

ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, PARISH HOUSE AND RECTORY, 201 West 99th Street (aka 800-812 Amsterdam Avenue), 225 West 99th Street and 227 West 99th Street, Manhattan.

Church built, 1890-91; architect, Robert W. Gibson; builder, Isaac A. Hopper
Parish House built, 1896-97 and 1901; architects, F. Carles Merry and Robert W. Gibson
Rectory built, 1912-13; architect, Robert W. Gibson

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1871, Lots 24 and 29

On May 13, 1980, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Parish House and Rectory and the related Landmark Site (LP-1136) (Item No. 8). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provision of law. The attorney for the church and the chairperson of Manhattan Community Board 7 asked for the hearing to be continued. The Commission received a letter in favor of designation from the Historic Buildings Committee of the American Institute of Architects. On July 8, 1980, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Parish House and Rectory and related Landmark Site (Item No. 1). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provision of law. The attorney for the church asked for a continuance and the record was kept open for 90 days. There was no other testimony at this time.

On March 18, 2008, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of St. Michael's Church, Parish House and Rectory and the related Landmark Site (LP-2281) (Item No. 3). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provision of law. The Rector of the Church, the Reverend Canon George W. Brandt, Jr. spoke at the hearing but did not take a position. Six people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of the Historic Districts Council, Landmarks West!, New York Landmarks Conservancy, Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America, West 89th Street Block Association and Women's City Club of New York. In addition, the Commission received a written resolution from Community Board 7 and 11 letters in support of designation.

On November 12, 2015, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a special public hearing on Backlog Initiative items in the Borough of Manhattan, including St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Parish House and Rectory and the related Landmark Site (Manhattan B Group 1, D). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provision of law. The Reverend Katharine Flexer, Rector of St. Michael's Episcopal Church and Jean B. Terepka, church archivist, spoke in favor of designating only the church. The Commission received a letter from the Episcopal Diocese of New York, supporting the designation of the church but not the rectory or parish house. Nine people spoke in favor of the designation of all three buildings including Councilmember Mark Levine, representatives of Manhattan Borough President Gail Brewer, the Historic Districts Council, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Victorian Society New York, Landmark West! and Save Harlem Now!. A tenth person spoke of his connection to the church but did not voice his opinion. Manhattan Community Board 7 resubmitted its testimony in support of designation of the complex first issued at the time of the 2008 hearing. In addition, the Commission received 20 e-mails and three letters, including one from the Municipal Art Society, in favor of designating the complex.

Statements about support for St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Parish House and Rectory during the backlog process reflect specific testimony given or submitted during the hearing or while the record was open. In addition, the Commission received numerous more general communications about the backlog that were directed at all items on the backlog. These items were not specifically submitted while the record was open. Due to the volume and variety of these more general emails they are not tallied for individual buildings.



Summary

St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Parish House and Rectory form one of the finest ecclesiastical complexes in Manhattan. All three buildings are executed primarily in rough-faced limestone and designed in the Romanesque Revival style combined with other stylistic motifs that create a singularly eclectic composition. St. Michael's Episcopal Church was organized in 1807 by several parishioners of Trinity Church to serve wealthy downtown residents who had built summer houses in the Bloomingdale section of Manhattan. By the late 1800s, the population of the Upper West Side of Manhattan had greatly increased as a result of transportation improvements and the real estate speculation that followed. St. Michael's replaced its second, Gothic style wood church with the present and much larger church in 1890-91 designed by Robert W. Gibson a noted architect of Episcopal churches. The complex massing of the church incorporates various ecclesiastical elements – a long nave, apsidal chancel, unevenly-sized transepts, cloistered arcade, tall clerestory, steeply-pitched tiled roof, and most notably, a tall campanile. The parish house, designed by F. Charles Merry in 1896-97 and completed in 1901 by Robert Gibson is reminiscent of a mid-19th century picturesque villa with its asymmetrical massing and Palladian windows. The more austere designed rectory by Gibson (1912-13) shares elements in common with the church and parish house and is an integral part of the complex.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Description

The remarkably intact trio of buildings belonging to St. Michael's Protestant Episcopal Church is located on the northwest corner of West 99th Street and Amsterdam Avenue. The complexly massed church with campanile anchors the site on the east with the parish house and rectory surrounding a courtyard on the north and west facing West 99th Street. The public facades of the three buildings are faced with rough-faced Indiana limestone and tan brick with stone and clay-tile detailing; the less visible articulated facades, including the west facades of the west transept, parish house and northwest façade of the church, are executed in red brick. The roofs of the church and the rectory have been re-clad with clay tiles; the roof of the parish house is clad with non-historic asphalt shingles. The complex is enclosed by wrought iron fences and gates, some of which may be historic.

St. Michael's Church

East (main) façade: three-story, stepped, rough-faced Indiana limestone façade (exception: dormers and clerestory above transept clad with clay tile); gabled clay-tiled roofs with modillioned cornices; limestone campanile with standing seam copper roof at southeast corner (full description see below); gabled entrance porch with cross at apex, shallow bluestone stoop, cornice supported by columns with decorative capitals at returns; entrance surround formed by archivolt of smooth and/or alternating smooth and rough-faced stone springing from freestanding and engaged columns with decorative capitals; historic double-leaf wood door with wood side panels and decorative wrought-iron strap hinges; arched transom; single-story arcade with double columns with decorative capitals, wrought-iron grilles and gate, and bluestone stoop; recessed nave with paired, arched stained-glass windows with stone archivolt; clerestory with triple windows with stone archivolt supported on engaged columns with decorative capitals; gabled east transept with two-story, flat-roofed wings (gable cornice supported at returns by colonnettes); paired, arched stained-glass windows at first and second story of transept with stone archivolt supported by engaged columns with decorative capitals (first-story windows with random-laid stone spandrels), oculus with leaded-glass window in stone surround; arched entrance in north wing of transept with stone archivolt and tympanum and wood door with decorative wrought-iron strap hinges; loop windows at second story of wings (east and north); gabled dormers with double arches and engaged columns; attic windows *Alterations:* period appropriate lanterns; roofs replaced; handrail and spotlights at main entrance; arched transom at

main entrance infilled with glass divided by cross with exaggerated arms; upper step of main stoop resurfaced; grilles and gate of arcade extended with non-historic metalwork; protective Plexiglas, metal bars and/or screens over leaded- and stained-glass windows; grilles at basement; one loop window replaced with louver; center column of dormers cut, louvers inserted; ladder; goose-neck vent in basement window

