

WEST PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
165 WEST 86TH STREET, BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

The West Park Presbyterian Church is considered to be one of the best examples of a Romanesque Revival style religious structure in New York City. The extraordinarily deep color of the red sandstone cladding is combined with the bold forms of the round-arched openings and soaring tower anchoring the corner of West 86th Street and Amsterdam Avenue.

The West Park Presbyterian Church was founded in 1852 as the 84th Street Presbyterian Church and formerly occupied a wood chapel on 84th Street and West End Avenue. The church purchased the site of the present church at Tenth Avenue and West 86th Street in 1882 and commissioned Leopold Eidlitz to design a small brick chapel on the eastern end of the site on 86th Street in 1883. It was completed in 1885. Eidlitz was a prominent New York architect who designed many New York City buildings, such as sections of the Tweed Courthouse and St. George's Episcopal Church in Manhattan. The Upper West Side's population dramatically increased during the 1880s and the church quickly outgrew the chapel. In 1889 the church commissioned Henry Kilburn to greatly expand Eidlitz's chapel and create the main church in a manner which joins the two buildings seamlessly. Kilburn, who also designed many private residences in New York, including a number in the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District, re-clad Eidlitz's original brick chapel in sandstone during the construction of the new church, which was finished in 1890. The resulting building is a monumental bold structure which anchors an important intersection on the Upper West Side.

The West Park Presbyterian Church was formed in 1911 when the Park Church (formerly 84th Street) merged with the West Presbyterian Church, which was founded in 1829 in Greenwich Village and later moved to 42nd Street. Kilburn's design remains intact, and the building retains its visual prominence on the Upper West Side.