





**Greenwich Village
Society for Historic Preservation**

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E V C C
East Village Community Coalition
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October 10, 2008

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

Dear Chairman Tierney,

We write to request that the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission consider the designation of the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Virgin Protection, located at 59 East 2nd Street in Manhattan, as a New York City Landmark.

The stately Russian Orthodox Cathedral (at 74' across, it stands the width of 3 city lots), is one of only three Russian Orthodox Cathedrals in Manhattan. The different phases in the building's history speak to both the greater immigrant experience in New York, and more specifically to the experience of the Russian Orthodoxy in the first half of the 20th Century. The cathedral, made of rock-cut Kentucky limestone, was designed in the gothic style by the renowned architect Josiah Cleveland Cady, who would later build such iconic New York City landmarks as the original Metropolitan Opera House, and the West 77th Street frontage and auditorium of the American Museum of Natural History, among others.

The history of the cathedral dates back to 1867, when houses stood in its place. That year, the New York City Mission Society converted the house on the easternmost lot into the Olivet Chapel. The church catered to the local immigrant population, offering services in German, Hungarian, Italian, and Russian. In 1891, Cady laid the cornerstone for the current cathedral, which was originally named the Olivet Memorial Church. At this time, the Mission Society was focusing on a new institutional approach, consolidating its programming into churches which provided ample space and resources to serve needy communities. The Lower East Side, which had a significant urban poor population, was particularly in need of such facilities. The new church was large enough to offer classes, a library, baths, and other social gathering spaces.

In 1943, the Olivet Memorial Church was purchased by the Orthodox Church of America, which was established in 1870 as the Russo-Greek Chapel of Holy Trinity to serve the needs of Russian and Greek Embassies. With this transaction, the Cathedral inherited a complex and interesting history of turmoil within the Russian State. In 1917, when the Communist revolution erupted in Russia, the Soviet government sued for ownership of all properties built abroad with Tsarist funds, including the Church of St. Nicholas on 97th Street, which had thus far been home to the parish. Twenty-six years later, the parish was able to purchase the Olivet Memorial Church, and renamed it the Cathedral of the Holy Virgin Protection. As a symbol of the Orthodoxy, icons are painted all throughout the interior, which are mainly in the traditional Byzantine style.

The Russian Orthodox Cathedral has stood intact for over 150 years, and has served as an unofficial landmark in this historic neighborhood, which recently has experienced a great deal of change. While a worthy landmark on its own merit, the cathedral also serves as a striking backdrop to the landmarked New York City Marble Cemetery directly across Second Street, and as a complement to the intact tenements and Federal and Greek Revival rowhouses that line the rest of the block.

We request that this RFE be considered expeditiously, as the cathedral currently faces imminent danger. The owners have applied for a permit from the Department of Buildings to erect, on-site, an eight-story residential tower with a penthouse. We thank the Commission for the work done in the East Village in recent months, and hope you will continue to honor the history of this significant immigrant neighborhood by landmarking this cathedral before irrevocable damage is done.

With this letter we are also submitting a photo as well as primary and secondary source documents that help establish the history of the Russian Orthodox Cathedral. We hope you will consider this vital structure for landmark designation.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director
Greenwich Village Society for Historic
Preservation



Katherine R. Spaulding
Managing Director
East Village Community Coalition



Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church
[B12]

Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Anglicans and Italians once mixed in this richly embellished Romanesque sanctuary at 359 Broome Street [●B12], originally the CHURCH OF SAN SALVATORE (as it still says over the entrance), run by the New York Protestant Episcopal City Mission Society. Designed by Hoppin & Koen and built in 1901/1902, it is now Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Holy Virgin Protection, Cathedral of the. Across from Marble Cemetery at 59 East 2nd Street [●E80]—as peaceful a setting as the Lower East Side has to offer—stands one of Manhattan's three Russian Orthodox cathedrals, heir to a complex history.

The New York City Mission Society built the Olivet Chapel in 1867 on this site [E79], once a small cemetery. Focusing on those not served by the city's mainline churches, the chapel offered services in German, Hungarian, Italian, and Russian. The present Gothic sanctuary, originally the Olivet Memorial Church, was built in 1891 and designed by J. C. Cady & Company. It offered classes, a library, a gymnasium, baths, societies, and clubs.



Cathedral of the Holy Virgin Protection
[E80]

The building was sold in 1942 to the body now known as the Orthodox Church in America, which traces its origins commonly with those of St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Cathedral, diverging in 1925 when the Soviet-controlled Living Church won control of the cathedral from Metropolitan (Archbishop) Platon. The followers of Platon moved in 1927 to St. Augustine's Chapel, at 107 East Houston Street [E89], which they subdivided, calling their half St. Mary's Russian Orthodox Cathedral. On acquiring Olivet Memorial, they rededicated it in 1943 as the Cathedral of the Holy Virgin Protection. Christ the Savior Orthodox Church is a parish of this body.



