

WEST PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 165 West 86th Street (aka 165-167 West 86th Street and 541 Amsterdam Avenue), Manhattan
Original chapel built 1883-85, Leopold Eidlitz, architect; current church and chapel façade built 1889-90, Henry Kilburn, architect

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1217, Lot 1

On July 14, 2009, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the West Park Presbyterian Church and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 1). The hearing was duly advertised according to the provisions of law. Fifty-six witnesses spoke in favor of the designation, including Councilmember Gale Brewer, Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal, and Councilmember Tony Avella, as well as representatives of Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, Councilmember Bill DeBlasio, Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum, the Historic Districts Council, the Municipal Arts Society, Manhattan Community Board 7, New York Landmarks Conservancy, Landmark West!, the Victorian Society, and the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. Thirteen speakers testified in opposition to the proposed designation, including both the church's pastor and its Ecumenical Associate Minister, the Reverend Dr. Robert L. Brasher and the Reverend Dr. Katherine Kurs, respectively, as well as members of the West Park congregation and the Reverend N.J. L'Heureux of the Committee of Religious Leaders in the City of New York. In addition, the Commission received numerous letters, e-mails, and post cards in support of designation.

Summary

The West Park Presbyterian Church is considered to be one of the best examples of a Romanesque Revival style religious structure in New York City. The extraordinarily deep color of its red sandstone cladding and the church's bold forms with broad, round-arched openings and a soaring tower at the corner of West 86th Street and Amsterdam Avenue produce a monumental and distinguished presence along those streets.

The Park Presbyterian Church was founded in 1852 as the 84th Street Presbyterian Church and formerly occupied a wood chapel on 84th Street and West End Avenue. The church purchased the site of the present church at Tenth Avenue and West 86th Street in 1882 and commissioned the prominent architect Leopold Eidlitz to design a small brick chapel on the eastern end of the site on 86th Street in 1883. It was completed in 1885. The Upper West Side's population dramatically increased during the 1880s and the church quickly outgrew the chapel. In 1889, the congregation commissioned Henry Kilburn to design a large new church and to re-design Eidlitz's façade, creating a unified Romanesque Revival-style church complex. Kilburn was the designer of many private residences in New York, including a number in the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District. The new Park Presbyterian Church was finished in 1890. The resulting building is a monumental structure which anchors an important intersection on the Upper West Side.

The West Park Presbyterian Church was formed in 1911 when the Park Presbyterian Church merged with the West Presbyterian Church, which was founded in 1829 in Greenwich Village and later moved to 42nd Street. Kilburn's design remains intact, and building retains its visual prominence on the Upper West Side.



DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Development of the Upper West Side¹

Following the creation of Central Park beginning in 1858, the Upper West Side gradually became one of Manhattan's most desirable residential neighborhoods. While the earliest row houses date from the 1870s, the first major decade of development occurred during the 1880s. Such real estate speculation was shaped by the introduction of rapid transit. Major improvements included the extension of the 8th Avenue car line along Central Park to West 84th Street in 1864, the paving and widening of the Boulevard (later renamed Broadway) in the late 1860s, and the construction of the elevated railway, which began service along 9th Avenue (renamed Columbus Avenue in 1890), with stations at 72nd, 81st, 93rd, and 104th Streets, in 1879. Alongside the railway, multiple dwellings were built, primarily five-story structures with ground-level stores. Called tenements and flats, most were leased to working-class and middle-class tenants. The side streets, to the east and west, were developed as single-family residences, mainly row houses, four and five-stories tall. Both types of buildings were designed in popular revival styles, chiefly neo-Grec and Romanesque Revival.

The significant exception to this pattern was Amsterdam Avenue (known as 10th Avenue until 1890) the neighborhood's chief service corridor.² Located between 9th Avenue and Broadway, it was an important transit route, served by a horse car line starting in 1878. Though tenements with street-level stores and an occasional hotel and storage warehouse were built on or close to the avenue, many structures were utilitarian, particularly a cluster of stables between 75th and 77th Streets. There were also a number of commercial, institutional, and religious buildings, such as the West Park Presbyterian Church, including Public School 87 (No. 369, demolished), New York Public Library (No. 444-446), Central Baptist Church (No. 651), Public School 93 (No.692, demolished), Holy Name R.C. Church (No. 740), East River Savings Bank (No. 743), St. Michael's P.E. Church (No. 800), Home for Respectable Aged Indigent Females (No. 891), Public School 54 (No. 905, demolished), and the West End Presbyterian Church (No. 921-927).³

West 86th Street, which is one of the wide east to west cross streets running from Central to Riverside Parks, developed as a comfortable residential address consisting of upscale row houses, flats building, and later, large apartment buildings, interspersed by an occasional commercial building or church, such as West Park.

