

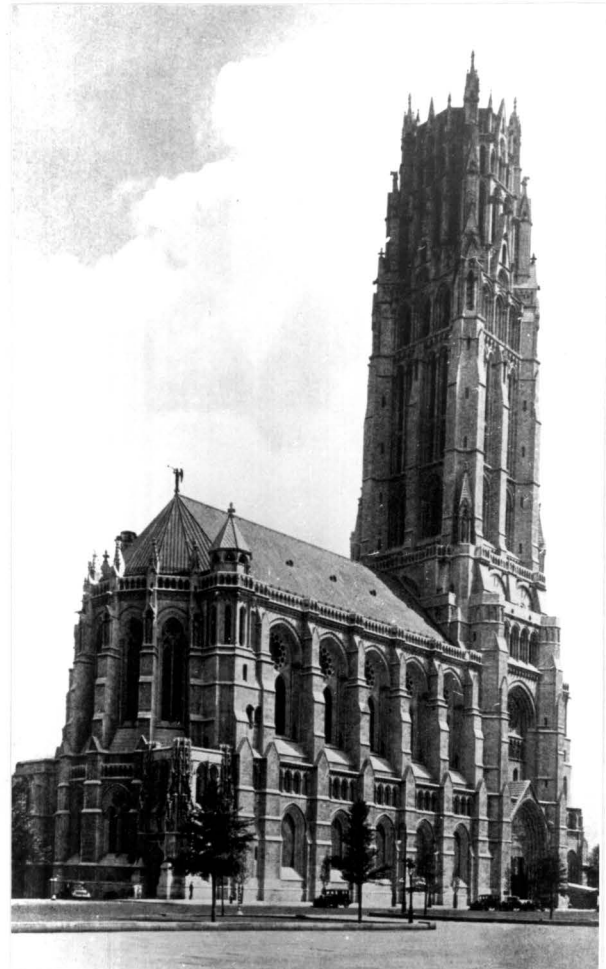
The Riverside Church, 490-498 Riverside Drive and 81 Claremont Avenue, Manhattan.
Built 1928-1930; architects Henry C. Pelton and Allen & Collens

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1991, lot 32, in part, consisting of the land on which the 1928-1930 church, tower, chapel, and “cloister” passage extending to Claremont Avenue, are situated.

On March 16, 1999 the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of The Riverside Church and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item 1). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with provisions of law. At the hearing the landmark site consisted of the Riverside Church and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Wing (south hall). Twelve witnesses, including representatives of the Manhattan Borough President, C. Virginia Fields, State Senator David Patterson, Community Board 9, the Historic Districts Council, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Morningside Heights Historic District Council and the Municipal Art Society, spoke in favor of the designation of both buildings. Two witnesses spoke in opposition to designation as proposed. Seven witnesses, including four representatives of The Riverside Church, supported designating the church but opposed the designation of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Wing. The hearing was continued to May 4, 1999 (Item 1). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with provisions of law. Eight witnesses, including representatives of Community Board 9, the New York Landmarks Conservancy and the Municipal Art Society, spoke in favor of designation, and three representatives of The Riverside Church supported designating the church but opposed the designation of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Wing. No witnesses spoke in opposition to designation. The Commission has received letters from Friends and Members of The Riverside Church, as well as other statements in support of designation. The Commission previously held a public hearing on The Riverside Church (LP-1231) on November 18, 1980 and February 10, 1981.

Summary

Located in Morningside Heights on a high bluff overlooking the Hudson River, The Riverside Church is one of the best-known religious structures in New York City. An ecumenical church, with its roots in the Baptist faith, its history reflects the modernist religious theology of its founding pastor Harry Emerson Fosdick. Financed with gifts from members of the church, including the industrialist and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the neo-Gothic style complex, built between 1928 and 1930, consists of three distinct sections: a five-bay nave and chancel extending north toward West 122nd Street, a mid-block twenty-two story tower housing the narthex, Christ Chapel, belfry, offices and meeting rooms, as well as a one-and-half story “cloister” passage extending east to Claremont Avenue. The architects Henry C. Pelton, of New York, and Allen & Collens, of Boston, based their design on mainly French Gothic structures, especially the Cathedral at Chartres. An Indiana limestone curtain wall disguises the building’s steel frame, which was used to speed construction and support the immense weight of the seventy-two-bell carillon housed in the tower’s upper stories, donated in honor of Laura Spelman Rockefeller. Built in an era when most Manhattan churches were literally being overshadowed by corporate and residential skyscrapers, the 392-foot high tower provided the new congregation with a strong presence on the skyline and in Morningside Heights. A symbol of the congregation and its progressive beliefs, The Riverside Church continues Fosdick’s mission of being “interdenominational, interracial, and international.”



DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Baptists in the New York¹

The Riverside Church has its roots in the Baptist faith. Along with many other Baptist organizations in New York City, the congregation traces its beginnings to the First Baptist Church, established on Gold Street in lower Manhattan around 1762. Following the American Revolution, feuds within the Baptist community resulted in the establishment of numerous small congregations throughout the growing city. Most were known by their street addresses and many gathered without guidance of a preacher. Among these groups were sixteen members of the Mulberry Street Baptist Church, who in 1823 broke from the Oliver Street Church. Initially, the small congregation had financial difficulties, but by 1833 they were able to finance the construction of a new building at 211 Stanton Street on the Lower East Side.² In 1841 they moved again, purchasing the former Christian Church on Norfolk Street, between Broome and Grand Streets. At this time they took the name the Norfolk Street Baptist Church, thus beginning an important tradition: with each successive location the congregation would adopt a new name reflecting its current location.

A fire destroyed the church in 1850 and the following year a larger building was erected nearby, one block south, on the east side of Norfolk Street. Built in the Gothic-Revival style, with crenelated towers flanking a central entry, the \$30,000 brownstone structure accommodated nearly one thousand worshippers. By decade's end, however, the congregation sought an uptown location, closer to where many of its congregants lived. After briefly meeting at two Broadway locations at 34th and 39th Streets, in 1859 the congregation acquired five lots on West 46th Street, near Fifth Avenue. Designed by the recently established firm D. & J. Jardine, in the Gothic-Revival style, the auditorium was completed in 1866.³ With a membership of approximately seven hundred, the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church flourished and in 1899 under pastor William Herbert Perry Faunce the building was enlarged to accommodate its growing membership.

The Rockefellers and the Baptist Church

William Rockefeller (1841-1922) was the first of many members of the Rockefeller family to be associated with the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church.⁴ An industrialist and financier, he used his business acumen

to help the congregation reduce its debt during the 1870s.⁵ In 1884, his older brother, John D(avison) Rockefeller (1839-1937), founder of the Standard Oil Company of New York, moved his wife, Laura Celestina Spelman (1839-1915) and five children, from Cleveland, Ohio, to New York City.

Many church functions took place in the Rockefeller home at 4 West 54th Street⁶ and its ministers "almost became members of the family circle."⁷ Both brothers served on the church's board of trustees, and Laura Spelman Rockefeller taught in the Sunday school. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (1867-1960) would follow his mother's example, leading the Men's Bible Class, from 1900 to 1908.⁸ In these weekly meetings he presented a practical and pragmatic approach to Christian worship, emphasizing communication and cooperation between denominations. Furthermore, he believed that it was critical that Christian theology reflect current concerns and needs. Under his guidance attendance quadrupled, attracting both members of the congregation and journalists who satirized his religious views.

During the first decades of the twentieth century, the once-residential blocks surrounding Fifth Avenue gave way to commerce and congestion. In 1917 the congregation announced plans to move to the Upper East Side.⁹ The new church, constructed between 1920 and 1922, was called the Park Avenue Baptist Church (located in the Upper East Side Historic District).¹⁰ John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who purchased the East 64th Street site, paid half of the building's \$1.5 million cost. Designed by the architects Henry C. Pelton and Allen & Collens, the so-called "Little Cathedral" featured granite and limestone elevations based on late English Gothic sources, a wide nave that could accommodate nearly seven hundred worshippers, and an octagonal bell tower, designed to contain a fifty-three-bell carillon, donated in memory of Laura Spelman Rockefeller. In addition, the building featured several stained-glass windows by Henry Wynd Young, as well as various rooms set aside for specific church activities, including the Young Women's Class, the Sunday School Chapel, and the Men's Bible Class.

Minister Cornelius Woelfkin led the first service in the new building in the early spring of 1922. Admired for his "gentle" and "courageous" temperament, Woelfkin encouraged the congregation to adopt an "open-door" policy, permitting "non-immersed" Christians -- believers who were baptized by having

water sprinkled or poured over them rather than being fully immersed in water -- to attend services. Fundamentalists criticized his liberal views, calling for his resignation and asserting that this policy was "a subtle attack upon the authority of Jesus Christ."¹¹

Harry Emerson Fosdick¹²

Woelfkin announced plans for his retirement in 1925. In an effort to maintain the direction Woelfkin had set for the church, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. approached Henry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1969), a minister known for both his charisma and his controversial religious beliefs.¹³ Born in Buffalo, New York, Fosdick received his religious training at Hamilton Theological Seminary and Union Theological Seminary, graduating in 1904. Rockefeller's interest in Fosdick's teachings can be traced to 1912 when he was considered as a replacement for Minister Charles F. Aked, who had served the Fifth Avenue congregation since 1907. Fosdick was not hired and during the next decade he developed a national reputation, publishing a series of popular religious books,¹⁴ and preaching throughout the United States and abroad. After serving in France during World War I as a military chaplain, he became pulpit minister at the First Presbyterian Church (located in the Greenwich Village Historic District) in 1918. Throughout his pastorate he found himself embroiled in controversy. Conservative members of the congregation strongly objected to his modernist theology, particularly the views expressed in his 1922 sermon "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?," in which he took the position that belief in "virgin birth" was unessential and that the second coming of Jesus was outmoded. Attacked by both local and national members of the Presbyterian church as a heretic, Fosdick resigned in 1925.

Following his mother's death in 1915, Rockefeller became increasingly involved in religious issues. As a businessman who understood the value and necessity of cooperation, he sought to encourage increased efficiency and unity among religious organizations. At a meeting of the Baptist Social Union in December 1917 he promoted the idea of a unified church, one that:

... would pronounce ordinance, ritual, creed, all non-essential for admission into the Kingdom of God or His Church. A life, not a creed, would be its test: what a man does, not what he professes; what he is, not what he has.¹⁵

He became a leading supporter of the failed Interchurch Movement and in 1922 underwrote the printing and

distribution of Fosdick's 1922 sermon to Protestant ministers throughout the United States.

Immediately following his resignation, Rockefeller invited Fosdick to become the minister of the Park Avenue Baptist Church. Though he felt uneasy with Rockefeller's enormous wealth, and at first refused his offer, he also sensed a unique opportunity and gained a series of radical commitments that would have a profound impact on the church. In a letter to the church's board of trustees he outlined his demands, requiring that the congregation abandon the Park Avenue building for a new and larger structure in the vicinity of Columbia University; that future membership be open to "all disciples of Christ," that the selection of ministers be based on character rather than religious affiliation, and that the new church be given a name without reference to a specific denomination. Later, Fosdick added one more stipulation, limiting his own salary to no greater than five thousand dollars.¹⁶

"To my immense surprise," Fosdick later recalled, "the Park Avenue congregation met the conditions," and on Memorial Day 1925 he led his first service.¹⁷ Fourteen hundred worshipers crowded into the Park Avenue building, filling the nave, gallery, offices, and basement classrooms. Fosdick did not hesitate to express his religious philosophy, declaring: "We invite you not to our table or the table of any denomination, but to the Lord's table." His sermon was later characterized as "a plea for a church inclusive enough that Lincoln might feel free to join."¹⁸ In the year that followed, 158 new members joined the congregation, of whom only half were Baptists.¹⁹ Such growth continued, doubling the congregation's membership by 1930.²⁰

Morningside Heights²¹

Several locations in Morningside Heights were considered for the new church, including two sites on Morningside Drive. During 1925 and early 1926, however, Rockefeller quietly negotiated the acquisition of several adjoining properties at the northwest corner of Riverside Drive and 122nd Street. Five residential structures -- a pair of 1880s mansions and three early twentieth-century apartment buildings -- were demolished to provide a large enough site for the proposed structure. Residential construction had been encouraged by a sequence of civic improvements, including the building of Riverside Park and the adjacent Riverside Drive (a New York City Scenic Landmark) in the 1880s and the beginning of subway

service along Broadway to 116th and 125th Streets in 1904. Initially, these projects attracted real estate speculation, mostly middle-class apartment buildings, but by the beginning of the twentieth century, with the recent arrival of Columbia University (Low Memorial Library, Saint Paul's Chapel, Casa Italiana, designated New York City Landmarks) and plans for St. John the Divine (first campaign by Heins & LaFarge, 1891-1911) the neighborhood was fast-becoming what one journalist called "the Acropolis of the new world."²² The congregation would become part of a thriving intellectual community, joining Barnard College, Teachers College, the Jewish Theological Seminary, and the Union Theological Seminary, where Fosdick had studied and taught practical theology since 1904.