South façade: rough-faced limestone, clay-tile roofs, modillioned cornices; first story below apse with paired wood casement windows with transoms; apse with stained-glass windows set in arcade with engaged columns, conical roof with cross; bluestone stoop; arched entrance with stone archivolt supported by engaged columns; double-leaf wood door with decorative wrought-iron strap hinges; one-story gabled ell with four windows at basement, single wood window and tripartite leaded-glass window with stone columns; loop window in gable; short tower at intersection of apse and west transept with round-arched window and buttress; west transept with triple arched windows with stone archivolts *Alterations:* lights with conduits; metal mesh transom, light and bird deterrent wires at entrance; grilles and Plexiglas; hatch in apse; ladder between apse and campanile; screens and grilles at basement; pipe through basement window

West façade: limestone, brick and clay tile; clay-tile roofs; modillioned and corbeled cornices; tripartite leaded-glass window with stone surrounds in ell; clay-tiled clerestory and dormers; attic windows; west face of west transept brick with similar fenestration to east transept, paired arched stained-glass windows at first and second stories (windows in second story moved from west aisle) with brick archivolts, stone or terra-cotta sills, oculus with eight-light window in brick surround; four windows with stone lintels and sills at basement; nave and clerestory on northwest brick, arched-windows with brick archivolts; brick corbels *Alterations:* windows at basement replaced; screens; grilles; Plexiglas on stained-glass windows; trellises at basement of west transept; northwest façade of nave and clerestory painted; arched window at second story of nave on northwest altered for second-story connection to parish house; basement entrance altered and door replaced; light, handrail, intercom and electronic lock at basement; signage; dormers altered with louvers; bird deterrent wires

North façade: brick; one-story connection to parish hall with two leaded-glass windows; brick chimney *Alterations:* façade parged; connecting structure between parish hall and northwestern-most nave window

Campanile: smooth stone water table (east and south); smooth stone corner block above water table; first story: tripartite wood windows with stone tympanum, stone sill, lintel supported by columns with decorative capitals (east and south); second story: loop windows with louvers (east and south); stone stringcourse; paired arched windows with stone surrounds; open-work metal clocks (installed between 1915 and 1927); upper two stories setback, first setback with single-arched openings behind an arcade, second setback with balustrade, pilasters framing arcade, stone spandrels; pyramidal copper roof *Alterations:* roof replaced; catwalks and ladders; grilles; metal anchors for masonry on upper stories

St. Michael's Parish House

South (main) façade: rough-faced limestone with stone band and stringcourses, hipped roof with dormers; modillioned cornices; bluestone stoop, possibly historic handrails; gabled entrance with cross in spandrel, stone archivolts springing from engaged columns and pilasters, stone tympanum with legend (“St. Michael’s Parish House to the service of God in memory of Thomas McClure Peters, Rector – 1858-1893”), double-leaf wood door; asymmetrical cross gable with cross at apex; round-arched windows at first story with stone archivolts, 12-over-12 sashes with

multi-light transoms and random-laid limestone spandrels; windows at second story with multi-light sashes and blind tympana with stone enframements; wall dormers with multi-light sash (west) and casement windows (east) with stone lintels and sills; five-bay Palladian window with stone surround, engaged columns, and multi-light sash; recessed connector between parish house and church: random-laid limestone at basement and first story, tan brick above; round-arched windows with stone surrounds at first and second stories, paired arched windows at third story with stone voussoirs and engaged column; multi-light wood sashes and fanlights; gable with modillioned cornice and stringcourse *Alterations:* stoop partially resurfaced; doorbell, intercom, and house number at main entrance; basement windows replaced, protected by metal mesh grilles; replacement doors, lights, intercom and fixed awning at basement of connector; mesh half-screen at second story of connector; alarm in first-story window; camera; roof replaced; bird deterrent wires

East façade: rough-faced limestone (at return) and tan brick; fenestration pattern at first and second stories similar to south facade with stone trim and brick spandrels and tympana; three-bay Palladian window with brick piers and stone-framed brick tympanum at third story; first- through third-story windows with multi-light wood sash, multi-light transoms at first story; northeast façade: brick, flat-headed and arched windows, some with multi-light sash, stone sills, cupola with louvers, modillions and pyramidal roof with metal finial *Alterations:* basement windows and windows on the northeast replaced; metal grilles and gate at basement; camera; mesh half-screens at second story; brick of northeast facade painted; roof of cupola replaced

West façade (partially visible): rough-faced limestone (at return) and red brick; cross-gable with modillioned cornice; windows at basement with stone sills and lintels; round-arched windows at first story with multi-light wood sashes and brick archivolt; windows at second story with stone lintels and sills, brick arch and tympana; round tower with stone stoop, arched doorway with brick surround, round-arched windows at second and third stories with 12-over-12 wood sashes and fanlight transoms, and conical roof *Alterations:* door of tower replaced, tympanum infilled; grilles; lights; cables; third-story windows replaced; roof replaced

North façade (partially visible): brick; multi-light wood sashes; stone sills and lintels; vent *Alterations:* partially painted; two windows replaced

St. Michael's Rectory

South (main) façade: rough-faced limestone with smooth stone quoins; bluestone stoop; asymmetrically placed entrance portico with modillioned cornice, archivolt supported by columns with decorative capitals, stone surround with blind tympana; double-leaf, metal-and-glass door; windows at basement with keyed surrounds; windows at first story with stone sills, keyed surrounds, and continuous lintel course; windows at second story with sill course and keyed surrounds, two on right with blind tympana; dormers at third story with hipped roofs; west dormer with quoins and single window with keyed surround, eastern dormers paired windows with smooth stone surrounds; single third-story window with keyed surround; modillioned intermediate cornice *Alterations:* windows replaced; grilles at basement and first story; house number in tympanum; doorbells with conduit at main entrance; light at basement; main roof replaced with clay tile, dormer roofs with standing-seam metal

East façade: rough-faced limestone with smooth stone quoins, third story partially clad with clay tile; gable with chimney; two-story angled bay with modillioned cornice, stone balustrade, stone piers and window enframements, second-story window with blind tympanum, paired windows set in gable above bay; windows with keyed surrounds, lintel course at first story, sill course at

second story, two windows on northeast with blind tympana, single wall dormer and double gabled dormer at third story; stone chimney *Alterations:* windows replaced; grilles at basement and first stories; roof replaced

