

Landmarks Preservation Commission
March 15, 1966, Number 13
LP-0204

GRACE CHURCH RECTORY, 804 Broadway, Borough of Manhattan. Completed 1846;
architect James Renwick, Jr.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 557, Lot 8.

On March 8, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Grace Church Rectory and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 28). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Five witnesses spoke in favor of designation including the Rector of the Church, Rev. Benjamin Minifie, who said the church welcomed the proposed designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Grace Church Rectory is probably one of the finest Gothic Revival residences in Manhattan. It belongs to that early phase of the Gothic Revival in which an attempt was made, by differentiating the bay windows, to make the building appear less symmetrical and thus to romanticize it. Often these small rectories, nestling in the shadows of their churches, are overlooked. Viewed on their own merits, they are frequently notable examples of residential architecture.

The ecclesiastical character of Grace Church is carried over into the residence in its use of corner buttresses with pinnacles, gables decorated with Gothic details (croquets and finials) and the use of pointed-arch windows both in the gables and elsewhere. Flamboyant tracery adorns the windows, as in the Church, and even the bay windows are in themselves a study in Gothic detail.

The entrance door, projected forward to create a vestibule, is most handsomely crowned by a richly decorated gable and flanked by miniature corner buttresses complete with pinnacles. Whether viewed separately, or as a part of the Grace Church group of buildings, this little rectory may be said to be an irreplaceable part of our architectural heritage.

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 the Grace Church Rectory has 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, the Grace Church Rectory is one of the monuments of the early Gothic Revival in New York and that it is an extremely charming building richly detailed and well proportioned.

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 Grace Church Rectory, 804 Broadway, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 557, Lot 8, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.