Holyhood Church. If you can ignore the roaring and the fumes of the George Washington Bridge Bus Station across West 179th Street, you will be astonished by this romantic work of Gothic Revival. It is as charming as a work by Alexander Jackson Davis, yet powerful enough to stand up to the concrete forms of the station, by Pier Luigi Nervi. The parish—Holyhood means "Holy Crucifix" or "Holy Cross"—was founded in 1893. Its first



CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP FOR BUILDINGS NEWS

NYC Department of Buildings

Actions

Premises: 59 EAST 2 STREET MANHATTAN

BIN: 1082819 Block: 443 Lot: 16

NUMBER	TYPE	FILE DATE
ALT 9-31	ALTERATION	04/07/1931
ESA 260-15*	ELECTRIC SIGN APPLICATION	00/00/0000
ESA 2423-20	ELECTRIC SIGN APPLICATION	00/00/0000
ESA 626-40	ELECTRIC SIGN APPLICATION	00/00/0000
FO 2062-84	OIL BURNER APPLICATION	00/00/0000
FUE 2734-45		00/00/0000
NB 10-91*	NEW BUILDING	00/00/0000
P 5-31	PLUMBING	00/00/0000
PER 484-31G	PERMIT	00/00/0000
PRS 1476-51	PLUMBING REPAIR SLIP	00/00/0000

Next

Enter Action Type: Or Select from List: Refresh

If you have any questions please review these [Frequently Asked Questions](#), the [Glossary](#), or call the 311 Citizen Service Center by dialing 311 or (212) NEW YORK outside of New York City.

CAMPAIGN TIN PLATE.**ALLEGED MAKERS WHO WON'T SELL OR
GIVE THEIR ADDRESS.***From the Evening Post.*

A friend of the *Evening Post* sent the following postal card to this office a day or two ago, saying that he had received it as an advertisement through the mails in the regular way:

HURRAH FOR MCKINLEY!

"U. S." BRIGHT TIN.

As a beginning, we can now furnish, 14x20, I C and I X Bright Tin, of superior ductility and heavy coated for durability. All "U. S." Iron and steel products excel those made in Great Britain. Address orders to

ELY & WILLIAMS,
38 Park Row, New-York.

A reporter of the *Evening Post* called at the office of Messrs. Ely & Williams, 38 Park Row, (the Potter Building,) on Monday, and, giving his name, inquired of Mr. Williams how much of the "United States Bright Tin, 14x20, I C and I X," his firm could contract to deliver in a week and at what figure. Mr. Williams, far from seeming overjoyed at the prospect of a customer, immediately took on an air of suspicion and asked the reporter what business he was in, where he lived, what he wanted the tin for, and a few other questions of that character, concluding by saying that the reason he asked the questions was because some time ago a reporter of THE NEW-YORK TIMES called at his office in his absence and obtained some trade secrets from his clerk and then lied about them. Mr. Williams then proceeded to abuse THE NEW-YORK TIMES and the *Evening Post* at great length, and not in the choicest language, (although it may be mentioned incidentally that he is greatly esteemed among some temperance and religious people of Plainfield, N. J., where he lives,) and after finally declaring that THE TIMES and the *Evening Post* were unmitigated liars, said that his firm did not care to quote prices to or deal with strangers.

The reporter, however, asked Mr. Williams where his tin-plate factory was situated. This Mr. Williams also declined to state. The reporter then told him that he was a representative of the *Evening Post*, and that his object was to ascertain the whereabouts of the factory where the "United States Bright Tin, 14x20, I C and I X," that he offered to sell was made. This caused Mr. Williams to indulge in another quarter of an hour's abuse of the *Evening Post*, but through it all he persistently refused to state the whereabouts of his factory. After he had exhausted himself, however, so far as abuse of the *Evening Post* and THE TIMES was concerned, he talked at some length on the beauties of the McKinley bill, the beautiful tin plate his firm was making, &c., and how superior it was to the imported article. Among other things, he said that the importers of tin plate had swindled the public by raising the price of tin, although the new tariff had not yet gone into effect; that when the tariff did go into effect the canned-goods people who put up goods for export would really get their tin cheaper than they did now, by reason of the drawback; but that the consumers in this country would of course have to pay more for American canned goods than the English, because they earned more and got more wages than the English people did. Just where the benefit of protection to the consumer came in under those circumstances Mr. Williams declined to say; in fact, he would not discuss that question. He maintained, however, apropos of his tin plate, that it was a far superior article to any that was imported, and declared that in a very short time arrangements would be perfected by which tin plate would be made in this country on a scale that would practically drive the English tin out of the market.

