

10 April 2009

Hon. Robert B. Tierney
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North
New York, New York 10007

re: West Park Presbyterian Church

Dear Commissioner Tierney:

Like many others I was surprised and delighted by the February 17th calendaring of the magnificent West Park Presbyterian Church at Amsterdam Avenue and West 86th Street. This is a much-needed first step in preserving this important church and I applaud the Commission for taking this step. I am writing today to strongly urge the Commission to act quickly to schedule a hearing so that the process of designation can move forward.

The complex, consisting of the original chapel by Leopold Eidlitz and the subsequent expanded church by Henry F. Kilburn, is worthy of preservation as both a neighborhood focal point and an example of the finest in the ecclesiastic architecture of Nineteenth Century New York. To allow this structure to further deteriorate or to be demolished would be a tragic waste of vision, craftsmanship and superb materials. One of the few buildings in our city to be constructed of East Longmeadow Sandstone, the building retains its striking coloration. The high quality of the design, craftsmanship and materials used in the original construction argue strongly for a sensitive and appropriate restoration rather than neglect and demolition.

Once designation is complete, every effort should be made to encourage appropriate uses for the complex. Having attended art exhibitions and classes in the church complex over the years, I believe it is possible to find uses for the building that do not conflict with the mission of the parish and allow the building to remain a vibrant center for the community.

It is good for people to live their lives in and around remarkable buildings like the West Park Presbyterian Church. That is why I urge you to act on the next stage of the designation process. Thank you for your efforts thus far and I look forward to the successful designation of West Park.

Very truly yours,



Daniel Allen, AIA
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