



Sarah Carroll
Chair

August 3, 2023

Andrew Berman
Executive Director
Village Preservation
232 East 11th Street
New York, NY 10003

Re: Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, 229-231 West 14th Street, Manhattan

Dear Mr. Berman:

Thank you for your Request for Evaluation for Our Lady of Guadalupe Church on West 14th Street. Research department staff has carefully reviewed the material you sent and conducted extensive additional research.

According to LPC staff's research, a small Spanish (Iberian) community was established in the West Village south of West 14th Street in the late-19th century and was in decline by the 1920s and 1930s as the community moved uptown. Two row houses at 229-231 West 14th Street were combined in 1902 to create space for the church—the first established specifically for Spanish-speaking Catholics in New York City. The church's parish initially included congregants from Spain and later other communities including from Mexico and Latin America, among other immigrant groups through its history.

According to archival records from the Archdiocese of New York, soon after it was established Our Lady of Guadalupe's space was considered temporary and insufficient, and inconvenient to an increasingly dispersed Spanish-speaking population that tended to worship in churches closer to their homes, attending Our Lady of Guadalupe primarily for baptisms and weddings. As the Spanish community moved farther uptown, the Archdiocese opened a new church intended to replace Our Lady of Guadalupe as their main church, but kept the 14th Street building open, serving as a chapel. The new church, Our Lady of Esperanza, was built in 1912 and its first pastor was the pastor from Our Lady of Guadalupe. This impressive purpose-built church is located within the Audubon Terrace Historic District and continues to reflect the history of its community.

A 1921 renovation of Our Lady of Guadalupe by Gustave Steinback resulted in the addition of a two-story projection with a Spanish Baroque-style entrance. The building has since been altered with the removal of historic window and door details, facade resurfacing, and changes to window openings, roofs, and parapets. The church's parish vacated the building in 2002 when it merged with and moved into St. Bernard's Church at 228 West 14th Street, where it remains a thriving congregation. The cultural association with this congregation is now shared by these two churches.

In a city the size of New York with its many neighborhood churches that have been anchors of their communities and represent their diverse history, LPC must be very rigorous in determining significance and merit for designation as a New York City individual landmark. In careful comparison with other designated and historic churches identified in surveys throughout the city that represent a community's history, staff notes that Our Lady of Guadalupe is more altered and less architecturally significant. Further, while it has served a Spanish-speaking community through its history, it has also served other communities, as so many churches

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across the city do, with services in various languages. As a result, it does not appear to possess a strong enough association with a specific community to merit consideration for its cultural significance alone.

We thank you for your commitment to historic preservation and appreciate your interest in the work of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Sincerely,



Kate Lemos McHale
Director of Research