

The Rev. Stephen S. Garmey
24 West 55th Street
New York, NY 10019

July 10, 2009

Hon. Robert Tierney, chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Tierney,

In 1882, Park Presbyterian Church on West End Avenue at 84th Street was beginning to outgrow its building and bought a much larger neighboring corner lot at 86th Street and Amsterdam Avenue. It hired Leopold Eidlitz, the New York architect best known for his first huge building, St. George's on Stuyvesant Square, but now sadly discredited by the collapse of his New York State Capitol vaulting in Albany, to build a chapel on its new land. Five years later, Henry Kilburn was engaged to incorporate it into a new large church. Kilburn indeed created a veritable city of gables, domes and towers in multicolored stone and Richardsonian detail. The whole ensemble was anchored by its great tower capped by an egg shaped dome, more Middle Eastern than Romanesque; a powerful landmark for the entire neighborhood. The Eidlitz chapel was, alas, lost in Kilburnian magnificence and in fact soon quite as forgotten as Eidlitz was to be himself. The whole wonderful "group" of architecture, somehow, nevertheless, survived and still precariously exists. Its huge tower still defines its ecclesiastical presence in a secular city.

But it has its enemies and they have been particularly busy lately, so we who care about such things must busy ourselves so that this irreplaceable church can find safety in our hands.

I, of course, support this serious cause.


Stephen Garmey 