West façade (partially visible): brick; gable with chimney; buttress at west property line (brick and stone) *Alterations:* parged at first story

North façade: not visible

St. Michael's Site:

Church: areaway on east and south; wrought iron fence and gates *Non-historic materials:* standing and hanging display cases; signage **Courtyard/Rectory:** concrete paving with stone steps at basement entrances; naturally occurring rock outcropping; brick- and stone-walled flower beds and planters; stone perimeter wall from the church to the west property wall of the rectory *Non-historic materials:* metal fence and gates (later replacements); metal fence at planter by church basement; plastic tool shed; fence and security gate between parish house and rectory; metal rose arbor; display case, signage, remote utility meter, doorbells and intercoms attached to fence

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Bloomingdale¹

Before the arrival of the Europeans, the wilderness that later became the Upper West Side may have served as hunting grounds for the Native American Weckquaesgeek, an Algonquian-speaking band, whose main settlements were located near the east side of what is now Central Park.²

Dutch settlers in the 17th century established farms in the area of Upper Manhattan which they named Bloemendaal (“vale of flowers”) a name Anglicized to Bloomingdale when the English took over the colony at the end of the century. In the 18th and early 19th centuries wealthy downtown residents built summer houses in Bloomingdale to escape the city and its outbreaks of diseases such as cholera, small pox and yellow fever. It was the residents of these summer homes that established St. Michael’s Church in 1807.

Bloomingdale Village, which was centered around what is now known as West 100th Street, formed in the early 19th century.³ The village was reached from lower Manhattan by the Bloomingdale Road, which was laid out prior to 1703 and followed an old Indian trail from what is now 23rd Street to 114th Street. Following roughly the same route as modern-day Broadway, Bloomingdale Road veered eastward between West 96th and West 104th Streets, intersecting West 99th Street close to Tenth (now Amsterdam) Avenue.

The Bloomingdale area remained mostly rural until the late 19th century although several large institutions established themselves there in the first half of the century. In 1837-42, the Croton aqueduct was constructed and many of the summer estates were divided by its construction. By the 1850s a number of summer hotels opened for residents of Manhattan. Several transportation improvements during the latter half of the 19th century contributed to the development of Bloomingdale. The streets west of Central Park (designed 1858, a designated New York City Scenic Landmark) were laid out beginning in the 1860s. As part of the widening and straightening of the Bloomingdale Road between 1868 and 1871,⁴ the original road between 96th and 104th Streets was closed and replaced by the new Boulevard to the west. In 1879, the horse car lines on Eighth Avenue (now Central Park West) were replaced by street rail service up to 125th Street. In 1880 the Ninth Avenue elevated train was extended to 155th Street and Ninth

and Tenth Avenues were renamed Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues, respectively. Cable traction cars appeared on Amsterdam Avenue in 1885. The “trolley wars” of 1897-99 over the number of tracks on Amsterdam Avenue involved strong opposition by St. Michael’s led by its Rector, the Rev. Dr. John Punnett Peters. The paving of the Boulevard began in 1890 and was completed as far as 106th Street by 1896 three years before it was renamed Broadway. In 1904, the IRT subway opened connecting Brooklyn Bridge to Broadway and 145th Street.

These transportation improvements and the establishment, in addition to Central Park, of Riverside Park and Morningside Park (1873-1902 and 1873-95, respectively, both designated New York City Scenic Landmarks) led to residential real estate speculation. Between 1880 and 1900 an unprecedented number of major houses of worship were erected on the Upper West Side, many designed by New York City’s finest architects.⁵ It was this large increase in the residential population of the area that caused St. Michael’s to replace its second church building with a much larger, grander church in 1890 to meet the needs of its growing congregation.

Episcopal Church in New York⁶

The Episcopal Church in New York began as part of the Church of England; the earliest-known Anglican service in the city took place in 1674. In 1686 when Governor Andros decreed that Anglican services should be held in the colony every Sunday and holiday it is likely that the churches were under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London. Trinity Church was chartered in 1697; ten congregations had been formed in the entire province by the first decade of the 18th century and by the start of the American Revolution Kings College (now Columbia University) had been established as were St. Paul’s and St. George’s Chapels.

Although a large number of Loyalist Anglicans left the city following the Revolution, the church expanded greatly during the following years. The Episcopal Diocese of New York was founded in 1785. Trinity Church became the diocese’s first principal church. By 1800, New York had about 26 Episcopal parishes; there were 50 by 1810, including St. Mark’s Church in-the-Bowery, the first independent Episcopal church in the new world, founded in 1799. St. Phillip’s, the city’s first African-American congregation, was established in 1818.⁷

History of St. Michael’s Episcopal Church⁸

St. Michael’s Church was founded in 1807 by several parishioners of Trinity Church in Lower Manhattan to serve the summer residents of the Bloomingdale section of upper Manhattan.⁹ A plot of land north of 99th Street and east of the Bloomingdale Road¹⁰ was deeded by prominent merchant Oliver H. Hicks and his wife Julia for \$150 and held by trustees Robert T. Kemble, William Rodgers and William Jauncey until St. Michael’s Church was built.¹¹ The first church, a small wood frame building, was completed and consecrated on July 27, 1807. It was located east of Bloomingdale Road on what is now Amsterdam Avenue, with an entrance on Bloomingdale Road that was reached by a long path. The seating capacity was about 200. The first pew holders¹² were all summer residents of Bloomingdale who attended Trinity Church or one of its chapels in the winter. Beginning in 1810 the land around the church was used for burials.

In the early 19th century many of the servants of the wealthy class in New York City were African-American slaves. The *Annals of St. Michael’s* notes that the son of a black servant was baptized at St. Michael’s on August 6, 1809 and two slaves were married on July 14, 1816.¹³

In 1817 St. Michael’s founded the first of many charitable organizations, a school to educate poor children called St. Michael’s Charity School. The school became Public School No. 9 when it was transferred to the New York Free School Society after the Common Council passed an ordinance that no school funds could be appropriated to religious organizations.