A CORNERSTONE TO BE LAID.**DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW OLIVET
MEMORIAL CHURCH.**

The cornerstone of the Olivet Memorial Church, in Second Street, between First and Second Avenues, will be laid to-day at 4 o'clock. The cost of the building will be \$65,000. It is the gift of D. H. McAlpin and his daughter, Mrs. J. T. Pyle, and is designed to be a memorial of a beloved son and brother. The church is under the care of the New-York City Mission and Tract Society, which has between fifty and sixty missionaries at work south of Fourteenth

Street.

The building has been designed by J. C. Cady & Co., and is intended to provide a number of schoolrooms in addition to the church proper. The façade of the building is made of Kentucky limestone in Gothic style. The church is in the rear, and in front there are the schoolrooms. The entrance is an elaborately-engraved doorway, 20 feet wide, leading to the main auditorium. Here 1,000 persons may be seated in a lofty room, conspicuous for its English roof, its massive timbering, and its stained-glass windows, which give it a very churchly appearance.

The classrooms, which will surround the main auditorium, are to be devoted to cooking schools, sewing schools, and work of a similar sort. In the basement there will be a gymnasium, 60 by 70 feet; a library, and a reading room. The ground dimensions of the entire structure are 75 by 100 feet.

It is expected that the congregation will occupy its new structure about Nov. 1.

NEWS OF FOREIGN NAVIES.

The name of the new British battle ship is to be changed from *Renown* to *Empress of India*. Speaking of the supposed sailor superstition concerning names, the *Army and Navy Gazette* says: "We venture to doubt if the present-day sailor is very superstitious, and we are very certain that numbers of them take an interest in the histories of the names of the ships in which they are required to serve. They like to feel that a ship with a glorious past is perpetuated in that to which they belong. On the other hand, if our sailors objected to put to sea in a ship named after one which had been lost, wrecked, burned, or taken by the enemy, and their wishes were acceded to, it is very certain that nearly every vessel in the British Navy would require a new appellation."

The Orecchon's electric dirigible torpedo is described by the *Lumière Electrique* in glowing terms. It is said to combine the best qualities of the *Lay* with the speed and slender form of the *Whitehead*. It has an electromotor and a double cable connected with dynamos in a torpedo boat and guiding it "like a race horse with bit and reins." A forward chamber contains the explosive, a rear one the mechanism for driving the screw, and between them is a third chamber, having the electric apparatus and a hydraulic machine for regulating the immersion. A revolving machine in the head of the torpedo signals the moment of contact, so that the charge can be exploded by a current from the torpedo boat.

The *United Service Gazette* pays this compliment to the makers of the American Navy: "Although it is an undoubted fact that they have first found out all that we knew here, and for years have had intelligent observers at work in Europe collecting and tabulating information which was ready to hand when required, in some points the Americans have not hesitated to leave the beaten track and have recognized the force of the argument that to thoroughly build up an efficient navy each nation must study what suits its own particular case, and not slavishly copy foreign designs."

The new torpedo depot ship *Vulcan* will have her contractors' steam trials under natural and forced draught this week, when her engines are expected to develop 12,000 horse power, giving a speed of 20 knots. This vessel was laid down in June, 1888, and by the time she is completed will have taken just three years to build.

Some interesting figures showing the cost of some of the guns used in the British land and sea service are furnished by a recent Parliamentary return. From this it appears that nine 13½-inch guns have been issued to the navy at an average cost of \$55,905. The 10-inch guns cost \$28,480 each, and the 5-inch \$2,840.

England provides liberally for those who suffer by the loss of its ships. For the sufferers by the loss of *Cowper Cole's* ship, the Captain, there were raised by public subscription \$300,000; for the *Eurydice*, \$115,000; for the *Atalanta*, \$45,000; and now for the *Serpent*, \$60,000.

ANOTHER NEAPOLITAN GOES BACK.

In the long line of immigrants from the steamship *Assyria* who waited in the Barge Office yesterday for a chance to tell their tales to the registry clerk was Giuseppe Pascarelli, a Neapolitan of twenty-two years, who had with him his wife and three brothers-in-law. As soon as he gave his name the clerk ran through a little reference book and ordered the whole party to be put in the detention pen.

Col. Weber then telegraphed to Astoria for Ciprione Marchese, the bootblack at the ferry landing, to come to the Barge Office at once. When he arrived he was taken before Pascarelli

and at once began to vilify him, calling him a thief and a murderer, and to insist that he be not allowed to land. He said that Pascarelli had stabbed and nearly killed him in a quarrel two years ago in Naples and had served five months in jail therefor. He said further that he had been reliably informed that Pascarelli's sole purpose in coming to America was to make another and more successful stabbing attack upon him.

