



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

SCOTT STRINGER  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

**Testimony of Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer  
To the Landmarks Preservation Commission re:  
West Park Presbyterian Church – LP-2338  
July 14, 2009**

I would like to thank Chair Tierney and the Landmarks Preservation Commission for the opportunity to testify today.

The West Park Presbyterian Church has a long history on the Upper West Side. The congregation was established on the Upper West Side in 1852 and located at its current site at West 86<sup>th</sup> Street and Amsterdam Avenue since 1883. The congregation quickly grew and the church undertook a series of expansions from 1883 through 1890.

The church was originally designed as a red brick chapel, constructed by Leopold Eidlitz – famous for designing sections of the Tweed Courthouse and St. George's Episcopal Church. It was then expanded and refinished by Henry Kilburn – known primarily for designing residential buildings, found throughout the Upper West Side and Central Park West Historic District. The resulting structure elegantly anchors the one of the Upper West Side's most prominent intersections with daring red-sandstone, rounded arched openings and a prominent tower.

But beyond its local significance, the church is prominent as one of the finest examples of Romanesque Revival-style religious structures in all of New York City. The structure is worthy of preservation and the City has a direct interest in ensuring that preservation occurs.

However, we must remember that landmarking protections are only one step towards the preservation of this church. Preservation of religious structures is not just about regulatory controls, but finding creative solutions to bring the revenue necessary to maintain the church in a state of sound repair. This is especially true in cases such as this one, where the congregation has dwindled and no endowment exists. I look forward to continuing to work with the church and the community to find these additional solutions.

I urge the Commission to designate the West Park Presbyterian Church as a New York City Landmark.

Thank you.