Visibility was also important to the church's founders. By choosing an elevated site beside two public parks -- Riverside Park and Claremont (now Sakura) Park²³ -- and the Hudson River, the soaring tower would become a prominent landmark, easily seen by strollers and drivers traveling along Manhattan's west side and in New Jersey. Low-rise neighbors to the east, such as the Union Theological Seminary, further assured the new institution certain visibility from Broadway and beyond.

Planning the church

The Riverside Church was envisioned as a hybrid, a "skyscraper affair" incorporating both religious and secular uses. During the early 1920s, an increasing number of urban churches were planned in this manner. In 1925 two religious high rises were proposed for the Upper West Side: a sixty-five-story tower on Broadway, between 122nd and 123rd Streets, and the Broadway Temple, at Broadway and 173rd Street.²⁴ Although neither tower was built, the conception -- combining a visible symbol of Christian faith with a high-rise structure -- provided a model for the new church.²⁵

In an effort to avoid publicity, Rockefeller, the building committee's chairman, personally commissioned designs from several prominent architectural firms, including McKim, Mead & White. By year's end, the preliminary schemes were complete, including a low Romanesque Revival style church facade with three arched portals, flanked by four corner apartment towers that stepped up to a central spire. Some trustees, including Fosdick, were troubled by Rockefeller's participation. They objected to him holding a financial stake in the complex, arguing that it might later place Rockefeller and the congregation "in

a very vulnerable position."²⁶ There was also concern that the visually-dominant apartments would send the wrong message -- placing income production above the church's spiritual mission. In a July 1926 editorial, the *New York Times* expressed a similar view, criticizing the skyline's increasingly secular appearance. The writer warned:

We are told that it is good business. Are we to look forward to a landscape free from ecclesiastical architecture? Must we visualize a New York in which no spires point heavenward? . . . In time, even the countryside may house its place of worship under a worldly guise.²⁷

In late 1925, the building committee adopted a new strategy. While the tower concept would be retained, its form and program would be of an exclusively religious nature. Several specialists in ecclesiastical architecture were approached, including the noted medievalist Ralph Adams Cram and York & Sawyer, with the commission ultimately going to the designers of the Park Avenue Baptist Church: Charles Collins, a partner in the Boston firm Allen & Collens, and the New York architect Henry C. Pelton.

The Architects

Francis R. Allen (1843-1931), born and educated in the Boston area, practiced architecture for more than two decades before establishing a long and successful partnership with Charles Collens (1873-1956) in 1904. Institutional design dominated the firm's practice, including many religious buildings and schools. On Morningside Heights, the firm built many important works: the French Renaissance style Woman's Hospital (begun 1902, demolished), the English Gothic style Union Theological Seminary (begun 1906, a designated New York City Landmark), and the neo-Gothic style Russell Hall (1922-1924) for Teachers College. To supervise these New York projects the Boston firm often collaborated with local architects, including Louis E. Jallade²⁸ (1876-1957), with whom they worked on the Seminary and Flatbush Congregational Church (1910, part of the Ditmas Park Historic District), and Henry C. Pelton (1867-1935). A graduate of Columbia University, Pelton first collaborated with Allen & Collens in the early 1920s as the co-designer of the Park Avenue Baptist Church. He produced work in a wide range of historical styles, including several neo-Renaissance residences on Manhattan's Upper East Side, the neo-Gothic style Irving Arms Apartments at 222 Riverside Drive (1908, northeast corner of 94th

Street), and an automobile garage for the Rockefeller family at 127-129 West 55th Street (demolished).²⁹

It is difficult to evaluate which architect should receive primary credit for the design of The Riverside Church. While church publications identify Pelton as the architect and Allen and Collens as the “Associated Architects,” Eugene C. Carder, an associate pastor and member of the building committee, said Collens “was the guiding genius and recognized specialist in all decisions concerning the Gothic tradition.”³⁰ He claimed that Pelton was responsible for the plan and for supervising day-to-day construction. Yet when the building was criticized in the *American Architect* in June 1931, it was a member of Pelton’s office, the architect Charles Crane, who came to the design’s defense.³¹

Design and Iconography

Despite Fosdick’s modernist theology and the decision to employ steel framing in the building’s construction, the architects designed Riverside Church in a traditional, neo-Gothic style.³² Fosdick explained:

We have had a long time to outgrow Gothic but when it comes to a kind of architecture that will make people pray, we have not outgrown Gothic. This is the plain fact of the matter.³³

In preparation, Pelton and Collens traveled to France where they drove “2500 miles to gain an intimate knowledge of the churches and cathedrals of Western Europe.”³⁴ Collens recollected that the trip confirmed:

. . . an increasing sense of fact that he who designs a great church in anything but Gothic has lost a divine spark in the structure itself which only great art can supply.³⁵

They identified the early Gothic cathedral at Chartres (begun 1140), south of Paris, as their main prototype, claiming their design would “bear no resemblance in outline, merely in fundamental principles.”³⁶ Chartres offered the architects general inspiration and a pattern book from which specific architectural elements and decorative features could be borrowed. Overall, they kept the ornament to a minimum, emphasizing the three entrances on Riverside Drive and the upper stories of the tower. The absence of decorative tracery causes the stained-glass windows, of which many were manufactured in France, to dominate the steep elevations. The arrangement of the fenestration -- a large rose window over two lancet windows in each bay -- is similar to that found at Chartres, as well as the recessed piers lining the east and west elevations.

To design the 392-foot high tower, the architects borrowed elements from each of Chartres’ two west towers. For instance, as the tower rises, it gradually diminishes in size, evolving from a square base to an octagon pierced by slender windows. The sculptured portals also share stylistic parallels, especially around the church’s main entrance which combines motifs from Chartres’ west front (the so-called “Royal” Portal) and the later, more elaborate, portals at the ends of the north and south transepts. Like these more elaborate 13th century portals, the main entrance is crowned by a bold projecting pediment with an inset relief at the apex. Of particular note are the reliefs of the seated Christ, flanked by representations of the four apostles. Located in the upper half of the tympanum, they are almost identical to figures carved above the central doors of Chartres’ west front.

Pelton and Collens also integrated features borrowed from churches visited in southern France and Spain. Here they located examples that would provide solutions to specific problems. In an effort to make the fullest use of the site, the architects aligned the church on a north-south axis, with the altar at the north end, opposite 122nd Street and Claremont Park. Since the church did not yet own the lots to the south, an unconventional entry was necessary. Collens wrote that in Bordeaux “a precedent was found for the main entrance to the church at the side rather than on axis with the nave,” and at Gerona they admired “the magnificent effects produced by use of a low, wide vault in the nave.”³⁷

A team of artists, craftsmen, modelers, and carvers was assembled to decorate the church. The sculptor Robert Garrison (1895-1945) supervised the sculptural program.³⁸ The majority of reliefs, gargoyles, and others free-standing works were executed by studios in New York City, including Horatio (1872-1954) and Bruno Piccirilli (1903-1976) of the Piccirilli Brothers,³⁹ John Donnelley & Co. (d. 1947), Maxfield H. Keck (dates undetermined), and Charles H. Humphriss (1867-1934). Their work, which is notable in terms of content and quality, closely follows medieval precedent, integrating religious imagery into various architectural elements. Most of the sculpture faces Riverside Drive, especially surrounding the main entrance which has two doors and five figurative archivolts representing prophets and followers of Jesus Christ. Of particular note is the third arch which represents philosophers, from Pythagoras to Immanuel Kant and Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the second arch, with such scientists as Hippocrates, Charles Darwin, and Albert Einstein. Including Einstein, a living man and a Jew, was

controversial. *The Church Monthly* commented:

... we found that the advisors with whom we talked, all of whom were scientists of no mean standing, agreed that Dr. Einstein could not possibly be omitted from any list of fourteen of the leading scientists of all time.⁴⁰

The church interiors, designed by the architect Burnham Hoyt (d. 1960), were shaped by a similar spirit. The chancel screen includes spiritual and secular figures, including representations of Michelangelo, Johann Sebastian Bach, Abraham Lincoln, Florence Nightingale and Booker T. Washington.

Of particular note is the magnificent stained glass.⁴¹ During the 1910s, the illusionist opalescent-style glass produced by such American designers as John LaFarge and Louis Comfort Tiffany began to lose favor. Under the influence of Ralph Adams Cram and others, there was a revival of interest in medieval, mosaic-style glass. In keeping with the church's Gothic origins, two French makers were commissioned to produce the east and west clerestory windows: Jacques Simon, the glass-keeper at Rheims Cathedral, and Charles Lorin, of Chartres. *The Church Monthly* observed:

Although the modern designer in stained glass cannot reproduce the magic charm of antiquity which prevails throughout the glazing of Chartres Cathedral, nevertheless in these clerestory apse windows the principles governing the design and fabrication of Chartres glass have been adhered to and the spirit has been imbibed.

These ten windows, which occupy the bays on the upper east and west walls of the nave, consist of a rose and two lancet windows, and are close reproductions of windows found at Chartres.⁴² Below, the aisle windows were manufactured by the Boston studio of Reynolds, Francis and Rohnstock. More than 138 religious and secular scenes are portrayed in these ten windows, which are set into iron frames modeled after those used at Chartres.⁴³ The three windows in the ambulatory, two of which are grisaille, are the work of Harry Wright Goodhue, of Boston. Other windows were produced by Wilbur Herbert Burnham, of Boston, and The (Nicola) D'Ascenzo Studios, of Philadelphia.

Construction

The cornerstone⁴⁴ was laid by Edwin L. Ballard, president of the board of trustees, on Sunday, November 20, 1927. The ceremony began with a

service in the chapel of the Union Theological Seminary, followed by a procession to the construction site. Many parishioners and officers of the church were in attendance, including John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who "took no public part," standing "quietly in the background."⁴⁵ In April 1928 the six-year old Park Avenue building (and three adjoining rowhouses purchased in 1924) was sold to the Central Presbyterian Church for \$1.5 million. A year later, in July 1929, the final service was held and in October the congregation moved temporarily to the recently vacated Temple Beth-El at Fifth Avenue and 76th Street. Services were held in the former synagogue for nine months.

Marc Eidlitz & Son, Inc. served as the church's contractor. Founded by Otto Marc Eidlitz in 1854, this firm was responsible for many notable buildings in New York City. In addition to building commercial skyscrapers throughout the lower Manhattan, they were also responsible for erecting a number of prominent institutions financed by the Rockefeller family, including the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research (now University, York & Sawyer, 1903-1910), The Cloisters (Allen, Collens & Willis, 1934-39, a designated New York City Landmark), and the Park Avenue Baptist Church. During construction of The Riverside Church, Robert J. Eidlitz (1864-1935) was the firm's director.

By October 1929 the first rooms of the church complex were occupied, including the basement Assembly Hall that was linked by telephone to Temple Beth-El during Sunday services.⁴⁶ In December, four days before Christmas, the nearly complete office-and-bell tower was damaged by fire. An estimated 100,000 spectators watched as fire-fighters from the throughout the New York and New Jersey area battled flames that turned "the half-completed tower into a mammoth torch."⁴⁷ Fosdick wrote to Rockefeller:

I sympathize with you more than with anyone else . . . you have loved the new building into existence detail by detail and I am sorry beyond measure . . . Nevertheless, nothing is destroyed that cannot be put back; nothing has been done that cannot be done again.⁴⁸

The damage to the interiors was considerable and the completion of the church was delayed more than six months.⁴⁹

The opening Sunday service, led by Fosdick and attended by 3,200 persons, was held on October 5, 1930. He "radiogrammed his joy" to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who had left the country several days earlier. Some journalists labeled the new building the

“Rockefeller” or “Fosdick” church and through his absence Rockefeller hoped to de-emphasize his central role in its founding. The following February, a series of formal dedication ceremonies commenced, beginning with the sermon “Despise Ye the Church of God?” and ending with a “Builders recognition service” on February 20, 1931. During this service, the “Builder’s Window,” depicting masons and carpenters, was dedicated, located in the northernmost window of the west aisle.