The Rev. William Richmond (1797-1858) became the third rector of St. Michael’s and also the rector of St. James (69th Street and Lexington Avenue, consecrated 1810) in 1820.¹⁴ The position of rector at St. Michael’s would remain in his family until 1919.¹⁵

St. Michael's missionary work led to the establishment of several churches serving the poor, including St. Mary's in Manhattanville (1826) and St. Ann's in Fort Washington (1827). In 1832 Rev. Richmond began holding services at the Bloomingdale Lunatic Asylum and New York Hospital. By the end of his second rectorship in the mid-1850s, the summer homes had mostly disappeared and the Bloomingdale area was inhabited by a larger, less affluent population. In 1847 Rev. Richmond and his assistant, and son-in-law, the Rev. Thomas McClure Peters (1821-1893) began to hold services in several city institutions and to visit the sick and poor in hospitals and almshouses. It was also in this year that Rev. Peters started a mission of St. Michael's at Seneca Village and by 1849 had established the All Angel's Church there. All Angel's Church had an interracial congregation with African-American, German and Irish parishioners. When Seneca Village was condemned for the construction of Central Park, All Angel's Church moved to West End Avenue.¹⁶

In October 1853 St. Michael's first church building burned down and was replaced by a new sanctuary close to the Bloomingdale Road the following year. St. Michael's established numerous charitable organizations to assist those in need including the House of Mercy (established in 1854) to house and educate former prostitutes upon their release from prison¹⁷ and the Sheltering Arms (established in 1864) as a home for children who had been deserted by their families.¹⁸

By 1909, there was a large African-American community living on West 99th Street from Amsterdam Avenue to Central Park. St. Michael's established St. Jude's, a mission to minister to this community, at first renting two adjoining apartments at 29 West 99th Street and in 1921 constructing a new chapel and settlement house.¹⁹ When St. Jude's was closed in 1957 its members were invited to join St. Michael's.²⁰

The Construction of St. Michael's Complex

In 1886 a proposal to enlarge the existing church was presented but a committee appointed to consider the matter determined that enlargement was not feasible.²¹ It was then decided to replace the second church building with a new, larger church. Title to the land that was in the old Bloomingdale Road roadbed only belonged to the church in front of the original property deeded by Oliver and Julia Hicks in 1807.²² For the remainder of the property, which was acquired at a later date, title was only held to the western edge of where the Bloomingdale Road had been. It was decided to erect the new church on the existing site including the churchyard with its graves and vaults.

On March 4, 1890 the plans submitted by Robert W. Gibson were accepted by the vestry. The cornerstone was laid on St. Michael's Day, September 29, 1890 and the church was consecrated on December 15, 1891.²³ The new church could seat 1,600, four times as many as could be accommodated in the second church. The old church which had been moved back and continued to be used during the construction of its replacement was demolished in early 1892. The final cost of construction was just over \$183,000.

The vestry selected the design of F. Carles Merry²⁴ from several plans that were submitted on October 14, 1895 for a parish house that was estimated to cost \$70,000.²⁵ The parish house was to be built on land that the Rev. Dr. Peters had bought for that purpose. After his death, his family sold the land to St. Michael's. Half of the parish house containing the Sunday school rooms, gymnasium, church offices, guild rooms and parlor was constructed between July 1896 and June 1897. The building remained unfinished for four years because of lack of funds until senior warden William R. Peters offered to pay for the completion of the building in 1901. Merry had died and was replaced, as architect, by Robert W. Gibson who was responsible for the completion of the building. The original plan was reduced by eliminating the library that was rendered unnecessary by the opening of the New York Free Circulating Library, Bloomingdale Branch (1898, James Lord Brown, a designated New York City Landmark) on West 100th Street.

The 3,000 volume parish library of St. Michael's had been donated in 1896 to the Bloomingdale library.²⁶

The present rectory replaced a three-story wood rectory that was located in the same location. It was constructed in 1912-13 to the designs of Robert W. Gibson.²⁷

The Design of the St. Michael's Complex

By the late 19th century, the Romanesque Revival style was one of the most prominent historical revival styles in New York City used in the design of row houses, commercial and institutional buildings such as St. Michael's Church. Noted critic Montgomery Schuyler wrote in 1891 that "[t]he West Side is not in any strictness a Romanesque town, to be sure, but the prevailing and pervading architectural element, which gives it its character is undeniably the Romanesque."²⁸ The *Rundbogenstil* or "round-arched style" as it was known was introduced to the United States prior to the Civil War through German publications and architects. The early Romanesque Revival style was used by Richard Upjohn at the Church of the Pilgrims (1844-46, within the Brooklyn Heights Historic District). Following the Civil War Henry Hobson Richardson took the forms of the Romanesque, arches and columns, and developed the Richardsonian Romanesque which was characterized by massive scale and the heavy masonry forms, wide transoms and mullion bars, contrasting colors and materials, and ornamental Byzantine-style carvings, exemplified in Boston's Trinity Church (1872-77).²⁹

St. Michael's parish complex is Romanesque Revival in style, but the Romanesque forms are used in an unusual manner and are combined with a variety of other stylistic motifs to create a singularly eclectic composition. All three buildings are clad in rough-faced limestone blocks laid in a random pattern and all are strikingly monochromatic. The most powerful feature of the church is the complex massing of the various ecclesiastical elements—the long nave, apsidal chancel, unevenly-sized transepts, cloistered arcade, tall clerestory, steeply-pitched tiled roof, and most notably, the campanile. The campanile nestled between the apse and the east transept, is based on Italian early Christian precedents. Topped by two tiers of open arcades and a pyramidal roof, it is visible for many blocks.

One of the most notable features of St. Michael's is its use of rough-faced white limestone blocks. McKim, Mead & White had pioneered the use of lighter brick and stone at Madison Square Garden (1887-91, demolished), the Boston Public Library (1888-92) and the Judson Memorial Church (1888-93, a designated New York City Landmark) on Washington Square South. After the lighter tonalities of classical design were introduced to ecclesiastical architecture in the Judson Memorial Church, other church architects were influenced in their choice of both style and coloration.³⁰ As noted by architectural historian Andrew S. Dolkart, Gibson's design for St. Michael's "combines the massive rough stone texture of Richardsonian styling with a wholly new sensibility for light colors."³¹

Gibson designed several Romanesque Revival style buildings prior to St. Michael's, including three residential buildings in Albany: Offices and Keeper's Residence at Albany Cemetery (c. 1883), Craig House (c. 1885), now the University of Albany President's Residence, and Charles Pruyn House (c.1889). All three employed the round arch with asymmetrical, picturesque massing. The Albany Cemetery building and the Charles Pruyn House have round-arch colonnades with decorative capitals. In addition, the Pruyn house has blind round-arch lintels. The U.S. Trust Company Building (1888-89, demolished) in Manhattan was designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. The building was constructed of rough-faced polychrome stone and had round-arched arcades, motifs used by Richardson in Trinity Church and the R. and F. Cheney Building, Hartford, Connecticut (1875-76), respectively.³² It appears that St. Michael's is the first church that Gibson designed in Romanesque Revival style.