The West Park Presbyterian Church⁴

The Presbyterian faith, the roots of which are based on a modified form of Calvinism and a specific ecclesiastical hierarchy, was begun in Scotland in the eighteenth century. It was soon transplanted in New York with the establishment of its first congregation on Wall Street. Two other Presbyterian churches were established in New York by the late eighteenth century, one on Beekman Street known as the "Brick Church" and another in the open fields on present-day Rutgers Street. None of these early church buildings survive. Breakaway groups soon began to form their own congregations apart from the established collegiate form of worship, following factions which were being started in Scotland known as Covenanters and Seceders. In North America, these new branches became known as the Reformed Presbyterians, the Associate Presbyterians, and later the Associate Reformed Presbyterians. The number of people declaring themselves Presbyterians multiplied as did the number of buildings constructed to house the growing congregations. By 1871, the Presbyterians were the most numerous and active

Protestant group in New York City, with more than ninety churches and mission chapels among the various branches.⁵

The Park Presbyterian Church, the first Presbyterian congregation on the Upper West Side, was founded in 1852 as the 84th Street Presbyterian Church and in 1854 built a wood chapel, designed by architect and area resident Leopold Eidlitz, on 84th Street and West End Avenue.⁶ The church's congregation, at first a mere fifteen members, struggled to grow until it hired Anson Phelps Atterbury (1855-1931) as its pastor in 1879. Atterbury was a member of the Phelps-Dodge mining family, and used his reputation to attract new members to the congregation, which also began to benefit from the increase in the population of the Upper West Side after the opening of the Columbus Avenue elevated railway at about the same time. By the early 1880s, the congregation had outgrown Eidlitz's 84th Street chapel, and Atterbury began planning for the church's imminent move to a new, larger brick building on Amsterdam Avenue and 86th Street. At first, a small brick chapel was built at the east end of the site in 1883.⁷ The church, which changed its name to Park Presbyterian Church in 1887, continued to grow rapidly under Atterbury's leadership and constructed in 1889-90 the present larger sanctuary, designed by architect Henry Kilburn, incorporating Eidlitz's earlier chapel, which was re-clad to match the new edifice.

The West Park Presbyterian Church was formed in 1911 when Park merged with the West Presbyterian Church, which was located in midtown at the time. The merged congregation made the Amsterdam Avenue church built by Park Presbyterian its home. West Presbyterian itself was founded in 1829 at 273 Bleeker Street in Greenwich Village as the North Presbyterian Church, and built a sanctuary, designed by Town & Davis, in 1831-32 on Carmine Street (now demolished). Within a few years it changed its name to West. In 1860, following the northward movement of Manhattan's population, West was relocated to West 42nd Street and soon built a Victorian Gothic-style edifice at 31 West 42nd Street (also demolished) which was completed in 1865. West Presbyterian counted a number of distinguished citizens among its membership, including Russell Sage, Jay Gould, and Alfred H. Smith, and by 1890 had become known as the "millionaires' gate to heaven."⁸ By the early twentieth century, commercialization of its midtown location led to the displacement of the area's residential population and the loss of many of West Presbyterian's members, including the prominent men mentioned above after an internal dispute. As a consequence, the two churches began competing for members and decided to merge their memberships, forming the West Park Presbyterian Church.⁹

The Architect¹⁰

Henry Franklin Kilburn (1844-1905), who designed the 1889-90 expansion of West Park that included the modification of Eidlitz's earlier chapel, was born and educated in Ashfield, Massachusetts, and first established an architectural practice in Northampton. In 1868, he moved his practice to New York, where he designed a number of churches in addition to West Park, including the West End Presbyterian Church (1891, Amsterdam Avenue and West 105th Street), the Mt. Moriah Baptist Church (1888, 2050 Fifth Avenue), and the St. James Episcopal Church Parish House in the Bronx (1891-92, 2500 Jerome Avenue, a designated New York City Landmark). Kilburn was also the architect of many private residences, factories, stables, and theaters in Manhattan, some of which are included in various historic districts, including the Durland Riding Academy building (1900-01, 8 West 67th Street, in the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District). Kilburn was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and a member of its New York Chapter and the Architectural League.

Design and Construction of the Church¹¹

In 1883, the 84th Street Presbyterian Church purchased five building lots at the northeast corner of West 86th Street and Amsterdam Avenue (then Tenth Avenue) for \$30,000 in anticipation of its expansion and relocation to a new church building.¹² The Reverend Anson Phelps Atterbury, its pastor at the time, engaged Leopold Eidlitz, the prominent New York architect who had designed the church's existing chapel on 84th Street in 1854, to plan a brick, Victorian Gothic-style chapel on the eastern end of the site.¹³ The building was completed in 1885. The western end of the lot was left open for the future expansion of the church.