Writers praised and criticized the completed church. While the *New York Sun* called it “one of the most outstanding additions to the ecclesiastical architecture of the city in recent years,” in the pages of *The American Architect* in June and July 1931, Walter A. Taylor, a professor of architecture at Columbia University, and Charles Crane, a member of Pelton’s office, debated the design’s merit and, in particular, the decision to use steel framing. Taylor took the modernist position, asserting that the neo-Gothic ornament was a superfluous and “costly camouflage” for twentieth construction techniques.⁵⁰ Crane published a vigorous defense of his office’s design, claiming that if such materials had been available medieval builders would have used them. Wary of modern aesthetics, he also contended that “Gothic architecture is fundamentally Christian; it is a style developed by and for the followers of Christ.”⁵¹

The Tower and the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Carillon⁵²

In addition to providing twenty-one working floors with approximately eighty offices and classrooms, the tower was built to contain the carillon, which occupies the bell chamber located between what would be the 23rd story in most high-rise structures and the observation platform. Notable for its size and weight, the architects engineered the tower’s steel frame to support the carillon, which can reportedly be heard as far as eight miles away.⁵³ It consists of fifty-three bells made by the Gillet and Johnston foundry in Croydon, England, for the Park Avenue Baptist Church, as well as nineteen additional bells. The 20-ton Bourdon, or bass hour-bell, is the largest and heaviest tuned carillon bell ever cast. The total weight of the ensemble (fixed and swinging bells, clappers and steel framework) is over 500,000 pounds. The bells and their installation were financed by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. in memory of his mother Laura Spelman Rockefeller. They are heard during concerts, as well as before and after weekly services.

Subsequent History⁵⁴

The new complex ushered in an era of unprecedented growth for the congregation. Despite the new uptown location and criticism of Fosdick’s theology, more than eight hundred members of the Park Avenue church joined the new church and by May 1946 the size of the congregation had grown to 3,500 members. Enrollment in the church school rapidly increased and “soon every room in the functional 20-storied [sic] tower was in use seven days a week.”⁵⁵

During the 1930s, the church became a hub of religious and community activity. According to the *WPA Guide to New York City*, the church employed a full and part-time staff of more than two hundred persons. They served an estimated ten thousand persons each week, through worship services, employment counseling and job training, as well as athletic and social programs. Many organizations founded before 1930 continued, including the Women’s Society and Men’s (Bible) Class. More recent groups have included the Chinese Christian Fellowship, the Tower League, the Memorial Society, the Adult Fellowship, the Black Christian Caucus, the Prison Task Force, and Arts in Religion. During the second World War, the church was particularly active. Although Fosdick spoke out against the United States’ involvement in the war, for three-and-a-half years, the Naval Reserve Midshipman School, located at Columbia University, used the church’s facilities, with 2,000 attending services each Sunday evening.⁵⁶

Fosdick, like John D. Rockefeller, Jr. recognized the importance of radio as a means to promote spiritual values and shape public opinion. After 1927, his weekly sermons were broadcast over NBC’s “National Vespers.” From 1961 to 1976 the church owned and operated a radio station, WRVR-FM (106.7FM). A wide array of programming was sponsored, including news, poetry, classical and sacred music.⁵⁷

John D. Rockefeller, Jr. had been the church’s primary benefactor, donating more than \$10.5 million towards construction. In the mid-1930s he acquired the lots to the south and later financed the construction of the seven-story \$15 million neo-Gothic style south wing, today known as the Martin Luther King, Jr. Wing (Collens, Willis & Bekonert, 1955-1959, not part of the designation).⁵⁸

Fosdick announced his retirement following his sixty-fifth birthday in September 1942. The farewell ceremony was held on May 22, 1946 and a week later he preached his final sermon, “Your Present is the Past

of Your Future.” He was succeeded by Robert James McCracken, who served from 1946 to 1967; Ernest T. Campbell, 1968 to 1976; William Sloane Coffin, Jr., 1977 to 1987; and James A. Forbes, Jr., 1989 to present. All have followed Fosdick’s example, leading a church that has always taken pride in being “interdenominational, interracial, and international.” As a reflection of these goals, the congregation elected its first black deacon in 1950, its first black minister in 1960, its first black trustee in 1970, and its first black senior minister, Forbes, in 1989.

During the 1960s The Riverside Church became actively involved in the civil rights and anti-war movements. From the church’s pulpit, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke out against economic injustice and the Vietnam War. Today, The Riverside Church has approximately 2,400 members, attracting congregants from more than forty different national, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

Description

The Riverside Church occupies a 454 by 100 foot lot at the southeast corner of Riverside Drive and West 122nd Street. Patterned on French Gothic prototypes, the exterior is faced in Indiana limestone. The religious complex consists of three distinct sections: a nave extending north toward West 122nd Street, a mid-block 392-foot high tower housing the narthex, Christ Chapel, offices and meeting rooms, as well as a “cloister” passage extending east to Claremont Avenue. An observation platform, 355 feet above the ground and served by elevators, is open to the public and offers panoramic views. Since the church’s completion in 1930 there have been few alterations to the well-maintained building.

The *Riverside Drive facade* is divided into two primary sections: a mid-block tower and nave, extending north from the lower floors of the tower to 122nd Street. The main entrance (or west portal) is located in the base of the tower. It consists of two historic double wood doors with transoms, over which are installed recessed wood panels. Both the doors and panels are embellished with decorative metal work. Over the center of each door is a single historic light fixture. In the open position, the double doors reveal an historic neo-Gothic style revolving door of wood and glass panels to the south, and an historic neo-Gothic double door with wood and glass panels to the north.

The tympanum rests on two horizontal relief panels. Between the doors is a trumeau, decorated with a single figure of “John the Beloved Disciple” set on a

high base. The entrances and tympanum are framed by a series of five archivolt, each decorated with groups of figures. The door jambs, beneath the archivolt, are embellished with a single figure raised above a series of bases that diminish in size as they approach the doors. The jambs are framed by slender columns, crowned by capitals and gargoyles. From the capitals rise thin moldings that intersect above the top of the tympanum, forming a pediment. At the top of the pediment are various reliefs aligned with the trumeau.

South of the main entrance is the entrance to the chapel. Reached by steps, the historic double doors, with elaborate metalwork, are flanked by two pairs of pillars. From these pillars spring two sets of archivolt, decorated with signs of the zodiac. Along the outer edge of the second archivolt runs a highly decorated molding. At center, directly above the tympanum relief of the Virgin Mary are a pair of mirror-image angels. The tympanum rests on a single horizontal relief panel.

The nave rises approximately ten stories. The west walls are divided by receding buttresses into three primary sections: from top to bottom is a single pointed arch window, an arcade divided by three colonettes, and the clerestory which features two side-by-side lancet windows below a rose window with tracery. Stained glass is installed in each of the windows. At the base of the roof, above the top of the buttresses, a shallow arcade extends around the top of the nave and chancel. Where it passes each buttress the arcade projects forward. The nave is crowned by a steeply pitched, standing seam terne metal roof which intersects with the base of the tower. A bronze statue, the “Angel of the Resurrection,” with its trumpet in the air, stands on a raised base at the north end of the roof, facing north.

Near the building’s south end, above the main entrance, rises a 392 foot high *office-and-bell tower*. The *west* elevation, facing Riverside Drive, has projecting piers joined by a pointed arch, a pair of grisaille windows with pointed arches, statues of seven kings set into deeply recessed slightly pointed arched niches supported by columns with composite capitals, and a circular stained glass window with ten lobes, known as the “West Rose Window.” Above the pointed arch are four windows flanked by buttresses. The colonettes that divide the four windows rise from a sloping base over a corbel table.

The base of the *south* elevation is mostly obscured by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Wing (not part of the designation). Between the point where these structures intersect and the arcaded railing the upper half of four slender stained-glass windows are visible. They are

surmounted by three deeply recessed windows crowned by a pediment with a small circular window at center. The lower portion of the *east* elevation, above the “cloister” passage that extends to Claremont Avenue, has a single rose window.

Above the ridge of the roof, the tower is divided into five sections. As it rises, each stage gradually diminishes in size. At each corner, set at an angle, is a slender niche supported by two columns. Set within each of the four canopied niches is a single statue. The base of these niches intersects with an arcaded railing that extends around the tower’s four elevations. The neo-Gothic fenestration does not reflect the stories contained within the tower. Above the arcaded railing, the sections are divided by string courses and set backs, topped by a shallow conical roof. The primary fenestration rises as follows: two windows, four windows, three windows, four windows, five windows. All of the windows are set into arches with one or two sets of engaged Corinthian columns. The upper sections, housing the carillon, are the most elaborately decorated, featuring gargoyles and other neo-Gothic details. The top section incorporates pediments and pinnacles that extend above the metal roof. Radio antennae are also visible.

North facade: The 122nd Street facade consists of the curved elevation of the chancel flanked by two entrance pavilions. The entrance at the building’s northwest corner is known as the “Woman’s Porch.” Framed by recessed piers, the stepped entry is set into a round arch with recessed moldings that rises to a pinnacle which culminates with a statue. The pinnacle bisects neo-Gothic style grillwork that extends between the piers. A string course, that runs along the top edge of the grillwork, extends onto and around the adjoining piers. Above the string course is a series of fully ornamented pinnacles and colonettes that extend up to and above the second story. The pavilion’s west facade, on Riverside Drive, is treated similarly, with a single recessed window covered with plexiglass, recessed piers, pinnacles, and colonettes above the first story.

The *chancel* is divided into two sections, separated by a sloping roof. The lower section has three groups of stained-glass ambulatory windows, divided by three receding buttresses crowned by triangular stonework. Each group consists of two lancet windows and a rose window with six lobes. The upper section of the chancel, divided by five receding buttresses, has five stained-glass clerestory windows, each incorporating cusped lancet windows, a trefoil window and a rose window with six lobes. Each buttress is crowned by a single niche, consisting of a pair of colonettes that

support a round-arched pediment. Within each niche stands a single figure on a squat base. The top of the chancel is crowned by an arcaded railing intersected by the top portion of each buttress, which is decorated with a finial and incorporates a water spout and projecting gargoyle that is connected to the niche below by a thin molding. Behind these finials is a taller finial, decorated with sprockets along each vertical edge. The rear finials are crowned by crouching gargoyles.

At the top of the receding buttresses, which rise behind the “Woman’s Porch” and the pavilion to the west of the chancel, are a series of slender windows flanked by colonettes. Between the top of the windows and the arcaded railing is a molding from which gargoyles extend out above each colonette. Behind the stone and copper railing are two lanterns, each consisting of round arches set on colonettes. Partial walls have been inserted between the colonettes. The roof, which appears to be made of stone, is treated to resemble tilework. It is crowned by a single finial. The sloping north section of the roof rises to intersect with the ridge line. The seams of roof’s sloping north end rise and intersect at the ridge line. At this point stands the bronze statue of the “Angel of the Resurrection.”

The *east facade* of the nave is only partially visible from Claremont Avenue. The lower portion is obscured, in part, by the “cloister” passage and the Union Theological Seminary’s McGiffert Hall (not part of this designation), an L-shaped neo-Gothic dormitory facing both Claremont Avenue and 122nd Street. This elevation is identical to the west, consisting of five bays and similar stained-glass fenestration. Where the nave and “cloister” passage meet, a one-story library (now bookstore) has been constructed. This structure, which is reached through the “cloister” passage, faces the rear of McGiffert Hall, and is not visible from the street. The “cloister” passage extends east from the base of the tower to Claremont Avenue. It is a 1 ½-story structure with four bays facing south (the original fifth bay is incorporated into the northeast corner of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Wing), surmounted by a blind arcade. Each bay has a pointed arch, flanked by Corinthian colonettes. Above each capital projects a limestone gutter. Within each arch are round-arched and circular grisaille windows. Both types have diagonal grids of leaded glass. In the circular window a thicker grid is laid over the diagonal grid. Four non-historic aluminum spotlights have been installed above the second bay from the east. The two-story easternmost bay serves as the handicapped entrance, with non-historic double doors, flanked by engaged columns set into a pointed arch, opening south. Above this side entrance is an

historic bronze and glass lighting fixture.