St. Michael's Church is well known for its Tiffany stained-glass windows. Its series of seven chancel windows depicting *St. Michael's Victory in Heaven* were designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933) assisted by Clara W. Parrish, Edward P. Sperry, Louis J. Lederle

and Joseph Lauber and manufactured by Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company. The windows, selected as a result of a competition, were dedicated on Christmas 1895. The baptismal window depicting the Holy Spirit as a dove (1907) and the Chapel of the Angels windows depicting the Resurrection (1902) and Annunciation (1914) were also made by Tiffany Studios. St. Michael's has other fine examples of ecclesiastical stained-glass windows by noted stained-glass artisans including Richard L. Lamb of J & R Lamb (west gallery windows depicting the angel appearing to the women after the Resurrection and Jesus talking to Mary while Martha is serving, 1893), David Maitland Armstrong (baptistery window depicting St. Luke, 1903; Chapel of the Angels windows depicting St. Cecilia, 1907 and "Heavenly Hope," 1910), and Charles J. Connick Studios (east windows in the nave depicting the four Evangelists, 1926-27; east transept clerestory windows depicting the archangels St. Michael and St. Gabriel, 1927 and windows on the south wall of the west gallery depicting the birth of Christ).³³

The Romanesque Revival style parish house is clad in rough-faced limestone set in a random pattern with round-arched openings and round-arched lintels with stone transom bars. The boldness of the Romanesque Revival form is tempered by the asymmetrical massing reminiscent of a mid-19th century picturesque villa and by the Palladian window in the gable projection.

The rectory is located to the west of the parish house and is built to the lot line, serving to enclose the garden on the third side. Although it is more austere and has a simpler massing than the other two buildings in the complex, it was designed by Gibson in a similar manner and is an integral part of the complex. The rectory is clad in rough-faced limestone set in a random pattern with smooth-stone limestone details and has a modillioned cornice and a round-arched, asymmetrically placed entrance portico.

Subsequent History

The original figure of St. Michael killing the dragon that was located on top of the tower was blown down by a strong wind c. 1902 and was replaced by a ball.³⁴ In 1921 the interior of the church was altered by removing the east gallery and reducing the west gallery by eight feet.³⁵

The original slate roof was removed from the parish house and replaced with asphalt prior to 1977. The original roof of the rectory had been replaced by asphalt tiles prior to 1977 but since then a new clay tile roof has been installed.³⁶

A full restoration of the sanctuary, including the stained-glass windows, plaster repairs and repainting, was carried out starting in 1988. The Tiffany chancel windows were cleaned and repaired.³⁷ The church's clay tile roof, flashings, gutters and leaders were replaced, the exterior masonry walls were repointed and the top of the tower was structurally repaired.³⁸

Robert W. Gibson³⁹

Robert Williams Gibson (1854-1927) was born in Essex, England and graduated from the Royal Academy of Arts where he was presented with the prestigious Sloane Medallion. Following his studies he spent a year traveling in Italy, France and Spain before he immigrated to the United States in 1881. Upon his arrival he established an architectural practice in Albany, New York and soon entered the celebrated competition for the design of the Episcopal cathedral. Gibson's Gothic Revival style design was selected in 1883 over the only other submission, a Romanesque Revival style design by the acknowledged master of that style Henry Hobson Richardson.⁴⁰ In 1888, Gibson moved to New York City and established a practice in Manhattan. His design for St. Michael's Church was accepted by the vestry in March 1890.⁴¹ He had a successful architectural practice designing many churches, especially Episcopal, mostly in the Gothic style. He also designed residences and commercial buildings, especially banks, in a variety of styles throughout the northeast. Among his other most notable buildings are the West End Collegiate Church and School (1892-93, Dutch Renaissance Revival style), Church Missions House (Edward J. Neville Stent co-architect, 1892-94, Northern European (or Flemish)

Renaissance Revival Style), and Morton and Nellie Plant House (1903-05, Italian Renaissance Revival style), all designated New York City Landmarks in Manhattan; New York Clearing House (1896, Beaux-Arts style, demolished), U.S. Trust Company (1888-89, Richardsonian Romanesque style, demolished), and New York Coffee Exchange (1895, Italian Renaissance Revival style, demolished), all located in Manhattan; and New York Botanical Garden Museum Building (1898-1901, Beaux-Arts style), a designated New York City Landmark in the Bronx. Gibson had a summer home in Oyster Bay that he built in 1899 and continued to enlarge in subsequent years. He was a director of the New York chapter of the American Institute of Architects and president of the New York Architectural League. By 1909 his career was in decline and personal problems led him move to a farmhouse in Woodbury, New York where he died in 1927.⁴²

F. Carles Merry⁴³

Frederick Carles Merry (c.1838-1900) was born in England and came to this country as a child. He worked in Philadelphia before becoming principal assistant in the New York City office of Henry Hobson Richardson. During the 1870s he was an assistant to George B. Post.⁴⁴ Many of Merry's designs, like St. Michael's Parish House, were in the Romanesque Revival style including the South Congregational Church Ladies Parlor, Brooklyn (1889) a designated New York City Landmark, a row of houses at 220-228 Lenox Avenue (1889) within the Mount Morris Park Historic District and 240 Berkeley Place (1886-87) and 52-54 8th Avenue (1886) within the Park Slope Historic District.

Isaac A. Hopper⁴⁵

St. Michael's Church was constructed by prominent builder Isaac A. Hopper (c. 1852-1912).⁴⁶ He constructed a number of well-known structures including Carnegie Hall (William B. Tuthill, 1889-91, a designated New York City Landmark), Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank (William H. Hume, 1889, demolished), the Third Avenue bridge (1894-98), New Netherlands Hotel (William H. Hume, 1893, demolished), and the Hotel Normandie (William H. Hume, 1887, demolished), all located in Manhattan, and the power house for the Third Avenue Cable Railroad Company at Kingsbridge in the Bronx⁴⁷ (Romeo Tomassek and Isaac A. Hopper, 1897, demolished).