In 1889, the congregation, by then having been renamed Park Presbyterian, commissioned architect Henry Kilburn to design a larger main church. To be located on undeveloped western lots, the new edifice was to incorporate Eidlitz's chapel of 1884-85, which would be modified to complement the new wing. Kilburn's design was a boldly-massed Romanesque Revival-style edifice faced in deep red sandstone and anchored by a soaring corner tower with a bell-shaped roof. The church would exemplify what was then a new interest in medieval Romanesque forms and palettes, such as in its heavy round arches, rock-faced stonework, massive tower, and earth-toned (reddish brown) materials. The building appears to have been inspired by the work of Henry Hobson Richardson, one of the major and most influential architects of the nineteenth century, and one of the main champions of the rugged, Romanesque Revival mode that is evident at West Park. Kilburn greatly expanded and re-designed Eidlitz's chapel, cladding it in brownstone and adding a tower, thereby creating a much larger, unified Romanesque Revival-style church complex.¹⁴ The two wings now share similar features, such as triple round arch window motifs and paired fenestration in their broadly-gabled roofs.

According to articles published at the time of its completion in 1890, the West Park Presbyterian Church is faced in Longmeadow (Massachusetts) and Lake Superior (Michigan) sandstones. Longmeadow stone, also used extensively by Richardson, is fine-grained and typically a bright brick-red color with little stratification, making it easy to dress and very durable. As a result, it was used commonly as a facing stone. Lake Superior brownstone is uniform in color and texture, also making it easy to cut and dress into blocks of almost any size. Richardson favored brownstone to represent the Romantic ideal that architecture should be in harmony with the forms and colors of nature. West Park rugged stonework and earthy shades exemplify Richardsonian principals.

Construction began on April 22, 1889, the cornerstone was laid on May 16th, and the building was officially completed on June 26, 1890. The new church, which had 900 seats, was finished enough to have held its first service with much fanfare on May 18, 1890. The church's entrance doors were featured in 1891 in *The American Architect and Building News*.

Later History¹⁵

When the socially-progressive clergyman, Anson Phelps Atterbury was hired to lead the congregation in 1879, West Park embarked on a more than one hundred year period of activism.¹⁶ Atterbury promoted ethnic inclusion, inviting Chinese congregants to worship at the church at the peak of anti-Chinese hysteria in the 1880s.¹⁷ Seventy-five years later, the church was at the forefront of the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War and anti-nuclear arms movements of the 1960s.¹⁸ Later, it became one of the founding churches of the West Side Federation for Senior Housing, Inc., as well as the original site of the West Side Food Pantry and God's Love We Deliver. The church also championed same-sex marriage rights.

The building itself has been little altered since 1890. In 1911, at the time of the consolidation of West Presbyterian and Park Presbyterian, interior alterations were performed by the architectural firm Ludlow & Peabody, but the exterior of the church remains remarkably intact. At present, the church building is unused and vacant.

Description

The West Park Presbyterian Church occupies a generally rectangular lot, located at the northeast corner of Amsterdam Avenue and West 86th Street. The main façade, overlooking Amsterdam Avenue, is 75 feet long, while the secondary façade, which includes the earlier chapel portion, measures 125 feet along West 86th Street. The building consist of alternating gabled sections, square towers, and recessed planes, topped by a series of broadly sloping, pyramidal, or bell-shaped roofs. The facades and towers are clad in rock-faced Longmeadow brownstone, randomly coursed, and trimmed in Lake Superior redstone. Sections of the brownstone facing and many of its decorative elements are presently in a deteriorated condition. Some of the churches windows also show signs of decay.

The Amsterdam Avenue façade consists of a recessed central section, topped by a gable and flanked by a short tower on the north side and a much taller corner tower on the south side. Altogether, including the tower facades, there are five bays, some of which have paired fenestration.

Located in the recessed central section of the façade, the tripartite main entryway is approached via a flight of shallow concrete steps with a pair of cast-iron handrails. The paired, batten doors with hewn and riveted hinges in the shape of bow are deeply inset within round-arch openings flanked by bundled columns with florid capitals supporting moldings with floral carving that extend into the reveals and along the façade. Protective metal fences and gates have been installed at the entryways. The main entryway arches have compound moldings with floral carvings, and are topped by radiating voussoirs and intersecting label moldings with label-stops. The doors are topped by leaded fanlights with heavy wood perimeter moldings. Wrought-iron lamps with lenses hang above the two side doorways, while the central doorway has a forged-iron, stylized Presbyterian cross springing from its molded lintel. There is a foliated crown above the main above the main entryway; its top molding serves as the sill for the windows above.