The entrance, reached by two steps, faces Claremont Avenue. Set into a recessed arch with serpents to either side, the entrance consists of two historic wood doors and a non-historic metal and glass revolving door. To either side of the doors are schedules of church activities set into historic neo-Gothic style copper frames, cut at top with the words "The Riverside Church." Above the cloister entrance are three figures (Faith, Hope and Charity) set into recessed niches with pointed arches, and corner buttresses with blind arcades. Where the south and

north facades meet is a statue of Maasaeiah - Keeper of the Threshold -- set on a raised pedestal below an elaborate elongated crown that extends up to the bottom of the blind arcades. The north facade is almost entirely concealed by McGiffert Hall. A single window bay opens onto the interior playground.

Researched and written by
Matthew A. Postal
Research Department

NOTES

1. Mina Pendo, *A Brief History of The Riverside Church* (The Riverside Church, 1957).
2. The cost of the Stanton Street building was \$10,000. In 1833 the congregation had 211 members. *Ibid.*, 9.
3. The lots on Fifth Avenue, from which the church took its name, were sold due to financial difficulties in the early 1860s. *Ibid.*, 22. In 1893 the church was described as "one of the most foremost Baptist congregations of New York" and that its auditorium was "large and tastefully decorated." See *Kings Handbook of New York City* (Boston: Moses King, 1893), 382.
4. William Rockefeller moved to New York City in 1867. In about 1910 he acquired and donated the Rockefeller Fountain (a designated New York City Landmark) to the New York Zoological Park. For more information, see his obituary, *New York Times*, June 25, 1922.
5. Pendo, 22.
6. The Rockefellers paid \$600,000 for the 54th Street house, which was demolished in 1936. Several rooms were donated to local museums, including the Brooklyn Museum of Art and the Museum of the City of New York. The site is presently occupied by the Museum of Modern Art's Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden (Philip Johnson, 1952, remodeled 1964).
7. Allan Nevins, *John D. Rockefeller* (New York: Scribners, 1940), 455.
8. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. succeeded Charles Evans Hughes who led the class from 1897-1899.
9. According to Pendo, by 1912 the Fifth Avenue church was "literally about to fall apart, for the building, now almost fifty years old, had been pronounced dangerous for occupancy." In addition, nearby skyscrapers were darkening the church windows. Pendo, 37-38.
10. The estimated cost of the new building was \$400,000. It is presently known as the Central Presbyterian Church. See LPC files and LPC, *Upper East Side Historic District Designation Report* (New York; City of New York, 1981), 1078-1079.
11. Pendo, 40.
12. This section is based on the following sources: Robert Moats Miller, *Harry Emerson Fosdick: Preacher, Pastor, Prophet* (New York: Oxford, 1986); "Harry Emerson Fosdick," *Dictionary of Christian America* (Intervarsity Press, 1990), 446.
13. Ron Chernow, *Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr.* (New York: Random House), 640.

14. Between 1908 and 1930 Fosdick published at least six books, including: *Meaning of Prayer* (1915), *Faith* (1917), *Service* (1920), *Spiritual Values and Eternal Life* (1927), *A Pilgrimage to Palestine* (1927), and *The Second Mile* (1928). Many went through several printings.
15. Chernow, 639.
16. Miller, 162.
17. About 15% of the congregation voted against Fosdick and abandoning the recently completed church. Andrew S. Dolkart, *Morningside Heights: A History of Its Architecture and Development* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 383 fn 157. Also see Miller, 163; and Pendo, 41.
18. Miller, 163.
19. Ibid., 201.
20. Pendo, 49.
21. Much of the information on the development of Morningside Heights comes from Dolkart, *Morningside Heights*.
22. Ibid., 1.
23. Claremont Park was purchased by the City of New York, as an extension of Riverside Park, from John D. Rockefeller in 1896. In 1912, one thousand cherry trees were planted to mark the Hudson-Fulton celebration of 1909. It was leveled and redesigned by the Olmsted Brothers, with donations from John D. Rockefeller, Jr., in 1932-1934. The following year the park was renamed Sakura Park. Renovations were undertaken during 1981-1986. Ibid., 385.
24. Designed by the architect Donn Barber (1871-1925), the Broadway Temple was to be a 24-story, 644 room complex, crowned by a thirty-foot tall illuminated, revolving crucifix.
25. The Broadway Tabernacle (Barney & Chapman, 1905) was one of the first New York churches to integrate an office tower into its plan. Similar hybrid projects from this period include: The Salvation Army Headquarters (120 West 14th Street, Vorhees, Gmelin & Walker, 1929-30), the Fifth Church of Christ Scientist (43rd Street, near Madison Avenue, A.D. Pickering, 1922) New Calvary Baptist Church (123 West 57th Street, Rosario Candela, 1924) and the Madison Avenue Baptist Church (Madison Avenue and 31st Street).
26. Miller, 204.
27. "Churches under Cover," editorial, *New York Times*, July 6, 1926, 20.
28. Allen and Collens had offices in both Boston and New York. In New York, their office was located at 416 Lexington Avenue. Jallade was the architect of Stone gym (1912, originally the Union Theological Seminary gym) at the northwest corner of West 120th Street and Claremont Avenue. He also designed the Broadway Presbyterian Church (1911).
29. For photographs of Pelton's work in New York City and the immediate suburbs, see *Henry C. Pelton, Architect* (New York: Architectural Catalog Co, July 1925).
30. Eugene C. Carder, "The Riverside Church As I have Known It," unpublished manuscript, cited in Dolkart, 77.
31. See Walter A. Taylor, "A Criticism . . . of the Riverside Church," and Charles Crane, "Why We Made It Gothic," both in *The American Architect*, June 1931, 32; and July 1931, 26. Pelton's associates included Frank M. Machan and Harold G. Webb.
32. Interest in Gothic architecture peaked during the late 1920s. Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1942) co-founded the Medieval Society of America in 1926 and was responsible for numerous neo-Gothic churches and institutional structures, such as St. Thomas Church (1906) on Fifth Avenue and various buildings at the United States Military Academy at West Point. In 1929 he edited *American Church Architecture Today*, which includes an

illustration of The Riverside Church scheme. Other architects who adopted the style include Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, James Gamble Rogers, and Howells & Hood.

33. Quoted in Miller, 211.
34. "The Architecture and Symbolism of The Riverside Church," collected and published in a special issue of *The Church Monthly*, December 1930, 5.
35. *Ibid.*, 5.
36. *Ibid.*, 9.
37. *Ibid.*, 5.
38. Garrison, a Colorado native, trained with the sculptor Gutzon Borglum (1867-1941). After working on The Riverside Church, he created three limestone reliefs for the RKO Building, facing Sixth Avenue, in Rockefeller Center. Installed in November 1932, they represent morning, evening, and Pegasus, the "steed of the Muses." See Alan Balfour, *Rockefeller Center: Architecture As Theater* (McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1978), fig. 291.
39. The Piccirilli family immigrated from Massa Carrara in c. 1888. According to Horatio Piccirilli's obituary in the *New York Times* (June 29, 1954) he was responsible for the church's chancel screen and the main door. The best-known member of the family was Attilio (1866-1945) who sculpted the Maine Monument (Columbus Circle, 1913) and the backlit cast glass panels in the International Building and the Palazzo d'Italia facing Fifth Avenue in Rockefeller Center ("Laborata" was removed during World War II and replaced by Giacomo Manzù's "Italia."). Also see entries for the various brothers in *The Dictionary of American Sculptors* (Apollo Book, 1984).
40. *The Church Monthly*, 18.
41. On April 25, 1927 an agreement between the Union Theological Seminary and the Park Avenue Baptist Church was signed, promising that no structure would be built directly east of the new church. The Seminary agreed to allow the church to erect "three ornamental buttresses" on its property and to maintain it as "an open and unobstructed courtyard," thus allowing sun light to filter through the projected east aisle and clerestory windows. New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, May 9, 1927, Liber 3590, p. 451.
42. To protect the west clerestory windows from high pressure winds, the leading of the glass is much heavier than that found at Chartres. See *The Church Monthly*, 54.
43. The various scenes were selected by the artists and the Committee on Iconography. *The Church Monthly*, 48.
44. In the cornerstone was placed Minister Woelfkin's bible, once used by Laura Spelman Rockefeller, and rag-paper editions of the *New York Times* featuring articles on the proposed church. See "Cornerstone laid for Fosdick Church," *New York Times*, November 21, 1927, 12.
45. *Ibid.*
46. Miller, 205.
47. "The Churches of New York, No. 26: Riverside," *New York Sun*, May 16, 1931, 7.
48. Quoted in Miller, 208.
49. The \$1.7 million loss was covered by insurance. In the year that followed, the use of wooden scaffolds at construction sites was outlawed in New York State. See Miller, 208.
50. Taylor, "A Criticism," 70.
51. Crane, "Why We Made It Gothic," 26.

52. The section is adapted from "The Riverside Church Carillon," a detailed brochure published by The Riverside Church, after 1978.
53. *New York Times*, February 11, 1931, 19.
54. "Fifty Years: A Time to Celebrate," brochure published by The Riverside Church 50th Anniversary Committee, 1980.
55. Ibid.
56. This episode is mentioned in nearly all church publications. For a photograph and brief description, see *The Riverside Church* (New York: 1978), 10.
57. At present, the transmitter is used by WKCR, of Columbia University.
58. This annex, which extends south of the tower to West 120th Street, permitted the church to expand its educational activities and social programs. It contains classrooms, an assembly hall, theater, cafeteria, recreation rooms, and a two-story underground parking garage.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of the building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that The Riverside Church has a special character and a 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 Riverside Church, dating from 1928-1930, is one of New York's best-known religious structures; that its history reflects the modernist religious theology of its founding pastor Harry Emerson Fosdick; that the neo-Gothic style complex was financed with gifts from members of the church, including the industrialist and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and consists of three distinct sections: a five-bay nave extending north toward West 122nd Street, a mid-block tower housing the narthex, Christ Chapel, offices and meeting rooms, as well as a one-and-a-half story "cloister" passage extending east to Claremont Avenue; that the architects Henry C. Pelton and Allen & Collens based the design and decoration on mainly French Gothic religious structures, especially the Cathedral at Chartres; and that the 392-foot high tower was designed to provide the progressive congregation with a strong presence on the skyline and in Morningside Heights.

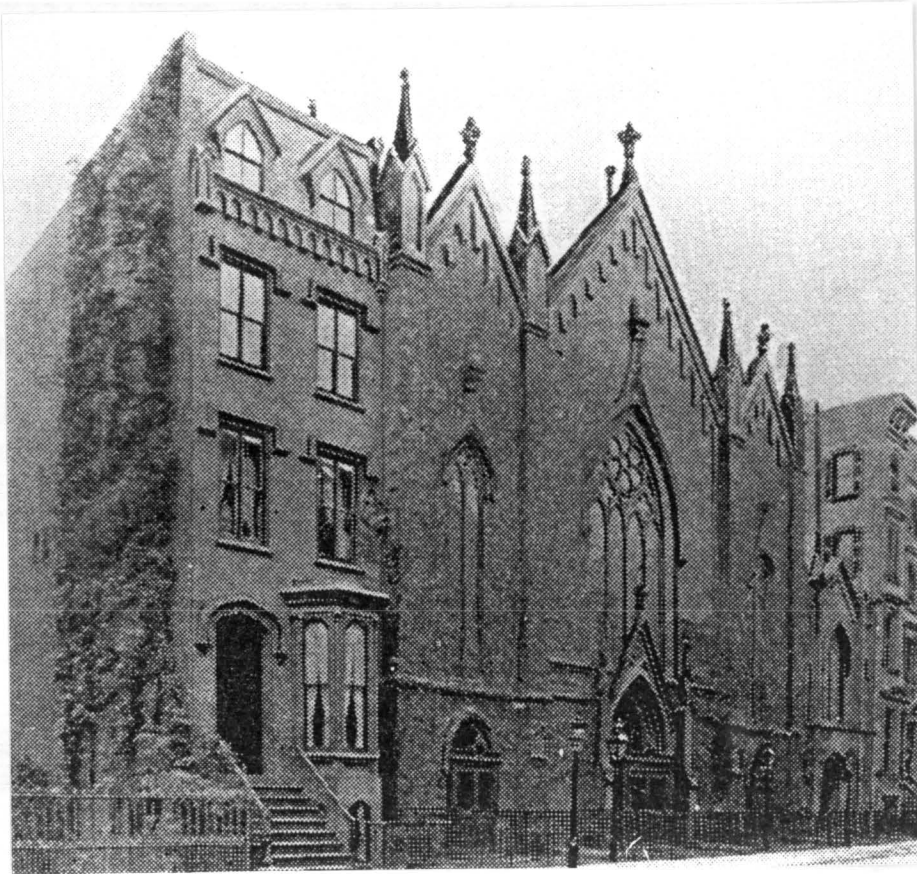
Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark The Riverside Church, 490-498 Riverside Drive and 81 Claremont Avenue, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1991, Lot 32, in part, consisting of the land on which the 1928-1930 church, tower, chapel, and "cloister" passage extending to Claremont Avenue, are situated, as its Landmark Site.



