



LEHMAN
COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF ART

Fine Arts Building, Room 014
250 Bedford Park Blvd West
Bronx, NY 10468

Phone: 718-960-8256
Fax: 718-960-7203
www.lehman.edu

Hon. Gale Brewer
563 Columbus Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10024

February 12, 2010

Dear Council Member Brewer:

I write to you today both as a professional art historian and as a concerned neighbor of West-Park Presbyterian Church. Thanks in large part to your leadership, combined with over twenty years of community advocacy, this important, and now rare, example of a "Richardsonian" brownstone Romanesque Revival church was officially designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on January 12, 2010.

I urge you to continue to support the designation of this important architectural and humanitarian monument as it comes before the City Council for confirmation. Historic religious monuments are, as you know, perhaps the most salient spiritual, social, and visual anchors in our communities. We cannot risk becoming victims of a kind of "cultural amnesia" if we allow these significant structures to succumb to short-term financial gains.

Bringing West-Park under the protection of the Landmarks law, as you know, will afford a rational, orderly, and judicious public process while creative solutions to its continued existence can be pursued.

Sincerely yours,

Herbert R. Broderick FSA
Associate Professor
Of Art History

(Home) 530 West End Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10024

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Hon. Robert Tierney
Chairman
Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street
New York, N. Y. 10007

February 10, 2009

FAX /212-669-7955

Dear Chairman Tierney:

I write to you today both as a professional art historian and as a concerned neighbor of West Park Presbyterian Church on Amsterdam Avenue and West 86th Street in Manhattan. This important, and now rare, example of a "Richardsonian" brownstone Romanesque Revival church must be given a hearing before the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Time is running out. Neighbors and friends of West Park have patiently requested this basic courtesy for some time now. The potential for a "mid-night requisition" seeking to demolish this important monument is immanent. The time to act is now.

To allow the demolition of this important historic structure through negligence, delay, and foot-dragging amounts to nothing less than vandalism. The Landmarks Preservation Commission can ill afford to have such a grievous stain on its record for all time. I appeal to your historic conscience to do the right thing - schedule a public hearing for this historic monument - schedule it now!

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H.R. Broderick".

Herbert R. Broderick FSA
A.B., M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.
Associate Professor
of Art History



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COLLEGE

The City University of New York

February 18, 2003

Hon. Robert B. Tierney
Chairman
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Of the City of New York
New York, N. Y. 10007

Dear Chairman Tierney:

I write to you as both a resident of the Upper West Side and an art historian with a sense of alarm at the prospect that we might lose to demolition Henry F. Kilburn's West-Park Presbyterian Church of 1890 on the corner of Amsterdam Ave. and West 86th Street. This architecturally significant church represents a now rare example on the Upper West Side of the brownstone "Richardsonian Romanesque" style in ecclesiastical architecture. The church is also significant in that, as Christopher S. Gray has shown, the easternmost portion of the church is actually an earlier (ca. 1884) chapel designed for the congregation by the important architectural theorist and architect Leopold Eidlitz.

Although interiors of designated religious architecture are not covered by the law, the stately interior of West-Park Presbyterian Church is especially significant as it retains its original dark wood work and detailing, so much of which has been painted white in other houses of worship of this period. In all ways, West-Park Presbyterian Church is an outstanding example of Lewis Mumford's *The Brown Decades* and must not be thoughtlessly destroyed.

With programs in place such as Sacred Sites at the Landmarks Conservancy and Partners for Sacred Spaces surely some viable solutions to the Church's current financial problems could be found.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that West-Park Presbyterian Church holds an important place in a still largely intact "set" of architecturally significant houses of worship from the last two decades of the nineteenth century on the Upper West Side, many of them, like West-Park, commanding visually prominent corner sites that anchor their respective neighborhoods. Among this "set" are the architecturally diverse St. Michael's P.E. Church at Amsterdam Ave. & West 99th St.; the Methodist Church of St. Paul & St. Andrew at West End Ave. & West 86th St.; and the West End Collegiate Church at West End Ave. & West 77th St. to name but three examples.

I urge you to consider West-Park Presbyterian Church a most suitable candidate for official landmark status and to schedule a public hearing on its significance as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,



Herbert R. Broderick / Associate Professor / A.B.; M.A.; M.Phil.; Ph.D. Columbia
Department of Art

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