The upper part of the recessed central section of the Amsterdam Avenue façade displays a set of three round arch windows, the center one being somewhat taller and wider than the other two. They contain leaded-glass sash (covered with protective plexi-glass), divided vertically and horizontally by a series of straight and curved wood members that are arranged as paired round-arch units supporting circular upper sash. The windows are flanked by attenuated columns with foliated capitals supporting a molded band (separated by the window openings and extending across the width of the façade).

The window arches, which spring from the molded bands, have rounded moldings and voussoirs, topped by intersecting labels with stops. There is a pair of deeply-inset round-arch windows in the gable. They share a molded sill on blocky brackets (some of which are missing). The two windows are separated by a squat column with foliated capitals, from which the arches spring. The round-arch sash consist of leaded glass with wood framing. The windows have rounded moldings and voussoirs, topped by intersecting label with foliated stops, which are at the same level of short foliated molding from which the arches rise. The bottom sections of the windows are covered by sloping, non-historic, protective metal panels. The central section is topped by a broad gable with cap moldings rising from foliated stops, and is topped by a foliated pinnacle.

The north tower has a molded stone base and randomly-placed fenestration in the form of narrow, rectangular windows at the lower part of the tower (staggered as to suggest the existence of an interior stairwell), paired rectangular windows at mid section, and paired round-arch windows at the top. The molding that begins at the springline of the entryway arch extends into the lower part of the tower and serves as a sill for the lowest window. The middle windows share a prominently molded sill on blocky brackets (one of which is missing). These windows are separated by a large pier fronted by a squat column with a foliated capital that supports the center of a massive, beveled lintel below a stone relieving arch. The window openings are further embellished by foliation at the beveled lintel and jambs. Deeply recessed, leaded casements with wood frames fill the openings. There is a pair of deeply-inset round-arch windows at the top of the north tower above a molded band. They have slanted sills, now covered with non-historic protective metal sheets. The windows are separated and flanked by bundled columns with foliated capitals, supporting a continuous molded band. Compound arches with thick architraves spring from the molding, as do voussoirs and continuous molded labels. The round-arch sash consist of leaded glass with wood framing. The arches sit in a checkerboard stone field, topped by a molded cornice on large stone blocks. There is cooper flashing at the roofline. The original pyramidal roof of the north tower was removed in the mid-twentieth century.

The tall south tower, located at the corner of Amsterdam Avenue and West 86th Street, rises up from a square, two-story base, which includes a secondary entryway facing West 86th Street. That entryway, recessed and approached by recessed steps, consists of paired batten doors, with bow-shaped hinges, that are set deeply within a round arch with radiating voussoirs and a label molding lying in a shallow gable. A protective metal fence and gate have been installed at the entryway. Paired windows sit above the gable and share a prominently molded sill on blocky brackets. These windows are separated by a large pier fronted by a squat column with a foliated capital that supports the center of a massive, beveled lintel below a stone relieving arch. The window openings are further embellished by foliation at the beveled lintel and jambs. Deeply recessed, leaded casements with wood frames fill the openings. The lower part of the tower facing Amsterdam Avenue has randomly-placed fenestration in the form of narrow, rectangular windows, staggered as to suggest the existence of an interior stairwell. The tower base is topped by wide belt course topped by a molded band that extends into the Amsterdam Avenue façade. There is a bracketed metal flagpole at the lower section of the tower on the Amsterdam Avenue side.

The four sides of the corner tower's mid-section are the same, except the lower part of the north side and a small section of the east side are cut off by the roof of the nave. Each side has a pair of deeply-inset round-arch windows that sit in a recessed plane. They share projecting sills above an area of slanted stonework. The windows are separated and flanked by bundled columns with foliated capitals, supporting continuous molded bands. Compound arches with thick architraves spring from the molding, as do voussoirs and continuous molded labels. The round-arch sashes consist of leaded glass with wood framing. The arches sit in a checkerboard stone field, topped by a foliated cornice on large stone blocks. The outer piers rise up to form the foliated bases of bartizans. The upper section of the corner tower, which contains the church's chimes, is distinguished by its corner bartizans topped with turrets, its tripartite arches, and bell-shaped roof. The arches, which contain louvers, are separated by smooth columns with foliated capitals, while the arches have thick architraves, rock-faced voussoirs, and continuous molded labels. The bartizans have vertical lookout holes. The tower is finished off with projecting band that wraps around all four sides and the bartizans; its serves as the sills for blind arcades that sit

below molded cornices. The bartizans are topped by conical roofs coursed in stone, while a bell-shaped roof with scalloped asphalt shingles and a copper finial top the tower.