Chartres Cathedral, west facade, c. 1140-50
Source: Laurie Schneider Adams, *A History of Western Art*, 1994



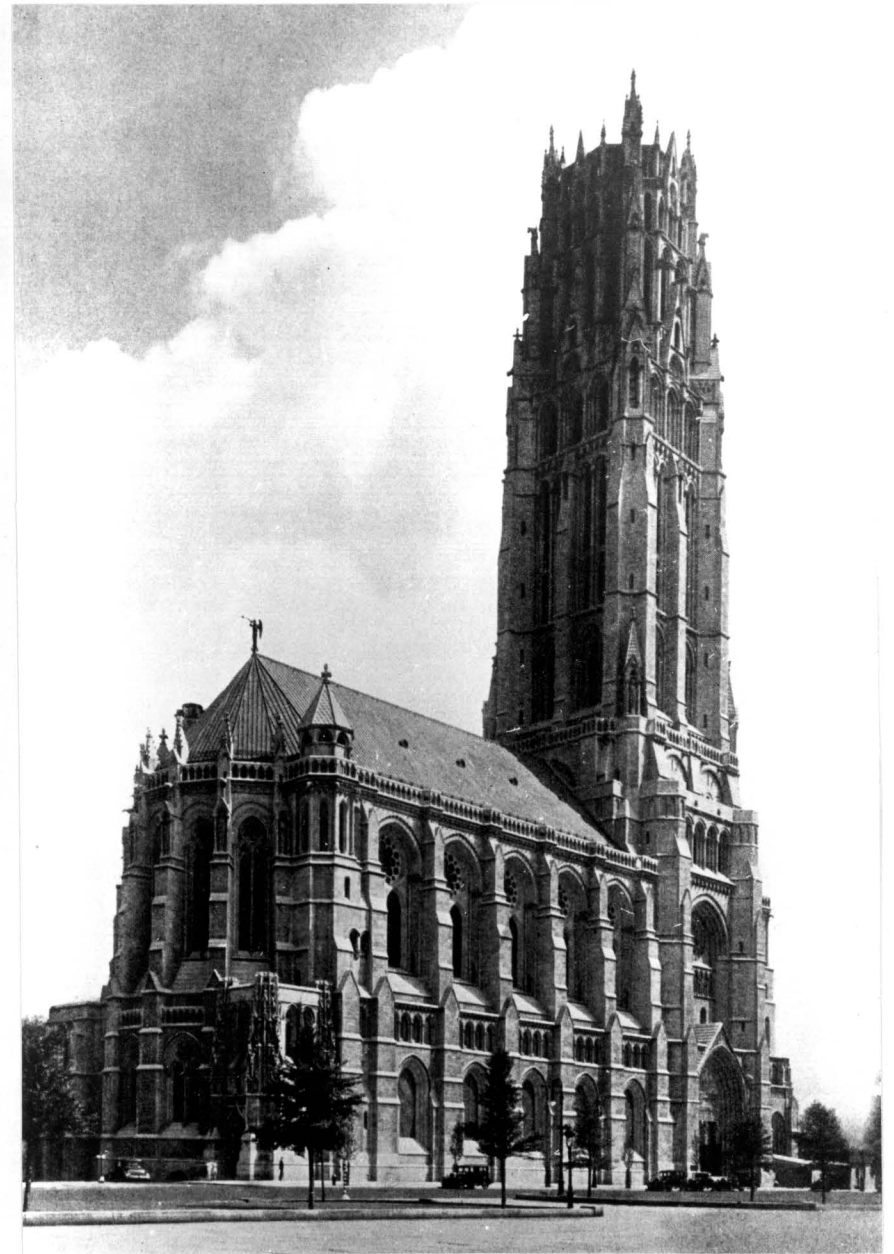
Proposal by McKim, Mead & White
rendered by Hugh Ferriss, 1925
Source: Andrew Dolkart, *Morningside Heights*



The Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, c. 1870

Source: Mina Pendo

A Brief History of the Riverside Church



The Riverside Church, 1930

Photo: Frank Ehrenford

Source: *The Iconography of The Riverside Church*



Harry Emerson Fosdick
Source: Mina Pendo, *A Brief History of the Riverside Church*

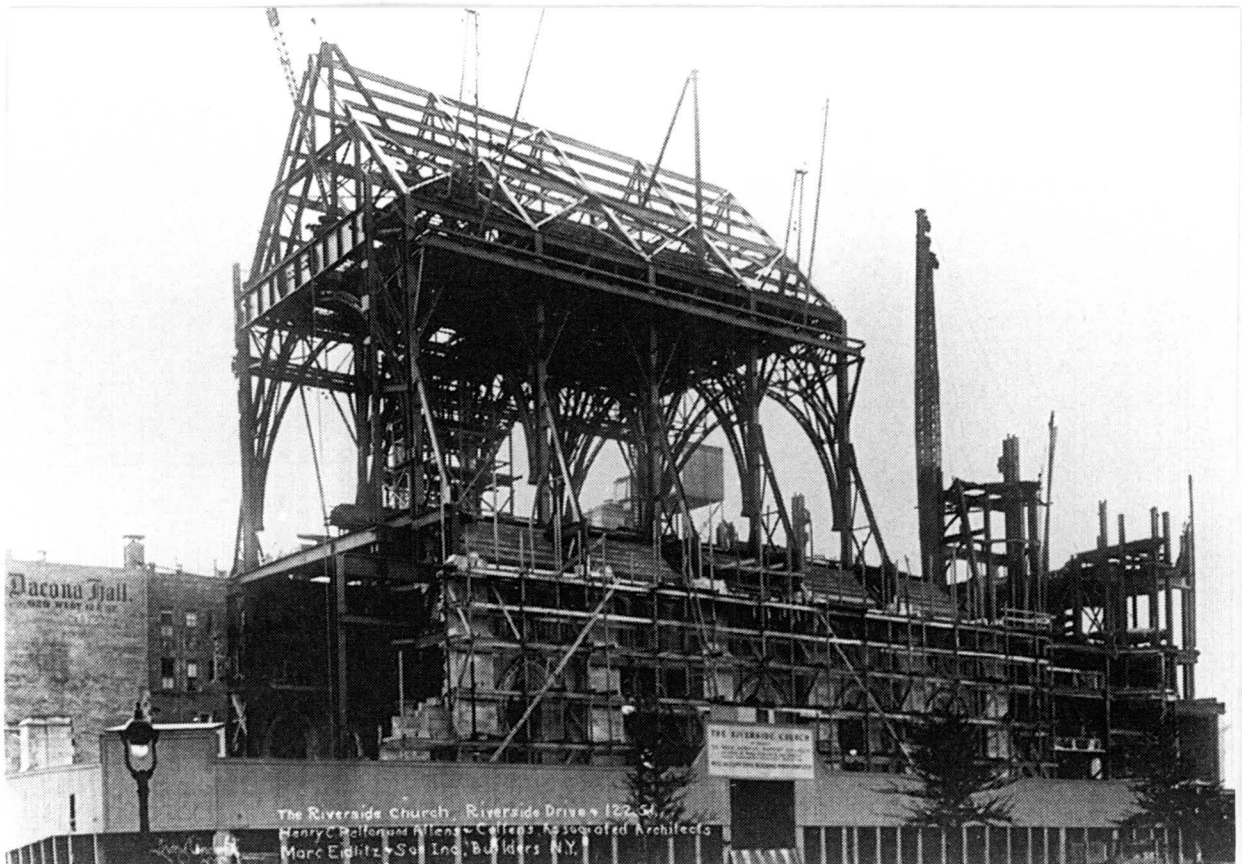


Resurrection Angel, near 122nd Street
Photo: Carl Forster



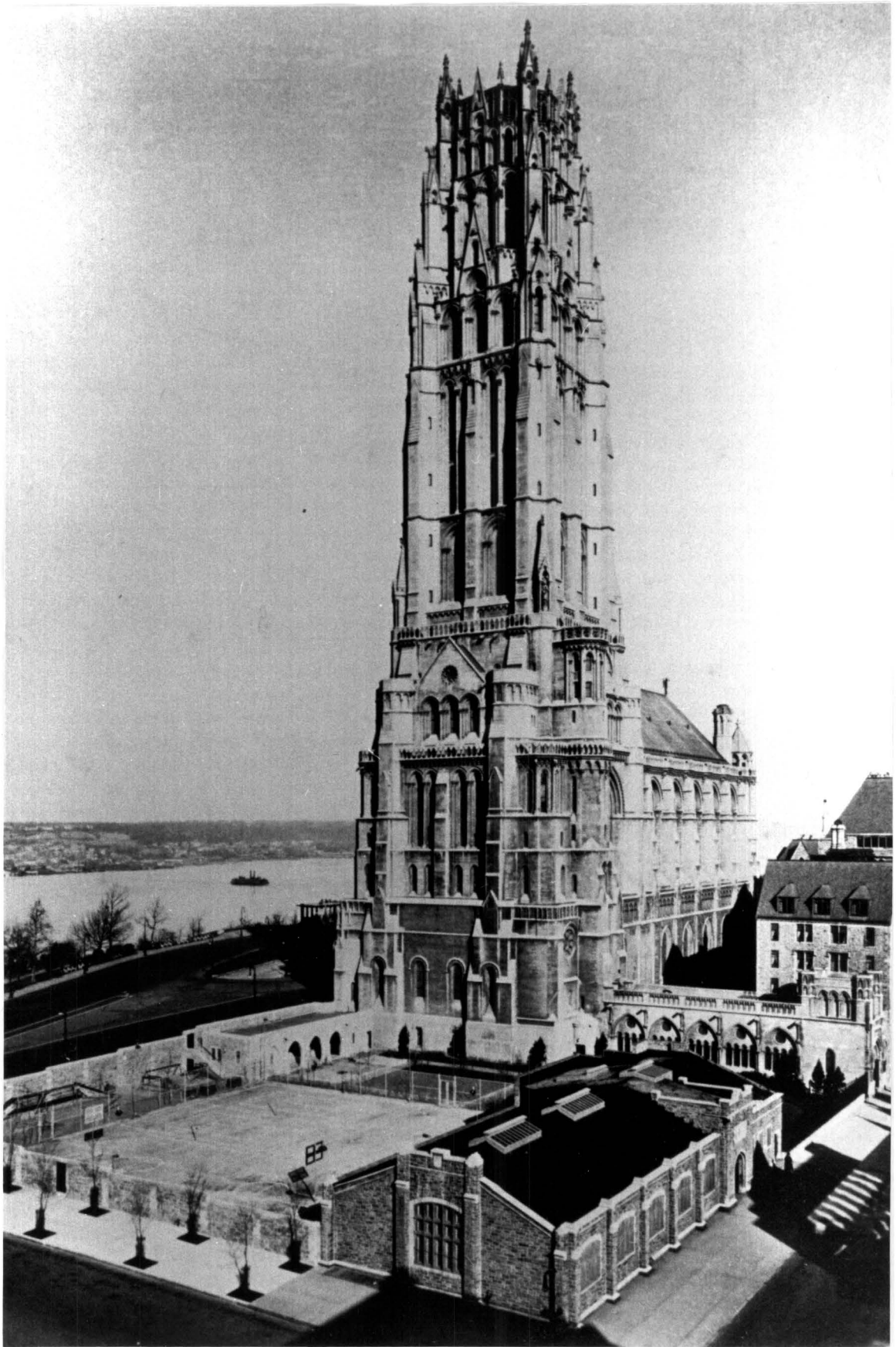
Aerial view of Morningside Heights, looking northwest, c. 1935

