

Landmarks Preservation Commission
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LP-0226

CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, (formerly Grace Chapel), 406-412 East 14th Street, Borough of Manhattan. 1894; architects Barney & Chapman.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 441, Lot 10 in part, consisting of the land on which the described building is situated.

On April 12, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Church of the Immaculate Conception and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 8). 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

This boldly severe Gothic Eclectic church of stone and Roman brick, has great distinction and individuality in its design and architectural composition. The clean cut profile of the free standing tower, is handsomely contrasted with the steep-pitched gable roof of the church and each structure clearly expresses its function with great clarity and dignity. A cluster of slender columns accents the verticality of the tower as they extend upward and terminate in pointed arches. The severe gable of the church cuts a sharp silhouette, against the soaring verticality of the bell-tower. Below the tower, at the street level, a low archway with deep reveal creates depth in the entranceway producing a deep shadow, adding mystery and atmosphere to the whole composition.

A large rose window penetrates the plain, asymmetrical brick gable of the church. Directly below it a handsome doorway with a decorated arched portal, creates a focal point for the church entrance. To the right of the doorway is a chapel of intimate charm, enriched with beautifully scaled details. Set between six pinnacled buttresses are paired, pointed arched windows separated by small columns. Above, at the roof line, a low stone railing (balustrade) adds richness to the structure.

Once a part of Grace Church Parish, the Chapel and Clergy Houses were known as Grace Chapel and Hospital on Fourteenth Street and were furnished as a "free-pew" place of worship for those less fortunate financially than the members of Grace Church itself. In the days of the great nationalities migrations, it had done yeoman's service for the incoming European Protestants. In 1943, the buildings were sold to the Catholic Church which has preserved and now makes good use of these buildings.

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 Church of the Immaculate Conception 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 Church of the Immaculate Conception is a superb example of Gothic Eclectic architecture, that the building possesses individual distinction and character, that along with its companion buildings, the Clergy Houses, it combines to form a notable architectural composition, adding to the prestige of the neighborhood and that the building contributes a rare charm and architectural beauty to New York City.

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 Church of the Immaculate Conception, 406-412 East 14th Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates as its related Landmark Site that part of Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 441, Lot 10 which contains the land on which the described building is situated.