The West 86th Street façade includes the corner tower and the nave, as well as the church's earlier wing and tower, which sit at the eastern end of the site. The facade displays a variety of window configurations and bays, some which lie in recessed planes. The ashlar base has a molding that also serves as the sill for the grouped sash at the lower part of the façade. The inset sash have leaded-glass casements (covered by protective plexi-glass panels) and are topped by foliated lintels at the nave and rock-faced, chamfered lintels at the east wing. The nave has a projecting central section, distinguished by a large rose window that is topped by a broad cross gable. The rose window has circular tracery and sash, which are obscured by protective, opaque plexi-glass panels with rectilinear divisions. The elaborate surround consists of a wide sill molding, foliated spandrels, attached columns with foliated capitals at the level of the foliated springline molding, an architrave at the upper part of the window, rough-faced voussoirs, and a molded label with foliated ends. A lancet in the gable has a molded sill, rough-faced voussoirs, and a label molding. The gable has cap moldings rising from foliated stops, and is topped by a foliated pinnacle. The other bays of the nave have paired, deeply-inset round-arch windows that share common sills above foliated panels. The windows are separated and flanked by attached columns with foliated capitals, supporting continuous molded bands. Thick architraves spring from the molding, as do voussoirs and continuous molded labels. The round-arch sashes consist of leaded glass with wood framing. The sash are obscured by protective, opaque plexi-glass panels with rectilinear divisions. The roof of the nave is covered with asphalt shingles (probably not original) with copper flashing, catches, gutters, and drainpipes. There are single-bay dormers about halfway up the slope. Sheathed in copper and asphalt shingles, they have round columns and belting at the level of the sills and lintels. Prism-glass sash fill wood frames; there are multi-pane, leaded-glass transoms. Flared, asphalt-shingle-covered roofs, above copper cornices, top the dormers. There is a wide, ashlar chimney at the rear of the nave, topped by a suspended metal cap.

The original wing and tower consist of four bays including the tower. At the base of the tower, there is a secondary entryway, consisting of paired batten doors, with bowed hinges, that are set deeply within a round arch with radiating voussoirs and a label molding lying in a shallow gable topped by a finial. A tall lancet window occupies the central stage of the tower. It has a molded sill, architrave, voussoirs, and a label molding that springs from a belt course that reaches across the façade. The sash is obscured by protective, opaque plexi-glass with horizontal divisions. There is a metal sign bracket attached to the stone. There is a pair of deeply-inset round-arch windows at the top of the tower above a molded band. The windows, which share a molded sill, are separated by a column with foliated capitals. Thick architraves spring from a continuous molding, as do voussoirs and molded labels. The round-arch sash consist of leaded glass with wood framing. This upper stage has two other visible facades, facing east and west, which are similarly articulated. The tower is topped by a clay-tile-covered pyramidal roof above a cornice. There is copper flashing and a finial. There is a bracketed metal flagpole at mid-level.

The gabled façade to the east of the 86th Street tower has grouped fenestration at the first story and round-arch, tripartite windows as its main feature at center stage (similar to the Amsterdam Avenue façade). The center window is somewhat taller and wider than the other two. They contain leaded-glass sash (covered with protective plexi-glass), divided vertically and horizontally by a series of straight and curved wood members that are arranged as paired round-arch units supporting circular upper sash. Some of the sash has been modified to accommodate air conditioners. The windows are flanked by attenuated columns with foliated capitals

supporting a molded band (separated by the window openings and extending across the width of the façade). The window arches, which spring from the molded bands, have architraves and vousoirs, topped by intersecting labels with stops.

There is a pair of deeply-inset windows in the gable. They share a molded sill on blocky brackets. The sash holds single-pane glass with wood framing (the east sash modified to accommodate an air conditioner). The windows are topped by splayed lintels. The central section is topped by a broad gable with cap moldings rising from foliated stops, and is topped by a foliated pinnacle. The slate-covered roof consists of intersection hips and gables with copper flashing. There is a skylight on the southern slope and a wide, stone chimney on the west side of the roof.

Report written and researched by
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NOTES

¹ This section is based upon the following sources: *Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District Designation Report*, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (1990) and *New-York Cab Company Stable Designation Report*, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (2006) by Matthew A. Postal.

² *Ibid.*, 34.

³ The library is located within the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District, while the East River Savings Bank and the Home for Respectable Aged Indigent Females are designated New York City Landmarks.