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NOTES

¹ This section is compiled from the following sources: Kenneth T. Jackson, ed., *The Encyclopedia of New York City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Peter Salwen, *Upper West Side Story* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1989); Charles Lockwood, *Manhattan Moves Uptown* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976); Stephen Jenkins, *The Greatest Street in the World: Broadway* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911); Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *Riverside-West 105th Street Historic District Designation Report (LP-0323)* (New York: City of New York, 1973), prepared by the Research Department; LPC, *Riverside-West End Historic District Designation Report (LP-1626)* (New York: City of New York, 1989), prepared by the Research Department.

² Reginald Pelham Bolton, *Indian Paths in the Great Metropolis* (New York: Museum of the American Indian Heye Foundation, 1922), 221; Reginald Pelham Bolton, *Indian Life of Long Ago in the City of New York*, enl. ed. (New York: Harmony Books, 1972), 132; Eric Homberger, *Historical Atlas of New York City* (New York: Henry Holt, 1994), 17.

³ The street grid was laid out by the 1811 Commission's Plan; however, the actual street cutting above 59th Street did not begin until after 1860.

⁴ The alteration of the road was based on the plan approved by the Board of Commissioners of Central Park under the Act of April 24, 1867.

⁵ LPC, *Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew Designation Report (LP-1126)* (New York: City of New York, 1981), prepared by Andrew S. Dolkart and Nancy Goeschel.

⁶ J. Robert Wright, "Episcopalians," in *The Encyclopedia of New York City*.

⁷ St. Mark's-in-the-Bowery (1799; tower, Town & Thompson, 1826-28, portico, 1854) and the fourth church of Saint Philip's Episcopal Church (1910-11 Tandy & Foster) are designated New York City Landmarks. Most parishes at the time of the founding of St. Mark's were chapels of Trinity Church, St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery was the first to be established and recognized as an independent parish. John Punnett Peters, ed. *Annals of St. Michael's: Being the History of St. Michael's Protestant Episcopal Church, New York for One Hundred Years 1807-1907* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), 26.

⁸ The primary source for the early history of St. Michael's Church is John Punnett Peters, ed., *Annals of St. Michael's*.

⁹ The church dates its history from 1807 when it was incorporated although the undertaking to build a church dates to 1805 and the cornerstone was laid in 1806. Peters, 9.

¹⁰ This land had been part of the original patent granted to Isaac Bedlow (d. 1673) c. 1667; it passed through various hands before it was acquired by Oliver Hicks. This information is compiled from the following sources: New York County's Register's Office, Deeds and Conveyances; I. N. Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island 1498-1909* (New York: R. H. Dodd, 1915-28); James Riker, *Revised History of Harlem (City of New York): Its Origin and Early Annals* (New York: New Harlem Publishing Company, 1904).

¹¹ Robert T. Kemble and William Rodgers were elected church wardens and Oliver H. Hicks, Valentine Nutter, Edward Dauscomb, Michael Hogan, William A. Davis, Jacob Schieffelin, Thomas Cadle and Isaac Jones were elected as vestrymen. Peters, 9.

¹² The first pewholders were Alexander Hamilton's widow, Jacob Schieffelin, Frederick DePeyster, Peter Schermerhorn, Baron John Cornelius Vandenheuvel, Oliver H. Hicks, John Jacobson and Dr. Hammersley. Peters, 11.

¹³ Peters, 40-41.

¹⁴ The arrangement of the shared ministry between St. Michael's and St. James (consecrated 1810) began with St. Michael's second rector Samuel F. Jarvis in 1813, after two years of negotiations. Peters, 31-34.

¹⁵ The Rev. William Richmond, served 1820-1837 and 1842-1858; the Rev. James Cook Richmond, his brother, served 1837-1842; the Rev. Dr. Thomas McClure Peters, his son-in-law, served 1858-1893; and the Rev. Dr. John Punnett Peters, his grandson, served 1893-1919.

¹⁶ In the 1970s All Angels sold its sanctuary on West End Avenue; the parish hall (1904-05, Henry J. Hardenbergh) at 251 West 80th Street now serves as the church and is included in the Riverside-West End Historic District Extension I. David W. Dunlap, *From Abyssinian to Zion: A Guide to Manhattan's Houses of Worship* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 9; LPC, *Riverside-West End Historic District Extension I Designation Report (LP-2463)* (New York: City of New York, 2012), prepared by Theresa C. Noonan and Marianne S. Percival, additional research by Jay Shockley, 41.

¹⁷ The House of Mercy was located at 86th Street from 1856-1891 when it relocated to 206th Street. "The House of Mercy," *New York Times (NYT)*, September 18, 1861, 2; "The House of Mercy," *NYT*, December 21, 1889, 6; Moses King, ed., *King's Handbook of New York City*, (Boston: Moses King, 1892), 402.

¹⁸ Rev. Peters housed the Sheltering Arms in his own house on 101st Street, moving his family to another house. "The 'Sheltering Arms,'" *NYT*, May 7, 1869, 2; King, 396-97.

¹⁹ The history of St. Jude's Chapel is compiled from Elizabeth Pettus Losa and Elfreda Morange, "Memories and Records of St. Jude's Chapel on the Occasion of the 175th Anniversary of the Founding of St. Michael's Church, New York City" (New York: St. Michael's Church, 1982) and Jean Ballard Terepka, "St. Jude's Chapel: West 99th Street and Beyond: The Legacy of St. Jude's Mission and Chapel" (New York: St. Michael's Church, 2007).

²⁰ St. Jude's was closed as a result of several factors including the integration of St. Michael's by its new rector, Rev. William F. Corker after World War II, the retirement of the chapel's longtime priest the Rev. Floarda Howard and the condemnation of St. Jude's Chapel and other buildings in the surrounding area for the construction of new housing.

²¹ The primary source for the history of the construction of the third church is Peters, 161-168.

