

TRINITY CHURCH AND GRAVEYARD, Broadway at Wall Street, Borough of Manhattan.
Completed 1846; architect Richard Upjohn.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 49, Lot 1.

On October 19, 1965, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of Trinity Church and Graveyard and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 20). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Four witnesses spoke in favor of designation. Two representatives of Trinity Church also spoke at the hearing.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The present Trinity Church, completed in 1846, is the third edifice of this Episcopal parish, founded in 1697, to stand on this prominent site, closing the vista at the end of Wall Street. The present Church is one of the monuments of the Gothic Revival and was executed in brownstone by the noted ecclesiastical architect Richard Upjohn in a free rendering of English Gothic. Its spire, once the highest structure on the New York skyline, is the most notable feature of the Church. The tower itself is given a marvelous appearance of solidity, being double-buttressed at each corner by stone buttresses which diminish in depth as the tower rises. Four ornate pinnacles at the corners with flying buttresses behind them make a skillful transition from the square tower to the handsome octagonal spire.

The side aisles are expressively designed with large, pointed windows separated by buttresses. Piers terminating in pinnacles separate the great windows in the upper part of the nave or clerestory. The sculptured bronze doors at the east end of the Church, in the north and south portals and in the main entrance at the base of the tower are the work of noted American sculptors and are among the finest of their kind in this country.

The first Trinity Church was burned in the Great Fire of 1776; the second Church was razed in 1839 because of structural weakness. The great historical associations of Trinity Church are best exemplified in the stories told by the headstones and monuments of the handsome, old burying ground which surrounds the Church. It holds the remains of many historical persons, among whom are Alexander Hamilton, Captain James Lawrence, Robert Fulton, Albert Gallatin, and Francis Lewis, the only signer of the Declaration of Independence to be buried in Manhattan.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission recognizes that the Landmark on the property in question (and the Landmark Site) is wholly used for religious and directly related charitable purposes by Trinity Church and that the needs of Trinity Church for such uses may change in the years ahead, entailing alterations in the existing structures or the creation of other structures on the Landmark Site. By this designation of the Landmark above described and the Landmark Site on which it is located, it is not intended to freeze the structure in its present state or to prevent future appropriate alterations needed to meet changed requirements of use for religious and directly related charitable purposes. The Commission believes it has the obligation and, indeed, it has the desire to cooperate with owners of Landmarks who may wish to make changes in their properties. In this connection the Commission wishes to state at this time that it recognizes that Trinity Church may want to erect new buildings on its grounds in the future. The Commission recognizes that Trinity Church may also wish to make exterior alterations to its existing buildings. The Commission looks forward to working with the representatives of Trinity Church when the Church desires to erect new buildings on its grounds or to make exterior alterations on its existing 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 Trinity Church and Graveyard have 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, Trinity Church and Graveyard is one of New York City's most historic areas, that the Church displays a wealth of ornament and detail, that it is a truly outstanding Church of one of New York's oldest parishes and that through its beauty and its wealth of historical associations, it is one of the outstanding monuments of the Gothic Revival.

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 Trinity Church and Graveyard, Broadway at Wall Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 49, Lot 1, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.