Pascarelli acknowledged that he was an ex-convict, but said that he had no evil intentions against his old rival, and that he would give bonds for his good behavior in this country. Col. Weber sent him back to the detention pen, however, and will make the Assyria take him back to Naples. The wife will go with him, but the brothers-in-law elected to stay.

CHANGING THE TRADING UNIT.

The grain trade of the Produce Exchange decided yesterday to change its unit for trading from 8,000 to 5,000 bushels. The latter is the Chicago standard and that of other American markets, and some of the option traders have been anxious to have New York adopt it. The change was not particularly favored by the exporters, but the meeting adopted it nevertheless.

The new rule will go into effect after July 1 on business for delivery after the close of the year.

J. CLEVELAND CADY, ARCHITECT, IS DEAD

Designer of Metropolitan Opera
House and Other Notable
Structures Was 82.

HIS 15 BUILDINGS AT YALE

President of Skin and Cancer Hos-
pital Was Superintendent of Sun-
day School for 53 Years.

J. Cleveland Cady, the architect, senior member of the firm of Cady & Gregory of 40 West Thirty-second Street, died yesterday of heart disease after an illness of two months at his home, 214 Riverside Drive. He was 82 years old.

Dr. Cady, (he had received the honorary degree of LL. D. from Trinity College in 1905,) was the designer of many of the most important buildings in this city, notably the Metropolitan Opera House, the American Museum of Natural History, the later buildings of the Presbyterian Hospital, the Skin and Cancer Hospital, Bellevue Medical School, and the Hudson Street Hospital. For Yale University he designed no less than fifteen buildings, including the Lamson, Fairweather, White Berkeley and Pearson dormitories, Dwight Hall, and the Chittenden Library. Examples of his work are also to be found at Williams, Trinity, and Wesleyan.

Dr. Cady was born at Providence, R. I., the son of Josiah and Lydia Cady. He received his early education at academies and was graduated from Trinity College with the class of 1860. Since 1870 he had practised architecture in this city, the associate member of the firm he established being William S. Gregory.

In 1861 he married Emma M. Bulkley of Orange, N. J. There were five children, two sons and three daughters. One of the daughters, Miss Lydia Cady, was married last year to William Langer, the Attorney General of North Dakota.

Dr. Cady was a devoted member of the Presbyterian Church. Speaking of his father last night, his son, Dr. Lyndon Cady of 214 Riverside Drive, said:

"I believe that the interest which was closest to my father's heart was his work as Superintendent of the Sunday school of the Church of the Covenant, in East Forty-second Street. He held this position for fifty-three years, and even during his last illness his mind was occupied with the development and continuance of this Sunday school work.

Dr. Cady was President of the Skin and Cancer Hospital, a Governor of the Presbyterian Hospital, a Trustee of Berea College, Vice President of the New York City Mission, President of the National Federation of Churches. His clubs included the Century, the Aldine, the Quill, and the Delta Psi Fraternity.

Last Autumn Dr. Cady presented to the Library of Trinity College his collection of books and photographs relating to architecture. This collection comprised 375 volumes and more than 2,000 photographs, and was considered one of the most complete of its kind in the country.

STATE OF NEW YORK,
CITY OF NEW YORK,
COUNTY OF

SS.:

William Fassbinder

Typewrite Name of Applicant

being duly sworn, deposes and says: That he resides at Number 29 Broadway

in the City of New York, in the Borough of Manhattan
in the State of New York, that Oliver Memorial Church
New York

is to be the owner and licensee of the proposed electric sign and (If the applicant is not the owner of the sign) that the undersigned has been duly authorized to make this application in his behalf; that all the statements and representations herein made are true; (In case the applicant is not the owner or lessee of entire building) that he has obtained consent and authority from NEW YORK City Mission Society who is the OWNER of this entire property, to erect and maintain structurally safe an electric sign as described in this application; and that the necessary consent of the owners of all adjoining properties occupied exclusively as private residences, as required by the ordinance, is appended hereto.