- ²² This strip of property in the old Bloomingdale Road was the subject of litigation brought by the heirs of Oliver Hicks against the purchaser of the adjacent lots, including St. Michael's, in 1890. The Hicks heirs and St. Michael's came to a compromise concerning this property in 1890 when the lawsuit was brought. "Won by the Hicks Heirs: A Case Involving the Title to Valuable Real Estate," *NYT*, March 8, 1890, 8.
- ²³ Manhattan Department of Buildings, New Building Docket 1533-1890.
- ²⁴ Manhattan Department of Buildings, New Building Docket 898-1896.
- ²⁵ The primary source for the history of the construction of the parish house is Peters, 186-188.
- ²⁶ LPC, *New York Free Circulating Library, Bloomingdale Branch Designation Report (LP-1616)* (New York: City of New York, 1989), prepared by Betsy Bradley, 2.
- ²⁷ Manhattan Department of Buildings, New Building Docket 232-1912.
- ²⁸ Montgomery Schuyler, "The Romanesque Revival in New York," *Architectural Record* 1 (July-September 1891), 17.
- ²⁹ Information about the Romanesque Revival style is compiled from: LPC, *South Congregational Church, Chapel, Ladies Parlor and Rectory Designation Report (LP-1245)* (New York: City of New York, 1982), prepared by Andrew S. Dolkart; Kathleen Curran, "The German Rundbogenstil and Reflections on the American Round-Arched Style," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 47 (December 1988): 351-373; Carroll L. V. Meeks, "Romanesque before Richardson in the United States," *The Art Bulletin* 35 (March 1953): 17-33.
- ³⁰ These include the Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew at West End Avenue and West 86th Street (Robert Henderson Robertson, 1895-97, a designated New York City Landmark). LPC, *Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew Designation Report*.
- ³¹ Andrew Dolkart quoted in Christopher Gray, "Streetscapes: St. Michael's Episcopal Church," *NYT*, February 5, 1989, R12.
- ³² Sarah Bradford Landau and Carl W. Condit, *The Rise of the New York Skyscraper 1865-1913* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 155. In the year following the completion of St. Michael's Church, another Gibson designed church was built for St. John's Episcopal Church in Northampton, Massachusetts. St. John's is similar to St. Michael's in that it is a Romanesque Revival style church built of light colored rough-faced stone (granite) blocks with smooth stone round arches and a tall corner tower; however, St. John's is smaller in size than St. Michael's and its exterior decoration is not as ornate. St. John's appears to be the only other Romanesque Revival style church designed by Gibson.
- ³³ Of the seven Tiffany designed chancel windows, the two outer ones are not visible from the exterior and are lighted artificially. The two Lamb windows were moved when they were obscured by the construction of the parish house. St. Michael's Church, *A Brief Tour and Description of the Church Interior and Windows* (New York: St. Michael's Church, 2007).
- ³⁴ In *The Messenger*, a publication of St. Michael's Church, on April 12, 1912, the rector, the Rev. John P. Peters in a letter to the parish noted the circumstances of the disappearance of the original figure and requested that someone donate a new bronze figure to replace the ball, which he called "unornamental and not very ecclesiastical."
- ³⁵ Manhattan Department of Buildings, Alteration 1498-1921, Ludlow and Peabody architects.
- ³⁶ LPC research files, photographs taken c. 1977, photographer unknown.
- ³⁷ In 2002-03 Renfro Design Group created a new fiber optics lighting system to light the two outer Tiffany chancel windows that are not lit by natural sunlight. The fiber optic lighting system was manufactured by Lumenyte International Corporation. Patricia Nelson, "Innovations in Lighting Interior Stained Glass: St. Michael's Church and LumePanel™" *Common Bond* 20 (Fall-Winter 2005): 6-8.
- ³⁸ Kim Lovejoy, "Case Study: St. Michael's Church, NY, NY," *Common Bond* 13 (December 1997), 6-7.
- ³⁹ This section is compiled from the following sources: LPC, *Church Missions House Designation Report (LP-1044)* (New York: City of New York, 1979) prepared by Ruth Selden-Sturgill; "Robert W. Gibson, Architect, Dies," *NYT*, August 19, 1927, 17; Robert B. Mackay, Anthony Baker and Carol A. Traynor, eds., *Long Island Country Houses and Their Architects 1860-1940* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1997), 177-179; Cornelia Brooke Gilder, "Robert W. Gibson (1851-1927)," *Albany Architects: The Present Looks at the Past* (Albany: Historic Albany Foundation, 1978), 10-11; Cornelia Brooke Gilder, "Robert W. Gibson: Master of Styles," *Preservation League of New York Newsletter* 10 (May-June 1984), 4-5; Albert Nelson Marquis, ed., *Who's Who in America 1912-13* (Chicago: A. N. Marquis & Company, 1912), 7: 797; *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York: J. T. White Company, 1893), 11: 324.

⁴⁰ George E. DeMille, *Pioneer Cathedral: A Brief History of the Cathedral of All Saints* (Albany, 1967), 51.

⁴¹ Peters, 166.

⁴² Mackay, Baker and Traynor, 177.

⁴³ The primary source for the information in this section is LPC, *South Congregational Church Designation Report*.

⁴⁴ Robert A. M. Stern, Thomas Mellins and David Fishman, *New York 1880: Architecture and Urbanism in the Gilded Age* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1999), 254; Sarah Bradford Landau, *George B. Post, Architect: Picturesque Designer and Determined Realist*, *Sources of American Architecture* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1998), 33.

⁴⁵ This section is compiled from the following sources; "Isaac A. Hopper's Record," *NYT*, January 1, 1893; "I. A. Hopper's Appointment," *NYT*, 26 January 1904, 2; *A History of Real Estate Building and Architecture in New York City during the Last Quarter of a Century* (New York: Real Estate Record and Guide Association, 1898; reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1967), 307-08.

⁴⁶ "For a Handsome New Church" *NYT*, September 30, 1890, 2.

