



METROPOLITAN CHAPTER OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA

March 18, 2008

**Testimony of the Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America
Regarding the Designation of
St. Michael's Church, Parish House, and Rectory
201-227 W. 99th Street**

Good morning, Commissioners. I am Hilda Regier, first vice president of the Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America. I am pleased to testify today in support of the designation of the St. Michael's Church, Parish House, and Rectory.

Founded in New York City in 1966, the Victorian Society in America is dedicated to fostering the appreciation and preservation of our nineteenth-century heritage as well as that of the early twentieth century (1837-1917). The Metropolitan Chapter, oldest of numerous chapters now flourishing throughout the country, is an independent organization affiliated with the national society.

Designed by Robert Gibson in 1890-91, St. Michael's Church is one of New York City's finest Victorian churches. The church's exquisitely executed Romanesque Revival style was called "a radical departure from the Gothic architecture of the majority of the city's sacred edifices" by the *New York Times* at the time of its construction. Its rockface limestone blocks are mirrored in the church's accessory buildings, including the parish house, designed by F. Charles Merry in 1896-97, and the rectory, designed by Gibson in 1912-13. At 160-feet tall, St. Michael's tower has long served as a focal point in this section of the Upper West Side. Although never completed, the interior of the church features wonderful windows and mosaics by Louis Comfort Tiffany's company.

Nearly thirty years after the LPC first considered it for designation, the time has come for the special architectural character of the St. Michael's Church complex to be officially recognized and protected by the Landmarks Law. The Metropolitan Chapter urges the Commission to vote to designate St. Michael's without delay.

Thank you for your attention.