(Sign Here) Application must be signed (with FULL NAME) by owner of proposed electric sign or authorized agent

By: If a Corporation, name and title of officer signing

Sworn to before me, this 26th day of March, 1920

Thompson Spickelton

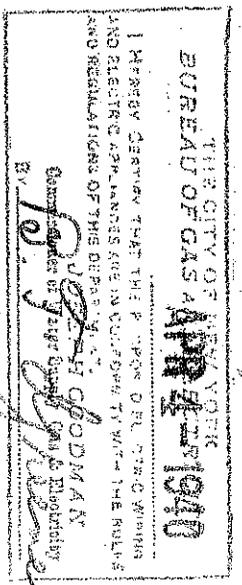
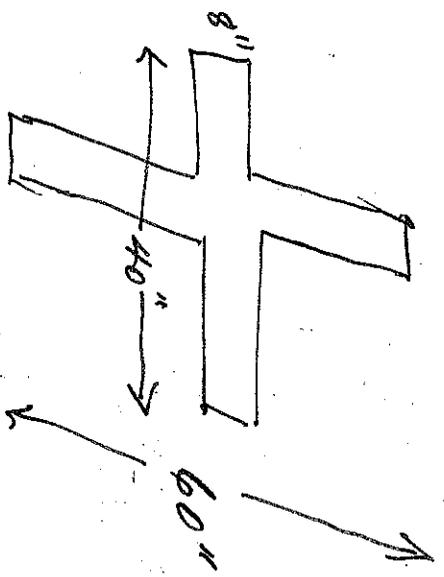
Permission is hereby granted to OLIVET MEMORIAL CHURCH

Tenant of my premises at 59-63 East Second Street, Manhattan

To erect an illuminating sign in full compliance with the rules and regulations of the Building Department.

Owner New York City Mission Society
Address 105 East 22 Street, N.Y.C.

Approved by
DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY,
GAS AND ELECTRICITY

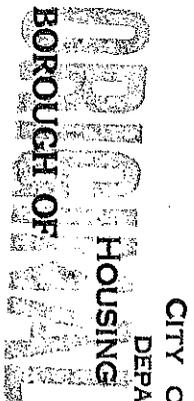


Work commented (Notice to District Inspectors—The following report must be made and filed immediately upon completion of above work in accordance with approved application)

To THE BOROUGH SUPERINTENDENT:

On 19, I examined the Electric Sign herein described, and respectfully report that the said sign has been built and erected at the above location as specified in this application, and that this sign is safe. (If otherwise, Inspector will report violation)

(Signed) 19 Inspector District



CITY OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF
HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

, CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN
Municipal Bldg.,
Manhattan

BROOKLYN
Municipal Bldg.,
Brooklyn

BRONX
Bronx County Bldg.,
Grand Concourse & E. 161st St.

QUEENS
21-10 49th Avenue
L. I. City

RICHMOND
Boro Hall,
St. George, S. I.

NOTICE—This application must be TYPEWRITTEN and filed in TRIPPLICATE, and TWO copies sworn to by Applicant. A separate application must be filed for each sign, and the application can be amended. All plans required must be filed on tracing linen or cloth, not exceeding 8 1/2 x 14 inches. No work is to be commenced under this approval until a permit is obtained from the Department of Housing and Buildings.

ELECTRIC SIGN

Application No. 626 1940 BLOCK 443

Permit No. 19 LOT 16

LOCATION 59-63 East Second Street 1/5 side 226' E/O rd

USE DISTRICT (under building zone resolution) AR

I have this day approved the proposed electric sign specified in this application; with the understanding that this approval shall not apply to any sign which varies in any important particular whatsoever from the proposed sign specified and described in this application, and with the further proviso that this certificate of approval shall expire six months from this date if a permit for the said sign is not procured from the Department of Housing and Buildings within that period. The annual fee should be computed on the basis of 6 square feet of space on one side of sign.

EXAMINED AND RECOMMENDED
FOR APPROVAL ON 4/4/1940 H. D. Sommerberg Examiner

APPROVED APR 4 - 1940 J. Dushorger Borough Superintendent

COMPENSATION INSURANCE has been secured in accordance with the requirements of the Workmen's Compensation Law as follows:

Hoist Permit No. 103503 State Insurance Fund Certificate Attached
Rigger J. Dushorger

To THE BOROUGH SUPERINTENDENT:

Application is hereby made, under Section B26-12.0 and 13.0 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, for approval of electric sign which is to be erected and maintained on premises known as

NUMBER 59-63 East Second Street BLOCK 443 LOT 16

in accordance with all the requirements of the aforesaid ordinances, and every other provision of any law or regulation relating thereto.

DIMENSIONS of Sign: 5 feet 0 inches high, by 3 feet 8 inches long.

Describe POSITION of Sign with respect to building (giving exact location on wall and stating whether parallel to building wall, right angle, V shaped, parallel to vertical line of corner, etc.):

Right angle to building wall

Will not obstruct light, air or egress from any window or fire escape
Will Sign when hung PROJECT more than two feet above the cornice, parapet wall, or roof level (if no cornice or parapet wall)? No

PROJECTION beyond the building line: 8 feet 0 inches

MATERIAL of construction Metal

HEIGHT of sign (above level of sidewalk beneath such sign when hung) 10 feet 0 inches in the clear.