Source: Andrew Dolkart, *Morningside Heights*



Steel skeleton during construction, May 1928

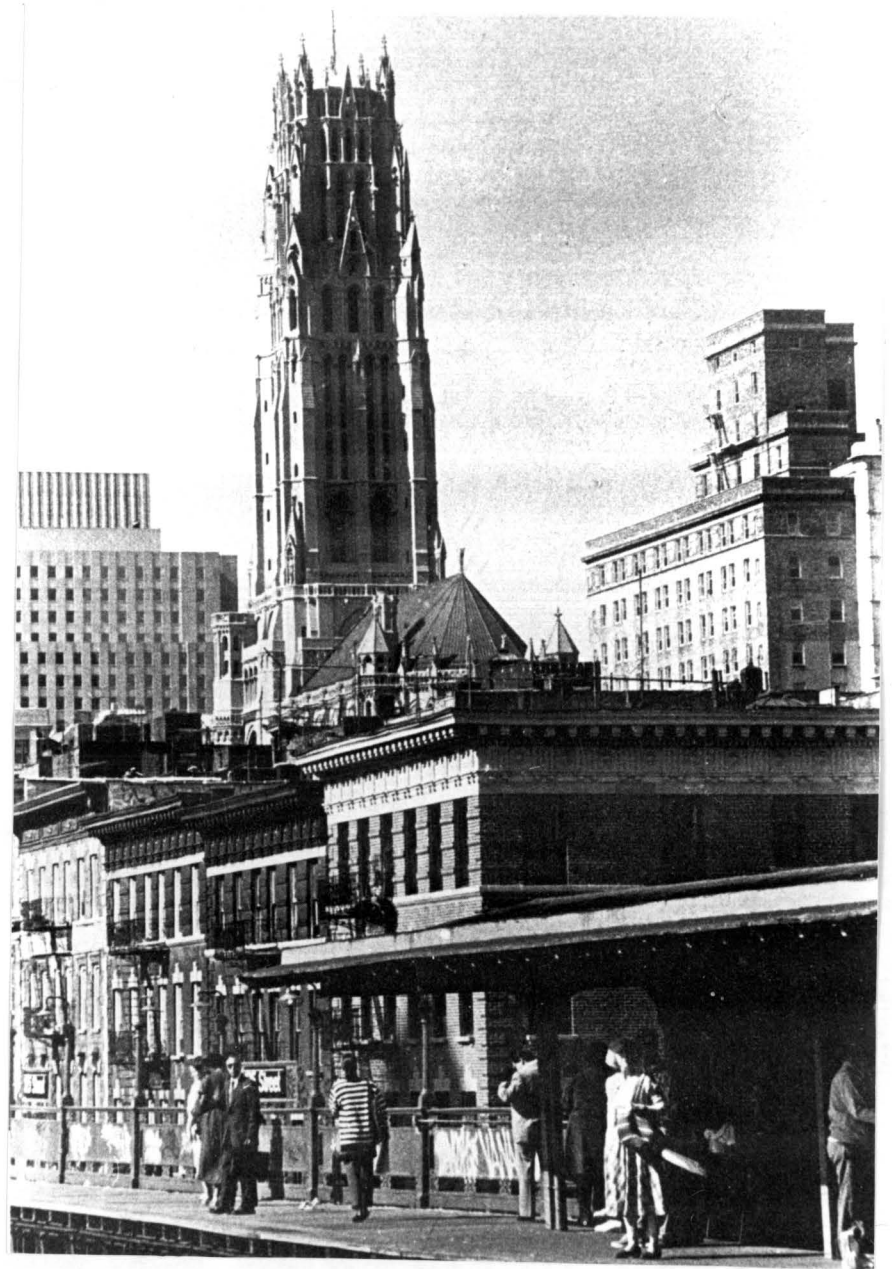
Source: Andrew Dolkart, *Morningside Heights*



The Riverside Church, 1936
Photo: *Gottscho-Schleisner*
Library of Congress, Washington, DC



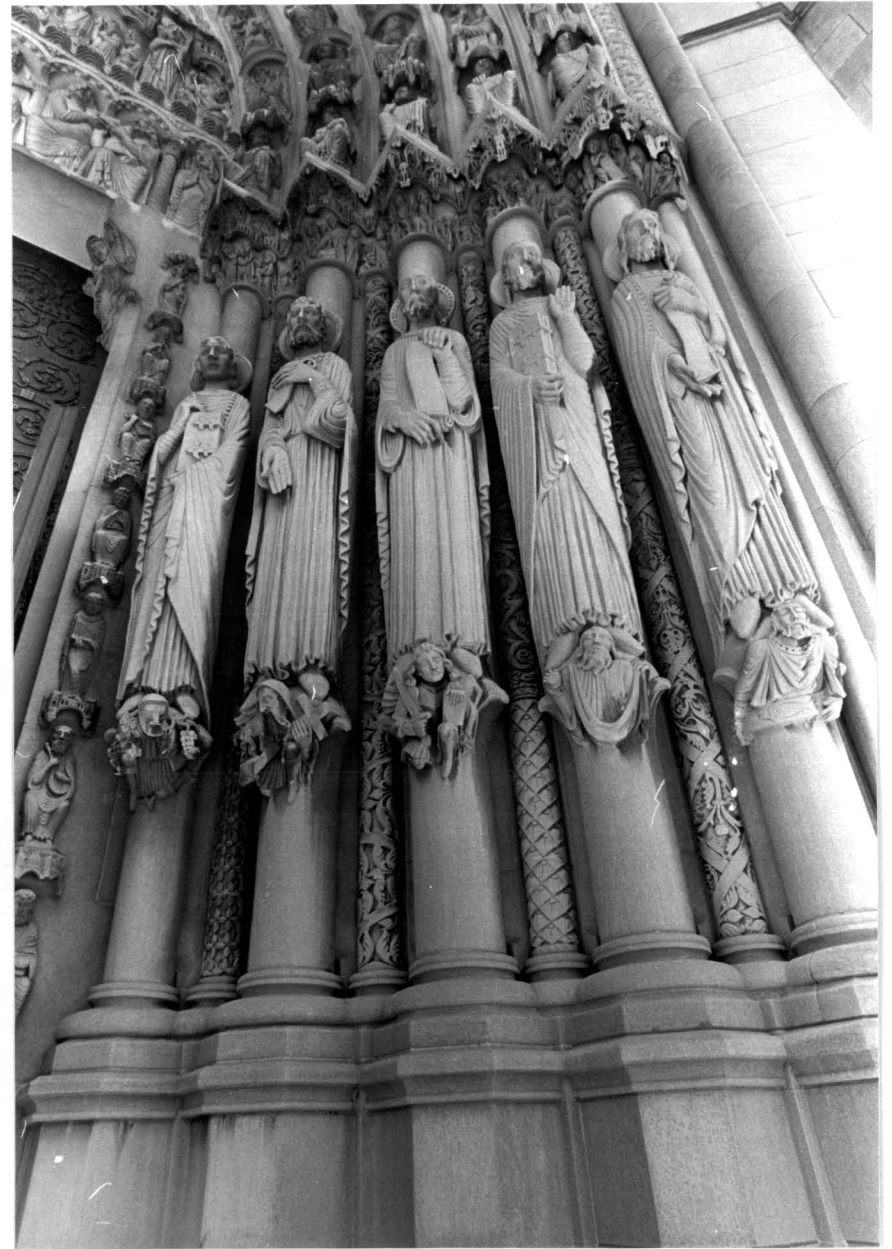
Aerial view of complex, toward the northeast
Source: *The Riverside Church*, 1978



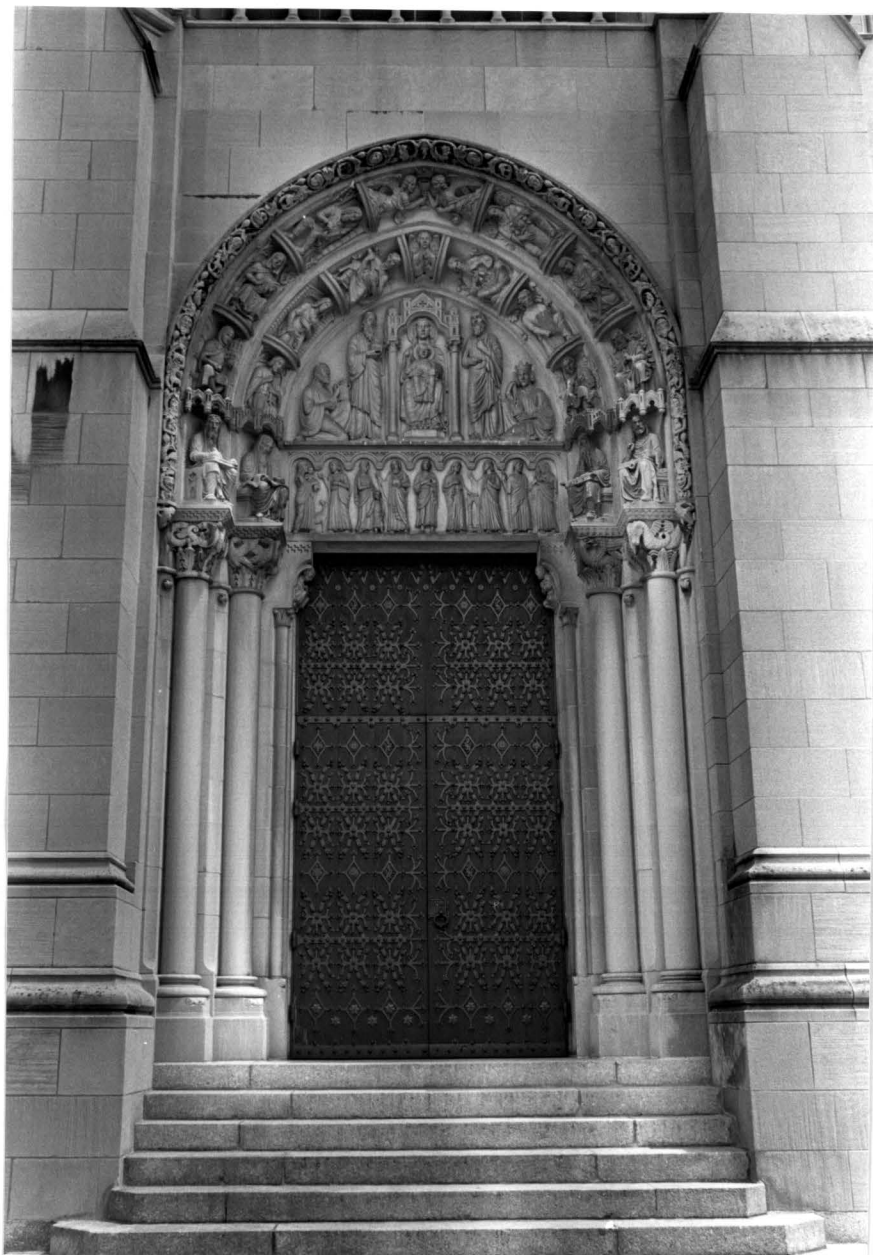
View of tower, from the 125th Street subway station
Photo: Esther Bubley, from *Rockefeller New York*



