

ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL AND LADY CHAPEL, AND RECTORY AND CARDINAL'S RESIDENCE; Cathedral Fifth Avenue between East 50th Street and East 51st Street, Cardinal's Residence 452 Madison Avenue, Rectory 460 Madison Avenue, Borough of Manhattan. Cathedral 1858-1879, James Renwick, Jr., architect; Chapel 1906, Charles T. Mathews, architect; Rectory and Cardinal's Residence completed 1880, James Renwick, Jr., architect.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1286, Lot 1.

On May 10, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the St. Patrick's Cathedral and Lady Chapel, and Rectory and Cardinal's Residence and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 20). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Two witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

St. Patrick's Cathedral represents the epitome of the Gothic Revival in New York City. A marvel of architectural design for its day, its rich marble exterior sits squarely on a handsome granite base. Cruciform in plan, its most conspicuous feature is the west front on Fifth Avenue where two identical towers rise to a height of 330 feet with octagonal spires decorated with flame-like (flamboyant) tracery. The transition from the square bases of the towers to the octagonal form of the spires is skillfully made by means of pinnacles which rise above the transition point at the corners.

The main entrance door, crowned by a traceried gable, is the focal point of the Fifth Avenue front. Above it is a rose window displaying beautiful flamboyant tracery surmounted by a high ornamented gable flanked by pinnacles. This theme is repeated at the transept doors on the side streets. Along their entire lengths, the side walls are given a strong rhythm where massive buttresses alternate with pointed windows. Truly a cathedral in scale, its overall interior length of 306 feet is scarcely less impressive than its height of 108 feet from pavement to the bosses of its plaster groin vaults. In 1906, the very handsome Lady Chapel was added to the east, and with its delicate spire or flèche, it enhances the main Cathedral with the beauty of its French Gothic detail.

North and South of the Lady Chapel and facing Madison Avenue are the handsome Rectory and the Cardinal's Residence. These dignified three and one half story free-standing Gothic mansions of excellent proportions display much fine detail and are harmoniously related to the Cathedral and augment and complete this outstanding ecclesiastical ensemble.

These buildings were designed by the architect James Renwick, Jr., with the exception of the Chapel which was designed by Charles T. Mathews. The drawings for the Cathedral were begun in 1853. The cornerstone for new St. Patrick's was laid on August 15, 1858 by the first Archbishop of New York, Archbishop John Hughes, and on May 25, 1879 St. Patrick's Cathedral was formally opened (completed except for the spires) by the first American Cardinal, his Eminence John Cardinal McCloskey. In October 1888, the spires of the Cathedral were completed.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that St. Patrick's Cathedral and Lady Chapel, and Rectory and Cardinal's Residence have a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, St. Patrick's Cathedral is the chief monument of the Gothic Revival in the City, that it represents a tremendous undertaking as a concept, as an investment, and as an example of a labor lasting over twenty years, that it is built of the finest materials, displaying beautiful detail of the Gothic Revival Period and that as the Cathedral of the Catholic Archdiocese in New York City, it is both a fitting and worthy symbol. The Commission further finds that the Rectory and the Cardinal's Residence are among the finest Gothic Revival houses in the City, and that the Lady Chapel is architecturally a notable later addition to the Cathedral

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 8-A of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the St. Patrick's Cathedral and Lady Chapel, and Rectory and Cardinal's Residence, Cathedral Fifth Avenue between East 50th Street and East 51st Street, Cardinal's Residence 452 Madison Avenue, Rectory 460 Madison Avenue, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Tax Map Block 1286, Lot 1, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.