our national history not generally acknowledged; that the movement of St. Philip's congregation northward, beginning in lower Manhattan, to the present location in Harlem, reflects the residential patterns of New York City's African-American population; that when the Reverend Hutchens Chew Bishop purchased residential property in Harlem in 1908 on behalf of St. Philip's and the church building was constructed at its present location, St. Philip's became one of the first institutions to attract African-Americans to Harlem; that St. Philip's Church building was designed in the neo-Gothic style by the firm of Tandy & Foster; that the design of the facade, a response to certain liturgical requirements, incorporates fourteenth-century English Gothic elements in contrasting orange Roman brick and cast stone aggregate; that Vertner W. Tandy was the first African-American architect to be registered in the State of New York and that George Washington Foster, Jr., was among the first African-Americans to practice within the architectural profession in the United States; and that St. Philip's has continued its nearly two-hundred year tradition of service to its congregation and community, addressing the spiritual needs of its members and providing a variety of social programs.

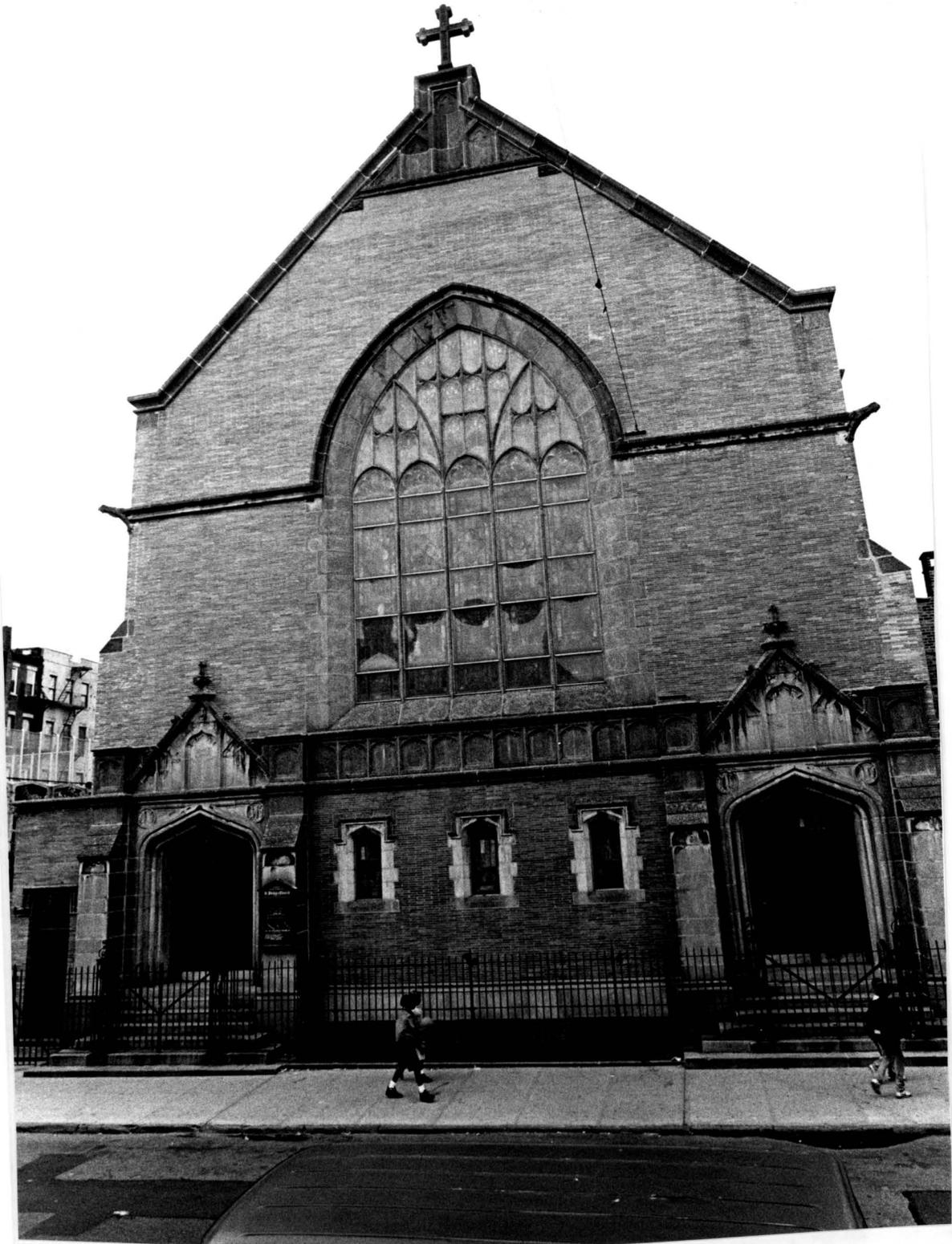
Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 (formerly Section 534 of Chapter 21) of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark St. Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church, 210-216 West 134th Street, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Tax Map Block 1939, Lot 40, Borough of Manhattan, as its related Landmark Site.