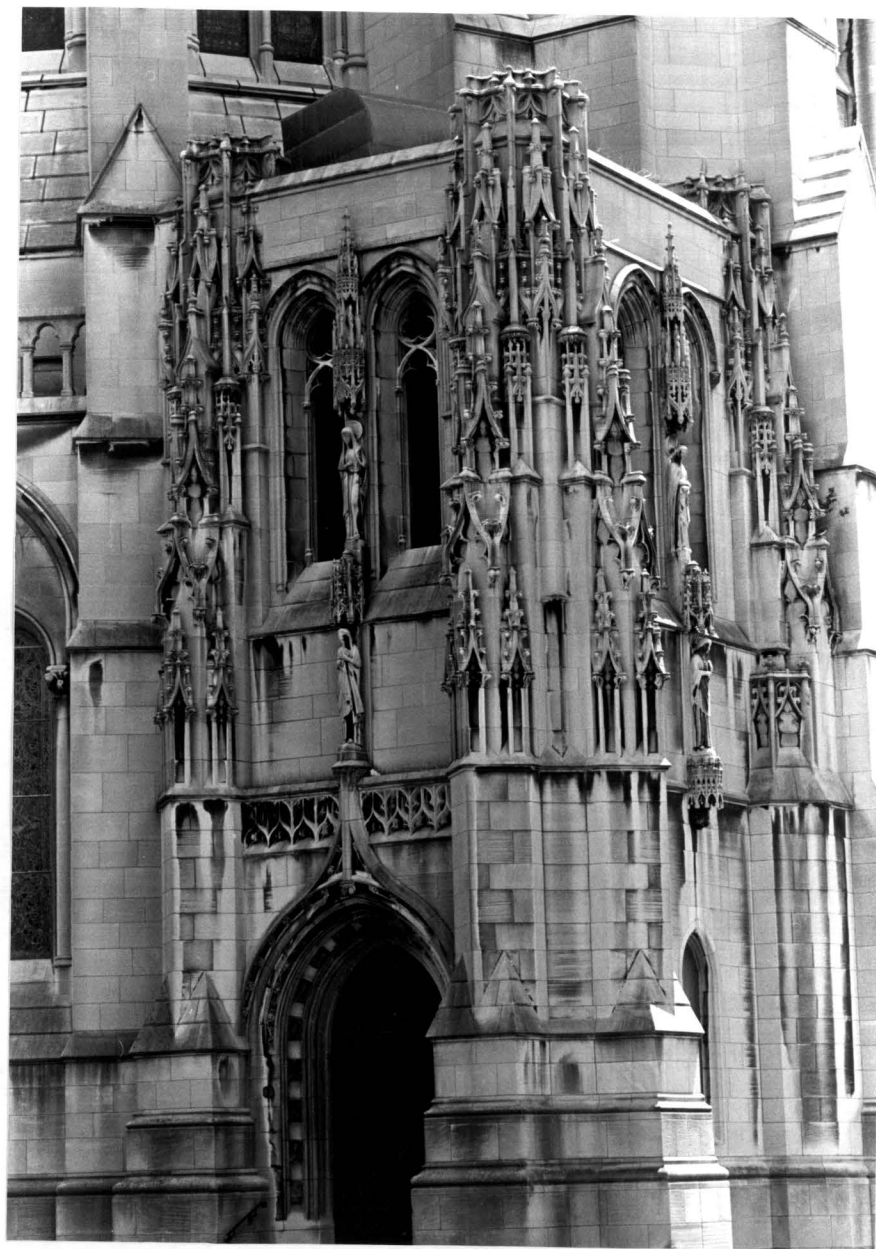
Main entrance/west portal, Riverside Drive
Photo: Carl Forster



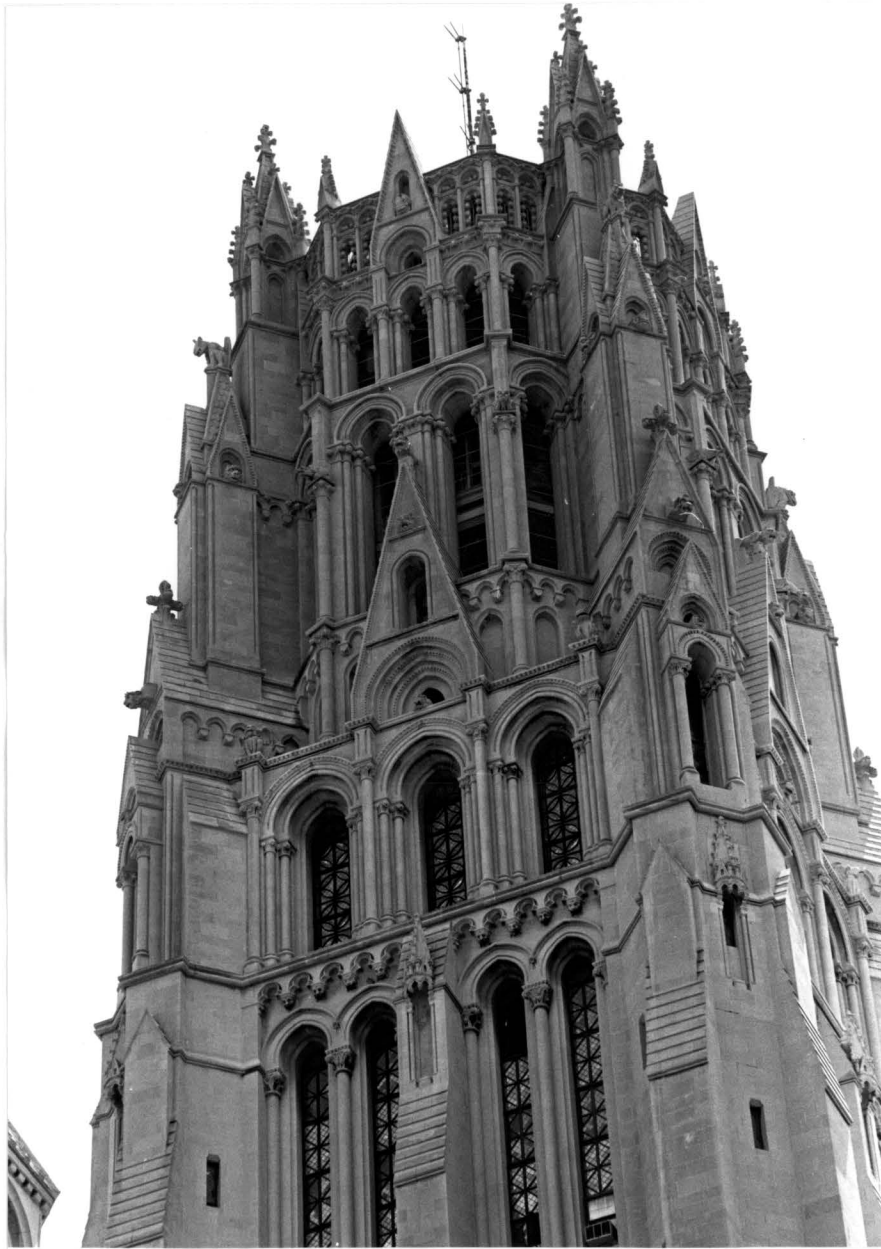
South side of main entrance
Photo: Carl Forster



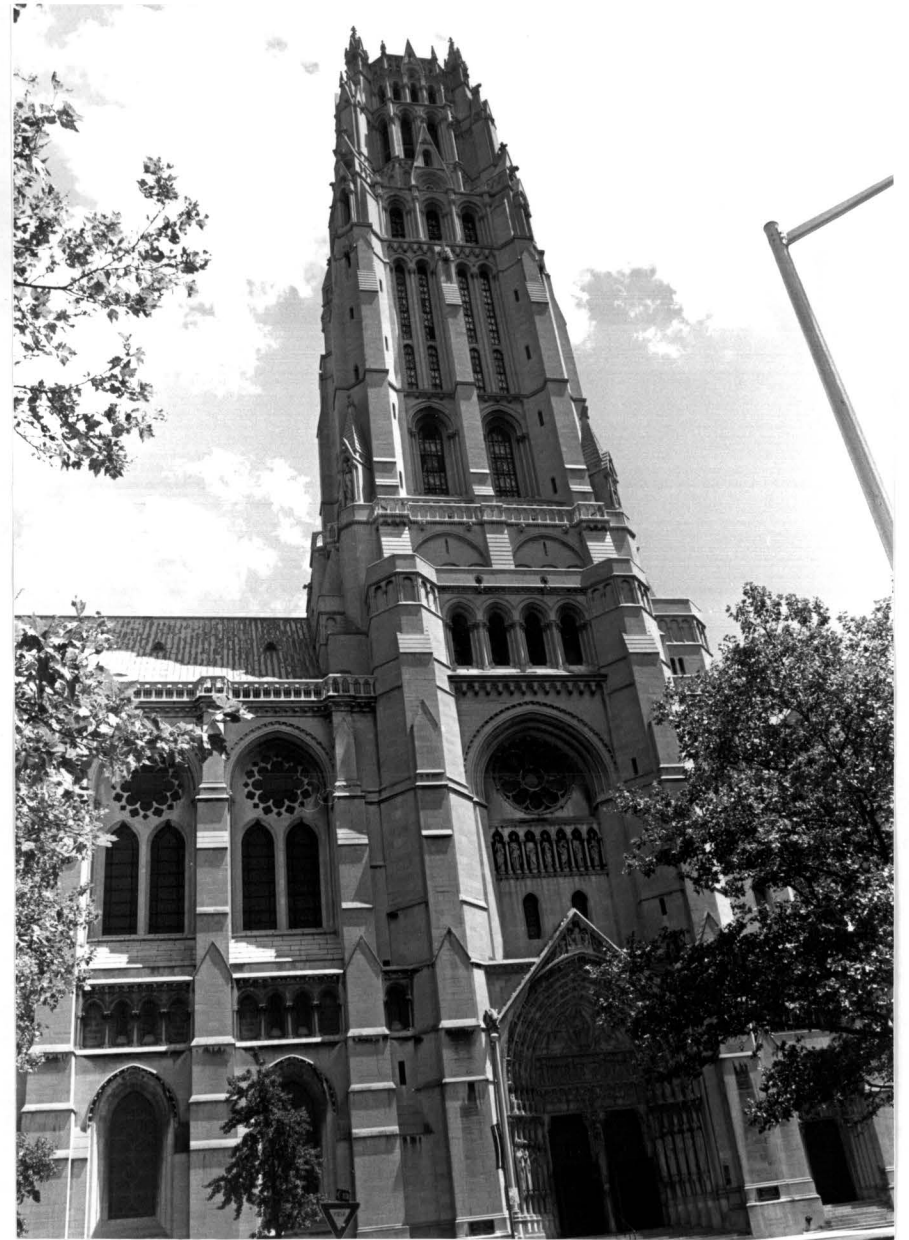
Chapel entrance, Riverside Drive
Photo: Carl Forster



Woman's Porch
southeast corner of Riverside Drive and 122nd Street
Photo: Carl Forster