ESTIMATED COST of Sign \$200.00 Weight 125 lbs.

TENANT of Portion of Building on which electric sign is to be erected } Name Oliver Memorial Church
} Manufacturer Houston Sign Co.

Location of ADJOINING Properties Used Exclusively as Private Residences (if any) } Number None } STORE

Sign on beam 10 feet above ground level
above sidewalk

626

LOCATION 59-63 East Second Street

DISTRICT (under building zone resolution) Use Business Height 1 1/2 Area B

Examined Jan 15 1931

[Signature]
Examiner

SPECIFICATIONS—SHEET A

- (1) NUMBER OF BUILDINGS TO BE ALTERED
Any other building on lot or permit granted for one? One No.
- (2) ESTIMATED COST OF ALTERATION: \$ 500.00
- (3) OCCUPANCY (in detail):
Of present building: 1st & 2nd floor - Church.
3rd floor - Caretaker's living apartment.
- (4) SIZE OF EXISTING BUILDING:
At street level 74'-0" feet front 110'-0" feet deep
At typical floor level 74'-0" feet front 110'-0" feet deep
Height 3 stories 53'-0" feet
- (5) SIZE OF BUILDING AS ALTERED:
At street level 74'-0" feet front 110'-0" feet deep
At typical floor level 74'-0" feet front 110'-0" feet deep
Height 3 stories 53'-0" feet
- (6) CHARACTER OF CONSTRUCTION OF PRESENT BUILDING: Ordinary.
[Frame, Ordinary or Fireproof]
- (7) NUMBER OF OCCUPANTS (in each story of building as altered, giving males and females separately in the case of factories):
NOT AFFECTED.
- (8) STATE GENERALLY IN WHAT MANNER THE BUILDING WILL BE ALTERED:
At 1st floor west side of building, install partitions enclosing toilet rooms and cut door opening in brick wall leading to toilet room.
All as noted on drawing filed herewith.

[PAGE 2]

[CONTINUED ON OTHER SIDE]

Owner NEW YORK CITY MISSION SOCIETY 105 East 22nd St., New York, N.Y.
Alexander H. McKenney, Superintendent " " " " "

Lessee
Architect SIDNEY DAUB 155 East 42nd Street, N.Y.C.
Superintendent

The said land and premises above referred to are situate at, bounded and described as follows, viz.: BEGIN-

Russian Orthodox Church

Website Excerpt

http://nycathedral.org/about_us.html

Welcome to the Cathedral of the Holy Virgin Protection and Chapel of St. Innocent of Irkutsk, one of the main places of Orthodox worship in New York City.

We are a warm and welcoming community with a great diversity of people, young and old, native New Yorkers, transplants, and immigrants. We are united in a community that believes that we can experience God's love and sustaining presence in our lives. We seek to acquire the Holy Spirit through the teachings of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures and the the life and activity of the Church as His continuing presence in the world.

The church is a Cathedral of the diocese of Washington and New York, and directly under the Primate and First Hierarch of the Orthodox Church in America. The Orthodox Church in America belongs to the worldwide communion of Orthodox Churches We profess the same faith as the Apostles of Jesus Christ which was articulated in the Letters of the Apostle Paul and defined by the earliest Councils of the original, undivided Church held from the 4th - 9th centuries. These same Councils formulated the Holy Bible with the Old and New Testaments, and provide the earliest and most authentic teaching of Christ held in common from the time of the Apostles by the early Christians. These teachings were not subjected to the changes brought about in the Roman Catholic church and, later the many branches of Protestantism which were derived from early Roman Catholic variations and additions.

Whilst the major Orthodox Churches are found in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, today Orthodox Christians are spread throughout the world and there are few countries without an Orthodox presence. In the United States, the Orthodox collectively form the third largest Christian community, having some 4 million members. Most of the local Orthodox Churches are represented, principally the Greek Orthodox Church, but also the Russian, Serbian, Antiochian, Romanian, Ukrainian, Carpatho-Russian, Bulgarian, and Albanian Orthodox Churches

At first sight, Orthodoxy can appear as something foreign, a purely Eastern form of Christianity. In fact, it is a universal faith, with roots in this land over 200 years old. The missionary monk, Herman from the Russian monastery of Valaam, who settled in the Aleutian chain of Alaska, first brought the Orthodox faith to this continent in the 18th century. A bishop, Innocent (Veniaminov) was assigned to this newly established diocese in the 19th century. Later, toward the beginning of the 20th century, the center of the diocese was transferred to the "lower 48," first to San Francisco, and then, in 1904 with the growth of immigration, to New York City. From among these early pioneer bishops, priests, monks and laymen, and those who would follow them, we have recognized and venerate more than ten saints of the Church. You will find icons of them in the church.

