

LANDMARK WEST!

THE COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE THE UPPER WEST SIDE

March 14, 2003

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

RE: West-Park Presbyterian Church (165 West 86th Street, Manhattan)

The West-Park Presbyterian Church is unquestionably one of the most beautiful religious structures on the Upper West Side. The bold massing of this Romanesque Revival style building, the soaring tower anchoring the corner of Amsterdam Avenue and West 86th Street, and the extraordinary deep red sandstone cladding combine to create a building of singular power.

- Andrew Scott Dolkart, architectural historian

This architecturally significant church represents a now rare example on the Upper West Side of the brownstone "Richardsonian Romanesque" style in ecclesiastical architecture.

- Herbert R. Broderick, art historian

The use of these particular stones is possibly one of the earliest in New York City. [...] The West Park Presbyterian Church is an exemplary building of the period that Lewis Mumford refers to as the "Brown Decades" (the 1870's through 1880's).

- Katherine R. McKee, architectural conservator/historian, writer, educator

The church retains an exceptionally high level of integrity of setting, design, materials, craftsmanship, feeling, and association on both the exterior and interior.

- "Resource Evaluation", New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Dear Bob:

We write to urge you to schedule a public hearing to consider designating West-Park Presbyterian Church as a New York City Individual Landmark.

The above quotes highlight West-Park's exceptional significance. As Andrew Scott Dolkart, Herbert R. Broderick, and Katherine R. McKee make clear in their full statements (enclosed), this 1890 church designed by Henry Kilburn (as a major addition to an 1884 chapel by Leopold Eidlitz) unquestionably merits consideration as an Individual Landmark.

As further evidence of the church's individual significance, we are enclosing a copy of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's letter (dated November 8, 2001) certifying that West-Park meets the eligibility requirements for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, along with the "Resource Evaluation" prepared by the State.

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LANDMARK WEST! has long advocated for preserving West-Park Presbyterian Church. The building was included in the Landmarks Commission's original proposal for the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District in 1988 (map enclosed). Regrettably, when the district was designated in 1990, a segment of 86th Street including the church was omitted.

The time has come to rectify that omission. We look to the Landmarks Commission to give West-Park Presbyterian Church, at long last, the recognition and protection it deserves as an Individual Landmark.

Sincerely,



Arlene Simon
President



Kate Wood
Executive Director