Saint Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church
 210-216 West 134th Street

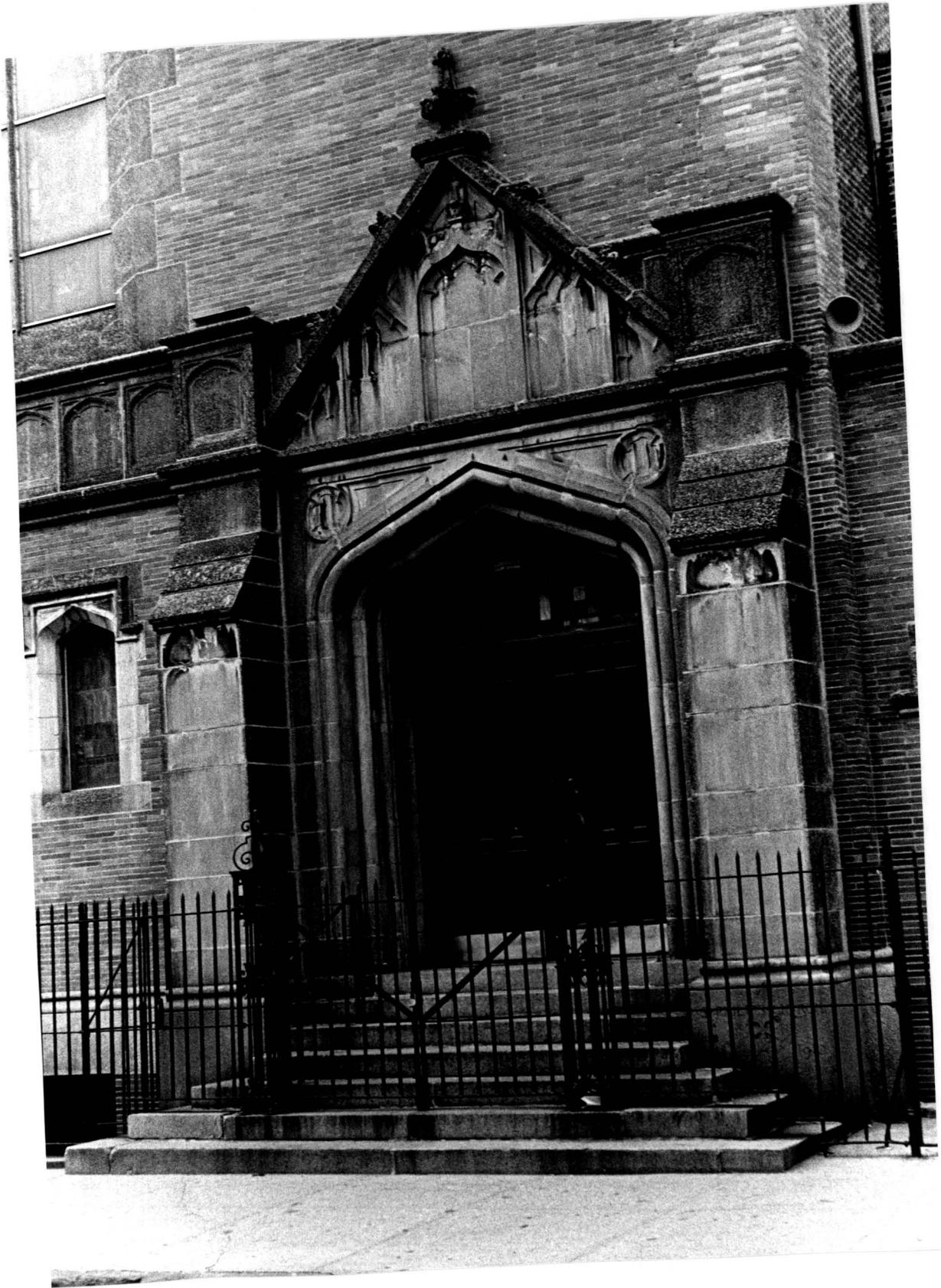
Landmark Site: Manhattan Tax Map Block 1939, Lot 40

Graphic Source: Sanborn Manhattan Land Book, 1992-93.