⁴⁷ Christopher Gray, "Streetscapes: The Kingsbridge Car Barn: Vacant, Outmoded and Nearing the End of the Line," *NYT*, December 31, 1989, R2.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of these buildings, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Parish House and Rectory have a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of the City of New York.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Parish House and Rectory form one of the finest ecclesiastical complexes in Manhattan; that the buildings are executed primarily in rough-faced limestone and designed in the Romanesque Revival style combined with other stylistic motifs that create a singularly eclectic composition; that St. Michael's Episcopal Church was organized by several parishioners of Trinity Church and incorporated in 1807 to serve wealthy downtown residents who had built summer houses in the Bloomingdale section of Manhattan; that from 1820-1919 St. Michael's was led by the Rev. William Richmond, his brother, the Rev. James Cook Richmond, his son-in-law the Rev. Thomas McClure Peters, and his grandson the Rev. John Punnett Peters; that in the 19th century St. Michael's was responsible for the establishment of schools, charitable organizations and new parishes in the Upper West Side; that in the 20th century in continuation of its missionary history St. Michael's established the Chapel of St. Jude (1909-1957) to serve the growing African-American population of West 99th Street; that to meet the needs of the growing population of the Upper West Side the third and present St. Michael's Church was constructed in 1890-91; that the complex massing of the church as designed by Robert W. Gibson incorporates various ecclesiastical elements – the long nave, apsidal chancel, unevenly-sized transepts, cloistered arcade, tall clerestory, steeply-pitched tiled roof and, most notably, a tall campanile that is based on Italian, early Christian precedents; that the parish house with its asymmetrical massing, reminiscent of a mid-19th century picturesque villa, and Palladian windows was partially constructed in 1896-97 to the design of architect F. Charles Merry and completed in 1901 by Robert W. Gibson; that the more austere design of the rectory by Robert W. Gibson and constructed 1912-13 includes elements common to the Church and Parish House thus forming an integral part of the complex; that architect Robert W. Gibson was a noted designer of Episcopal churches; and that St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Parish House and Rectory are remarkably intact and remain a significant presence on the Upper West Side.

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 St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Parish House and Rectory, 201 West 99th Street (aka 800-812 Amsterdam Avenue), 225 West 99th Street and 227 West 99th Street, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1871, Lots 24 and 29 as its Landmark Site.

Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin, Wellington Chen,
Michael Devonshire, Michael Goldblum, John Gustafson,
Kim Vauss, Commissioners



St. Michael's Church
201 West 99th Street (aka 800-812 Amsterdam Avenue)
Block 1871, Lot 29
Photograph: Marianne S. Percival, 2016



St. Michael's Church, south and west elevations
Photographs: Marianne S. Percival, 2016



St. Michael's Church, east elevation
Photographs: Marianne S. Percival, 2016



St. Michael's Parish House
225 West 99th Street, Block 1871 Lot 29
Photographs: Marianne S. Percival, 2016

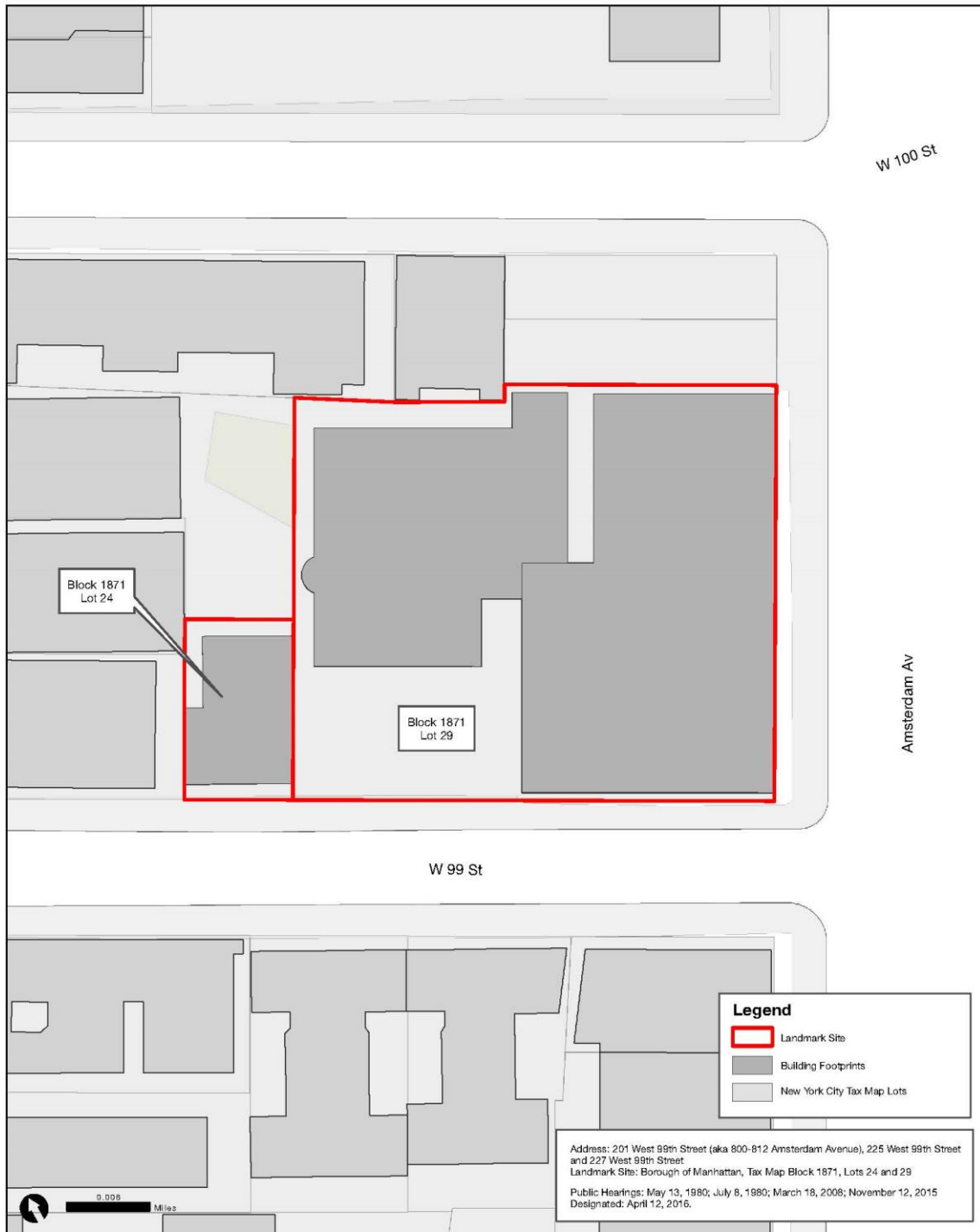


St. Michael's Rectory
227 West 99th Street, Block 1871 Lot 24
Photographs: Marianne S. Percival, 2016



St. Michael's Episcopal Church Complex
Photograph: Marianne S. Percival, 2016

St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Parish House and Rectory | LP-2281



Graphic Source: MapPLUTO, Edition 15v1, Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, DHW, Date: 4.12.2016