The Cathedral Parish

The parish originated in 1870 as the Russo-Greek Chapel of Holy Trinity to serve the needs of the Russian and Greek Embassies. In 1895 it was re-organized as the Church of St. Nicholas and the community began to flourish under the pastorate of Archpriest Alexander Hotovitsky who began a vigorous campaign to raise funds to build a permanent church. In 1898 Bishop Tikhon

(Bellavin) arrived in New York, and in 1904, after the completion of construction of a new church on East 97th Street, he transferred the center of the Diocese from San Francisco to New York City, raising St Nicholas to the status of Cathedral.

Church life in America was thrown into turmoil during and after the 1917 Communist revolution in Russia, and in the process, the government of the Soviet Union sued for ownership of all properties built with Tsarist funds abroad. It would only be in New York City that they would prevail and win control over the cathedral building in 1926. The dispossessed community, now re-organized as the Cathedral of the Holy Virgin Protection, would wait another 17 years before enough funds were raised to purchase the Olivet Memorial church on East 2nd Street, our present home.

The building, constructed in 1867 and designed by renowned architect Josiah Cady, was easily adapted to Orthodox worship. The icons were painted at various times and are of both traditional Byzantine style as well as the westernized style popular in Russia in the 19th century. In recent years we have made a conscious effort to adhere to the traditional Byzantine style that better communicates the other-worldly theology of the Orthodox Church.

Liturgy and Worship

You will notice immediately that there are no pews in the church. In general they are not favored by the Orthodox because we believe that it is appropriate to pray standing or kneeling in the presence of God, and pews restrict the freedom of movement necessary in Orthodox worship. Chairs are placed around the side of the church for the elderly or the infirm and for those who find it difficult to stand throughout the service (it is however, customary to stand whenever the Main Holy Doors are opened and especially for the reading of the Gospel and during the consecration of the Holy Gifts at the Divine Liturgy).

The templon (icon screen or iconostasis) that delineates the sanctuary has a two-fold significance. It reminds us of the fact that we are pilgrims on the way to the kingdom of heaven and that this must be the basic purpose of our lives in this world. Equally, the icons of Christ, His Most-Holy Mother, and the saints turned toward us proclaim the good news that, in Christ, our fallen human nature is already redeemed and taken up into the life of heaven: Christ has entered... into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf (Heb. 9:24). Thus, the templon does not separate heaven and earth, the sanctuary and the nave, but rather unites them.

The general structure of the Liturgy will be familiar to members of Western denominations. It consists of psalms, Epistle and Gospel readings, the Creed and the prayer of consecration, followed by the Lord's Prayer and the Communion. The Liturgy takes the form of a dialogue between celebrant and people, in which the function of the choir is to give voice to the prayer of the congregation. Intercessory prayer, in the form of litanies chanted by the deacon to which the choir responds Lord, have mercy or Grant this, O Lord, occupies a prominent place. In the Orthodox tradition, services are always sung without musical accompaniment, as the human voice is felt to be the fittest instrument for the praise of God. The services are primarily in English with some Slavonic, Romanian and Georgian.

The reception of Holy Communion is reserved to baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians who have duly prepared themselves by fasting, prayer, and the sacrament of Holy Confession. Non-Orthodox are welcome to also participate in worship by being quietly open to the presence

of God in this holy place and by attending to the words and actions of the services. Printed texts of the Liturgy may be bought at the bookstore, but we suggest that you study them before or after the service; there is much that may be missed if one is absorbed in the printed text.

You will see people lighting candles; this is done in honor of Christ and His Saints, whose invisible presence is manifested by the icons. Likewise, the icons are censed during the services, as are the people. This is done in reverence to the image of God that abides in each of us. Small bread rolls (prosfora) are offered at the Sunday Liturgy with the names of those Orthodox Christians, living and departed, for whom we wish to pray. These are taken to the offertory table in the sanctuary, where the priest removes a small portion and places it on the paten next to the bread that is to be consecrated, praying for those Orthodox Christians for whom it was offered. At the end of the Liturgy everyone is invited to come and venerate the Cross and receive a blessing. On Sundays coffee and tea is served in the parish hall after the Liturgy and you are most welcome to join us. At the Vigil service, all who wish may come to venerate the Book of the Gospels and to receive an anointing with oil (Ps.23:5) and on feasts, a distribution of blessed bread and wine. Though founded by Russian immigrants, this parish is ethnically diverse and nearly 40% of our members are adult converts to the Orthodox faith.