Upper stories of tower
Photo: Carl Forster



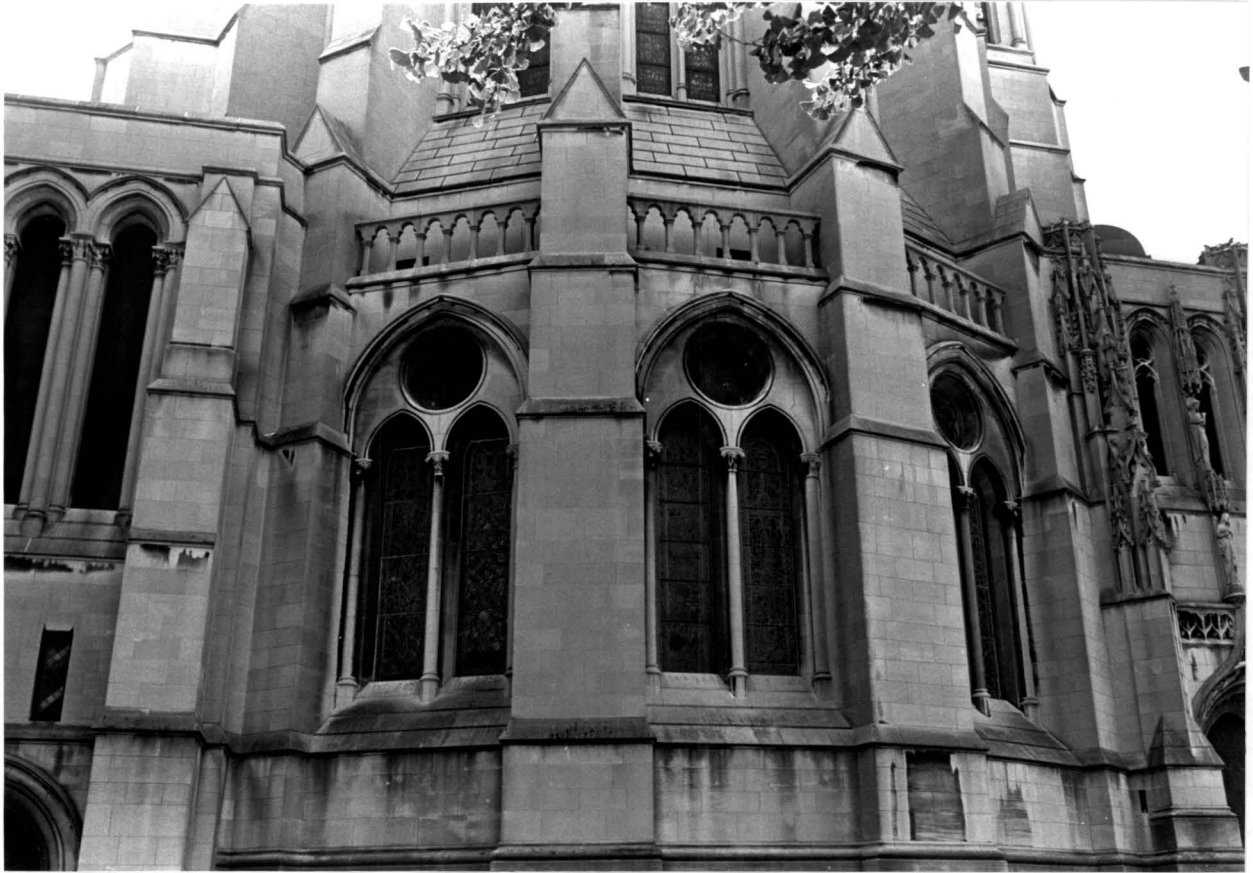
Tower, viewed from Riverside Drive
Photo: Carl Forster



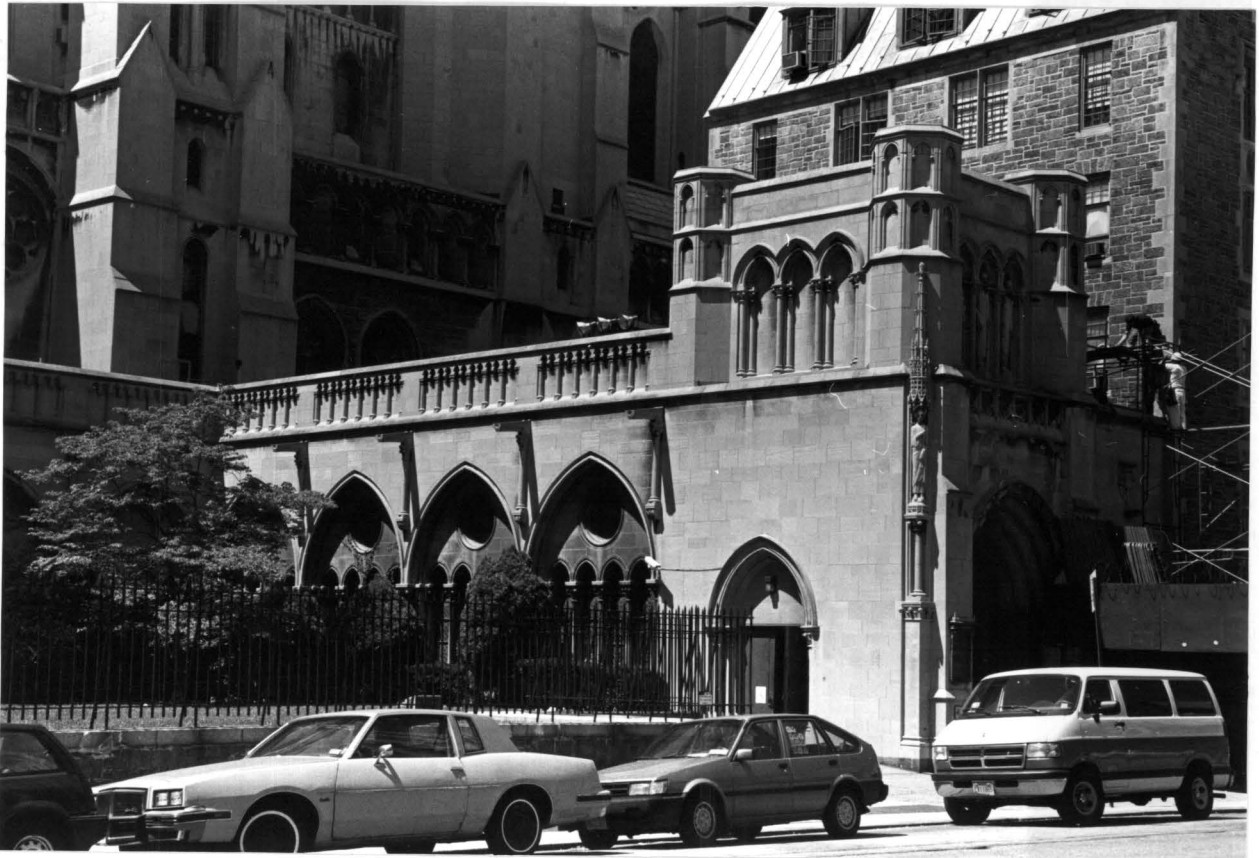
View south from 122nd Street and Riverside Drive
Photo: Carl Forster



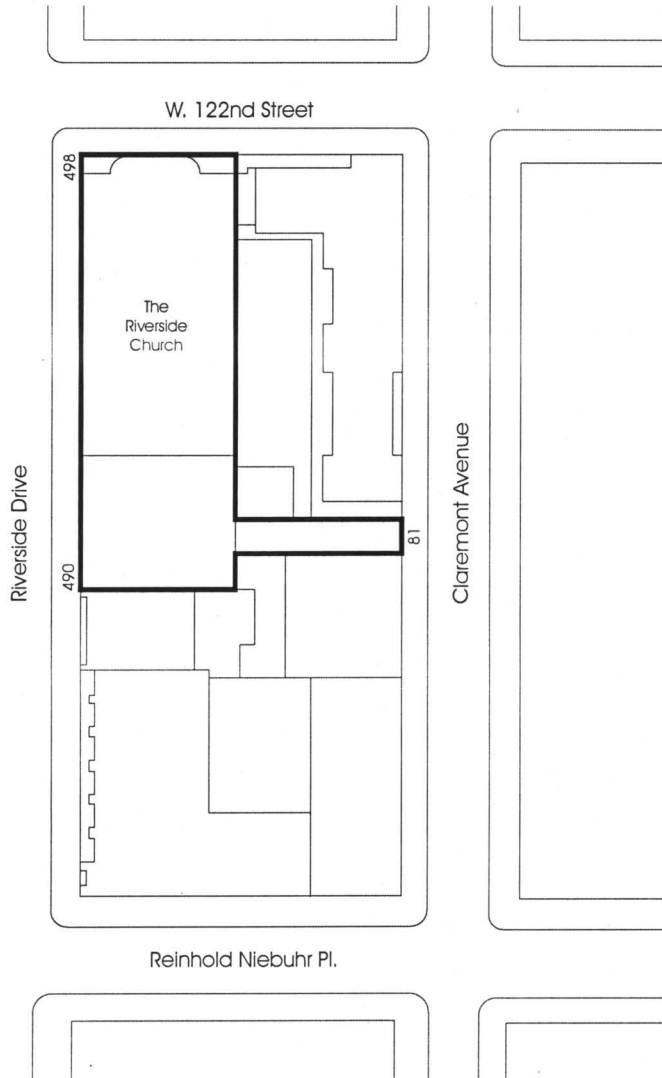
West facade
Photo: Carl Forster



Chancel, 122nd Street
Photo: Carl Forster




"Cloister" Passage, Claremont Avenue
Photo: Carl Forster



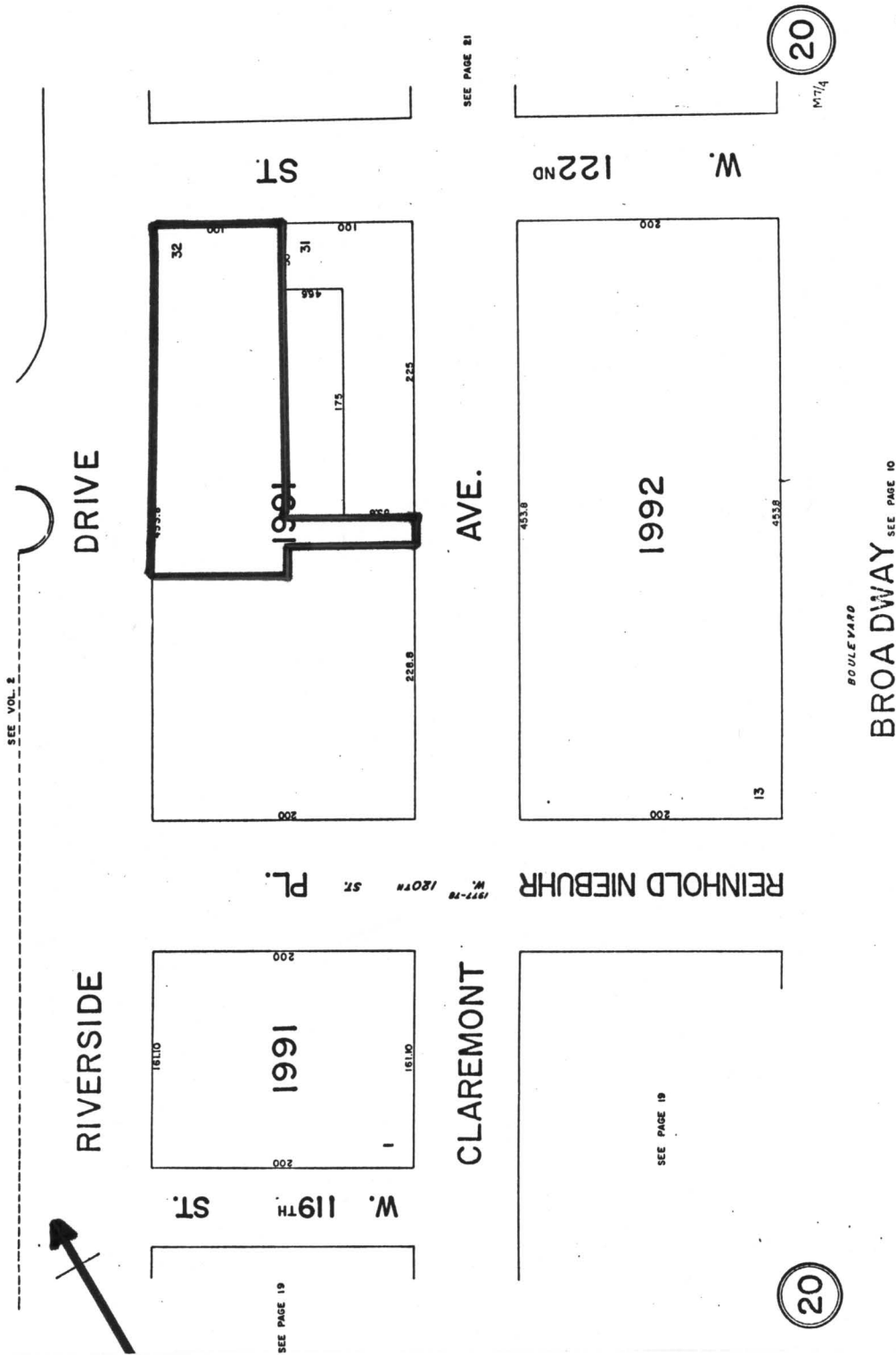
The Riverside Church
 490-498 Riverside Drive and 81 Claremont Avenue
 Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan
 Tax Map Block 1991, Lot 32, in part

Designated May 16, 2000
 Landmarks Preservation Commission

Site Boundaries



Map for illustrative purposes only



The Riverside Church, 490-498 Riverside Drive and 81 Claremont Avenue
 Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1991, Lot 32, in part
 Source: New York City Department of Finance, City Surveyor, Tax Map