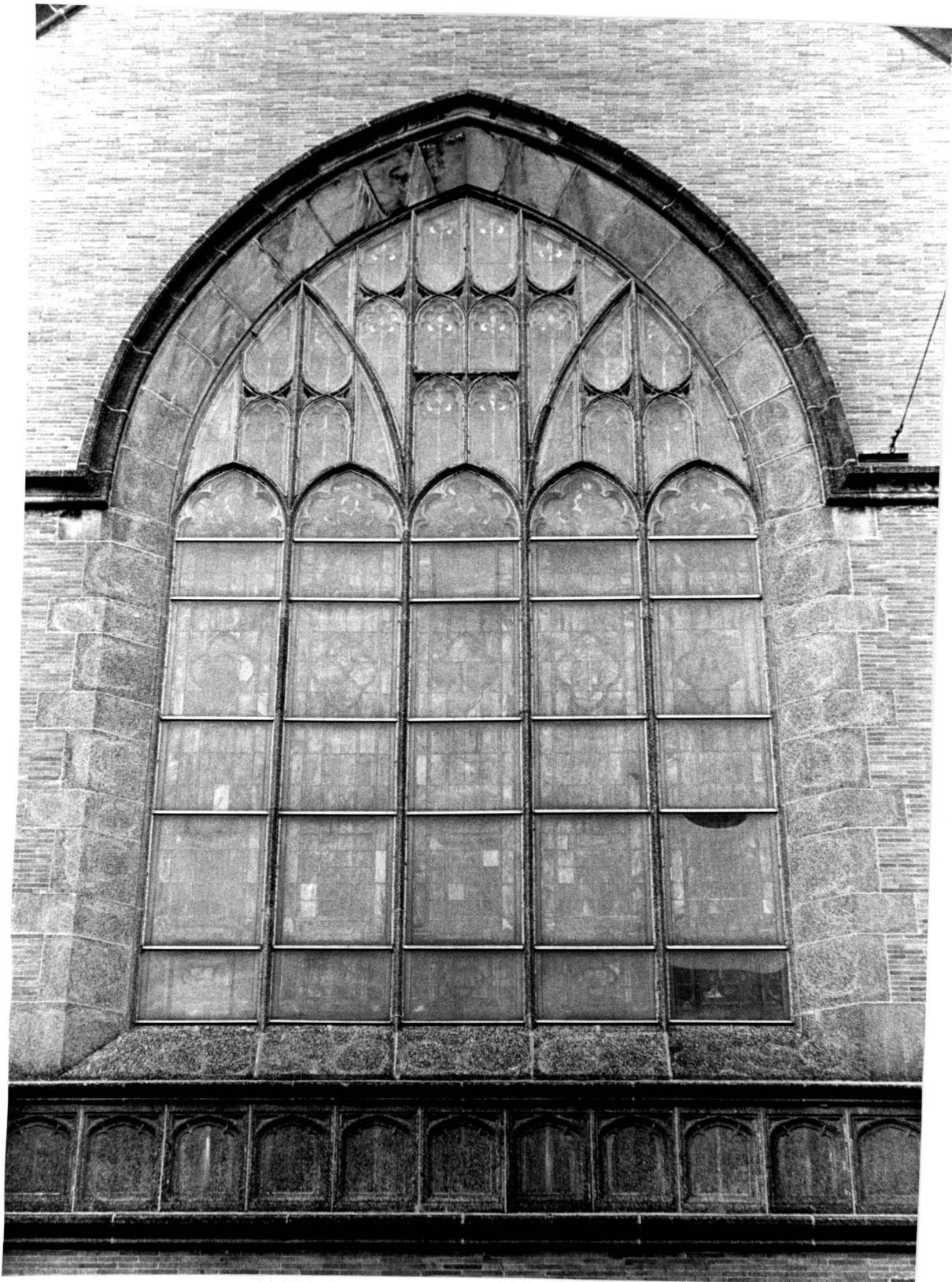
Saint Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church, facade.

(Photo: Carl Forster)



Saint Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church, northwestern doorway.

(Photo: Carl Forster)



Saint Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church, great northern window.

(Photo: Carl Forster)



Saint Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church, facade gable detail.
(Photo: Carl Forster)