⁴ The section is based upon the following sources: *Actors Studio (former Seventh Associate Presbyterian Church) Designation Report*, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (1991), by Virginia Kurshan; David W. Dunlap, *From Abyssinian to Zion A Guide to Manhattan's Houses of Worship* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 293; "Famous Old Church to Close Its Doors," *New York Times* (March 13, 1911), 3; *Fort Washington Presbyterian Church Twenty-five Years of Service* (New York: printed privately, 1938), 47, 48; *Metropolitan Baptist Church (formerly the New York Presbyterian Church)*, Landmarks Preservation Commission (1981), by Rachel Carley; *New York Times* (March 16, 1911), 8; "Streetscapes: West-Park Presbyterian An 1890 West Side Church Fighting Landmark Status," *New York Times* (Jan. 10, 1988), 8-11; and "West-Park Group Marks 125th Year," *New York Times* (Nov. 1, 1954), 30.

⁵ For a general history of the Presbyterian Church in New York, see Rev. J.F. Richmond. *New York and Its Institutions, 1609-1871* (New York: E.B. Treat, 1871), 9-10; J. Gordon Melton, ed., "Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America," in *The Encyclopedia of American Religions* (Detroit: Gale Research, Inc., 1989), 196; and Henry W. Jessup, *History of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church of New York from 1808-1908* (New York: Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, 1909), 9-10.

⁶ Four building lots were purchased in 1853.

⁷ The architect of the 1883-85 portion of the church, Leopold Eidlitz (1823-1908), was born in Prague. After studying at the Vienna Polytechnic, he immigrated to New York in 1843, joining the office of Richard Upjohn, the leading exponent of Gothic architecture whose Trinity Church, a designated New York City Landmark, was then under construction. Eidlitz soon formed a partnership with Otto Blesch to design St. George's Church (1846-48, a designated New York City landmark), located in Stuyvesant Square. This design established Eidlitz's reputation as a church architect and started his career as a practitioner of the Gothic mode. Among his notable churches St. Peter's Church⁷ in the Bronx, Temple Emanu-El in New York (demolished), Church of the Pilgrims rectory in the Brooklyn Heights Historic District, the Second Congregational Church in Greenwich, Connecticut, and Christ Church Cathedral in St. Louis. Eidlitz also designed a number of notable commercial and public buildings in New York City, none of which have survived with the single exception of his addition to the old New York County Courthouse (Tweed Courthouse, a designated New York City Exterior and Interior Landmark). Perhaps his most significant commission was the redesigning and completion of the New York State Capitol in Albany undertaken in partnership with Henry Hobson Richardson and Frederick Law Olmsted in 1875 to 1885. Eidlitz, a founding member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), was also an architectural theorist and author whose principles of rational design remain widely admired.

⁸ *New York Times* (March 13, 1911), 3.

⁹ The deal between the two organizations included the construction of a new church in Washington Heights at 175th Street and Wadsworth Avenue, called the Fort Washington Presbyterian Church, which remained affiliated with West Park until 1923.

¹⁰ This section is based on the following sources: *St. Peter's Church, Chapel and Cemetery Designation Report* (New York Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1976); and *Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District Designation Report*, Architects' Appendix (New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1990), and includes the following sources: "A Great American Architect: Leopold Eidlitz," *Architectural Record*, vol. 24, No. 3 (Sept. 1908), 281, 282, 29; Dennis Steadman Francis, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1840-1900* (New York, 1979), 28, 46; "Henry Franklin Kilburn," *American Art Journal*, ed. F.N. Levy (New York, 1900), vol. 3, p. 116; Norvel White and Elliot Willensky. *AIA Guide to New York City* (New York, 1978), 195, 208; and Henry F. Withey and Elsie R. Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles, 1970), 192-93, 342.

¹¹ This section is based on the following sources: *American Architect and Building News* v.33, p.58, pl. 813 (July 25, 1891); Dunlap, 293; New York City Department of Buildings, Borough of Manhattan, new building files and docket (NB 1229-1883 and NB 228-1889); *New York Times* (Nov. 10, 1884), 8; (May 16, 1889), 8; (May 19, 1890), 8; (Jan 10, 1888), R11; and John Conover Smock, *Building Stone in New York*, New York State Museum Bulletin 10 (1890).

¹² New York County, Office of the Register, Deeds Liber 1733, Page 344 (May 29, 1883). Protestant churches appear to have preferred corner sites on the Upper West Side; other prominently-sited corner churches included the First Baptist Church (79th Street and Broadway), St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church (540 West End Avenue, a designated New York City Landmark), and the West End Presbyterian Church (921-927 Amsterdam Avenue).

¹³ According to a newspaper account, it was a brick structure, 35 feet by 85 feet with an upper church and classrooms on the lower floor. *New York Times* (Nov. 10, 1884), 8.

¹⁴ The extent of Kilburn's changes to the chapel's interior has not been examined and is not part of this designation.

