

November 6, 2007

Hon. Helen Rosenfeld, Chair
Hon. Klari Neuwelt, Co-Chair, Parks & Preservation Committee
Hon. Lenore Norman, Co-Chair, Parks & Preservation Committee
Manhattan Community Board 7
250 West 87th Street
New York, New York 10024

Dear Chair Rosenfeld and Co-Chairs Neuwelt and Norman:

One of New York City's great architectural treasures, West-Park Presbyterian Church, deserves your immediate attention and consideration for landmark protection. As an architect and concerned citizen, I congratulate you on your recent resolution in support of designating West-Park as an individual landmark.

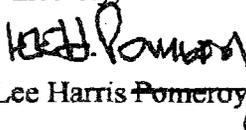
I am far from alone in my deep admiration for West-Park Presbyterian Church. Eminent historians including Barry Bergdoll and Andrew S. Dolkart have written eloquently about the significance of this work by architect Henry Kilburn, which has its roots in the original 1884 chapel designed for this site by Leopold Eidlitz, unquestionably one of America's most important 19th-century architects. The work of Eidlitz and Kilburn has all but disappeared from New York City, the most recent loss being Kilburn's wonderful, palazzo-style 1889 Colonial Club (West 72nd Street and Broadway).

West-Park is a rare and extraordinary example of late-19th-century ecclesiastical Richardsonian Romanesque architecture, I would argue, one of the finest still in existence. It also embodies the plight of many beautiful, historic houses of worship that, like the great country houses of Great Britain in the late 20th century, desperately need concerted public advocacy and government intervention in order to survive. Once the future of these structures is secured, we as a society must work together to restore them to beneficial use. It would be tragic to lose West-Park now, when this issue is so high on the priority list of communities throughout this city and beyond.

Together with the Landmarks Preservation Commission, you have the ability to turn West-Park into a success story, not just another heartbreak.

Thank you very much for taking action to preserve West-Park Presbyterian Church.

Sincerely,


Lee Harris Pomeroy, FAIA