Other Activities

The life of the parish includes many activities besides the services. A Church School for children ages 3 and over is held every Sunday from 12:15 PM to 1:30 PM from September to June. From time to time there are talks and classes on some aspect of Christianity. The Andronoff Library has a good collection of texts on Orthodox Christianity. A Book and Icon Shop carries a large array of study and prayer guides, icons and crosses. Throughout the year we work with various Orthodox churches and institutions in the city on joint charitable and missionary activities. A parish newsletter The Semandron - A Call to Prayer (click here for archive) contains sermons, parish news, spiritual reading and articles on Orthodox faith and life. The Women's Council provides assistance for the Church School, liturgical appointments and beautification, and charitable appeals of the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Virgin Protection. The Prosopon School of Iconology (<http://www.prosoponschool.org>) meets here and runs classes and workshops in the art and practice of Orthodox Iconography.

Excerpts from One Man in His Time – The Memoirs of Serge Obolensky (New York, 1958)

[with a few minor corrections]

At that time the attack on the priests was under way. The churches were still open, but thousands of priests were being killed. The people still continued to go to church, and the priests kept on saying masses [sic]. In times of stress, people pray. And how they prayed in Russia throughout this time! They packed the churches. Only the Communists themselves did not dare go, and people too closely affiliated with the Bolsheviks to risk being seen by them in any act of prayer. Many of the latter were people, like me, with jobs in industry. I assure you I rarely went to church during this time.

The Communists then began their antireligious propaganda. There is a belief in Russia that saints don't deteriorate corporeally after death. They exhumed the bodies of the saints, and forced thousands to march past their decayed remains. Then they put God Himself on trial, showing He was guilty. And they had embalmed Lenin, their saint, who would not decay. But it still made no difference. The churches were

jammed more than ever. They were unable to destroy the people's faith. Finally the Bolsheviks gave up, and their antireligious propaganda dwindled away. The Bolsheviks have since tried to neutralize the church, infiltrating it, putting in their own priests, but can they ever be sure of them? Masses [sic] are said on a quid pro quo basis. You the Church do something for us, and we will allow you to sing so many thousand masses in a year. The Church survived. What really mattered was the Russian people, who wouldn't give it up. Everybody was afraid of the terror, but they went to church. (Page 199).

I was then suddenly deeply involved in a legal complication affecting the Russian Church. In Russia, the Bolsheviks had slacked off their frontal attack on the Church, but had decided to turn their eyes elsewhere. They had been unable to depose the head of the Church in Russia, the Patriarch Tikhon, who, after having been imprisoned, was released and returned to his monastery in Moscow. There he maintained his full prerogatives as head of the Church.

Many years before, parishes had been established in America under the old imperial regime, and were basically a mission under the jurisdiction of the senior Metropolitan, who had his seat in New York. By this time there were 360 valuable parishes of the Russian Church in America. To get control of them would be a plum for the Soviet regime. The Soviets, despite Tikhon's disapproval, had organized a small synod of dissident priests and bishops, and called in "The Living Church." Then they sent a bishop of this "Living Church" to New York with credentials that supposedly authorized the removal from his post of Metropolitan Platon and appointed the "Living Church" bishop as his successor. When I arrived, there had been litigation. The American judge, who had been unaware of the subterfuge, had ordered the Cathedral on 97th Street to be handed over to the new bishop and Platon to be removed. Metropolitan Platon summoned me when he learned that I was in New York and told me of these dangerous events. He said he was fearful because the deeds of all parishes were held under the jurisdiction of the legally recognized head of the Russian Orthodox Church in America. This head was now bishop of the "living Church," and one by one this man could throw out the clergy, put in propagandists as priests and take over the properties of the churches.

Serge Gagarin and I founded a committee, including Rachmaninoff and Sikorsky, to raise funds and appeal the court order. With the great help of Bishop Manning and the Episcopal Church, we achieved our financial goal and secured the assistance of George Zabriskie, the prominent attorney, Charles Sabin of the Guaranty Trust Company of New York, and Haley Fisk of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Through their help we won the appeal.

As a result, the Bolsheviks' "Living Church" withered away, and Metropolitan Platon, now back in power, turned over to their respective parishes all the deeds to Russian Orthodox church properties throughout the country. Thus such a situation could never arise again, and henceforth the parishes could elect their own priests and bishops, come what may. I patted myself on the back, because it was one of the few times that the Soviets were really defeated.

During the lengthy fracas, the intricacies of Russian Church law became too much for me, and I got Peter Zouboff to come to the United States from Estonia to help us. I got him a visitor's visa through the intercession of Bishop Manning, who recognized his importance to the Church. I went to meet Peter at the boat along with his former troop commander, Serge Boutourline.... (Pp. 307-8)

(Provided by John Chaippe)