¹⁵ *New York Times* (Aug. 18, 1911), 8; (Aug. 1, 1960), 30; (Aug. 26, 1963), 46; (Dec. 18, 1981), A26; (Oct. 14, 1987), C3.

¹⁶ Atterbury translated Werner Sombert's writings on socialism into English.

¹⁷ The United States Congress passed a series of Chinese Exclusion Acts between 1882 and 1886.

¹⁸ Both Daniel Berrigan and Rabbi Marshall Meyer preached from it pulpit.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of the building and site, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the West Park Presbyterian 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, the West Park Presbyterian Church is considered to be one of the best examples of a Romanesque Revival style religious structure in New York City; that the extraordinarily deep color of its red sandstone cladding and the church's bold forms and soaring tower anchor the corner of West 86th Street and Amsterdam Avenue and produce a monumental and distinguished presence along those streets; that the original 1883-85 brick chapel (now re-clad in sandstone) facing West 86th Street was designed by prominent New York architect Leopold Eidlitz; that Henry Kilburn, another prominent New York architect, designed the main church, and redesigned and re-clad the earlier chapel, creating a unified Romanesque Revival-style church complex; that Kilburn's design remains remarkably intact; and that the West Park Presbyterian Church is one of the Upper West Side's most important buildings.

Accordingly, pursuant to 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 West Park Presbyterian Church, and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1217, Lot 1 as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair

Pablo Vengoechea, Vice-Chair

Stephen Byrnes, Joan Gerner, Christopher Moore,

Margery Perlmutter, Elizabeth Ryan, Roberta Washington, Commissioners



West Park Presbyterian Church,
165 West 86th Street, Manhattan
Tax Map Block 1217, Lot 1
Photo: Christopher D. Braze, 2010



West Park Presbyterian Church,
165 West 86th Street, Manhattan
Photos: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010





West Park Presbyterian Church (West Façade)
165 West 86th Street, Manhattan
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



West Park Presbyterian Church (South Façade)
165 West 86th Street, Manhattan
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



West Park Presbyterian Church (South Façade)
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010

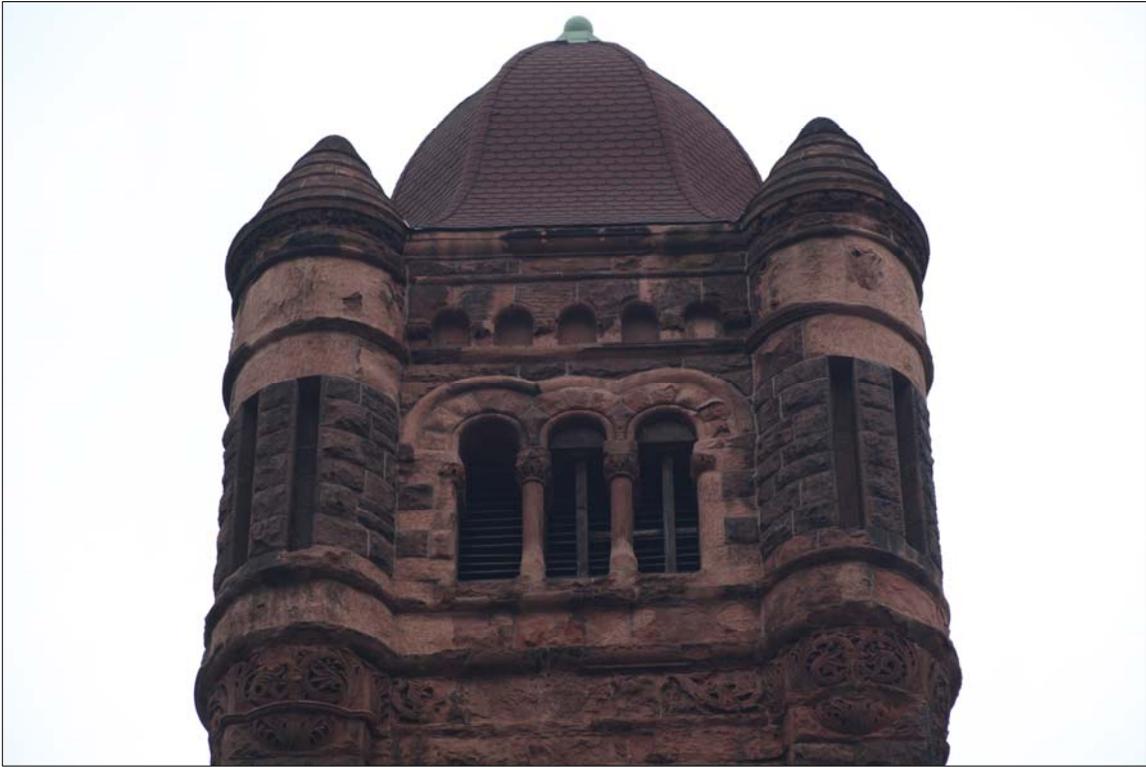


West Park Presbyterian Church (South Façade)
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



West Park Presbyterian Church
Details
Photos: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010





West Park Presbyterian Church
Details

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2009





West Park Presbyterian Church
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2009



West Park Presbyterian Church
Window details
Photos: Christopher D. Brazee. 2009

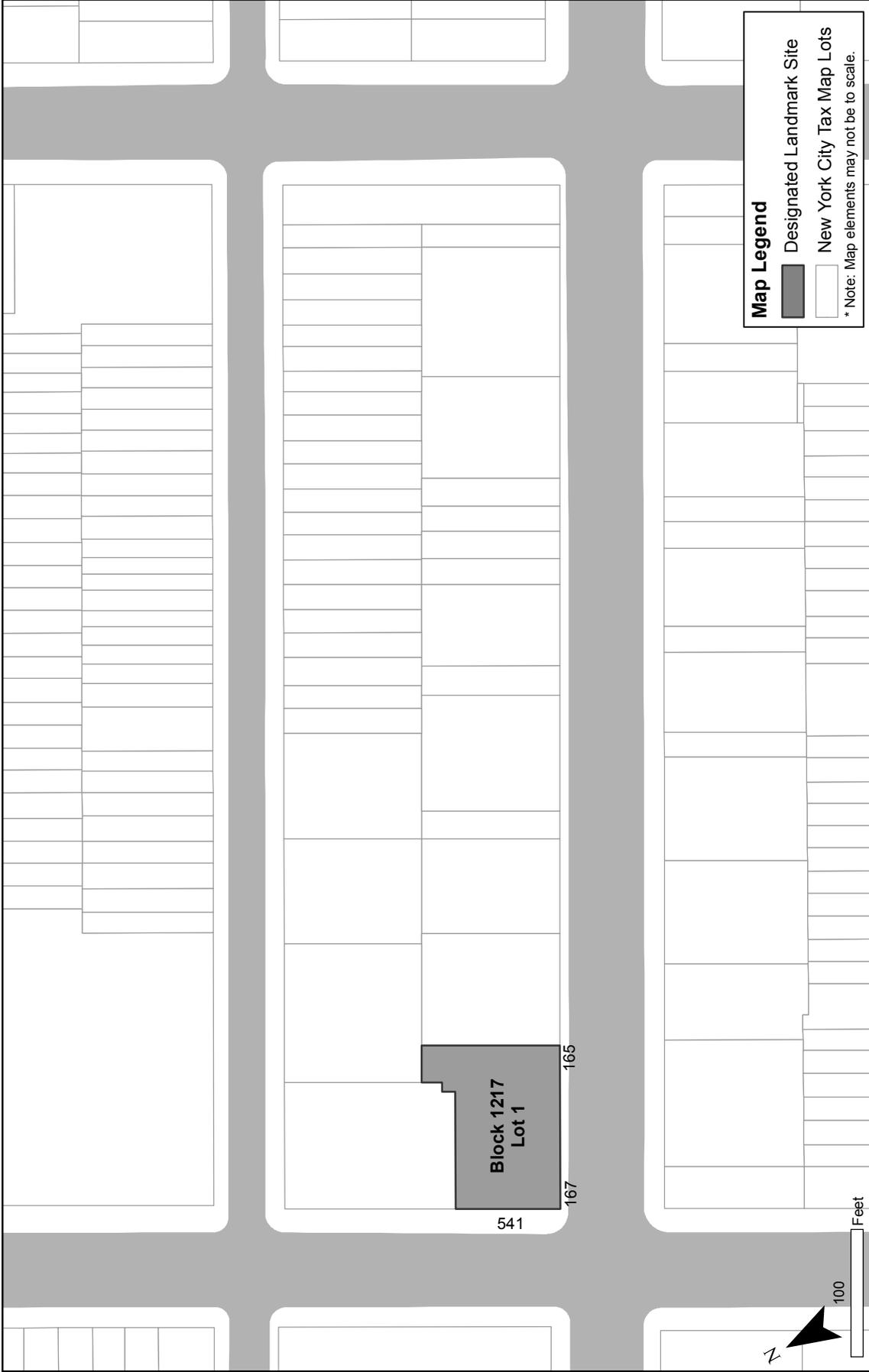




West Park Presbyterian Church
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2009



West Park Presbyterian Church
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2009



Designated: January 12, 2010