

Chapel of the Intercession

Individual Landmark

550 West 155th Street

Designation Date: August 16, 1966



Chapel of the Intercession July 1, 1967

Image courtesy of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission

Here in this modern version of Gothic architecture is a remarkable complex of buildings forming a truly picturesque group, which houses the many functions of today's church activities.

The architect, Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, used architectural elements from different periods rather freely combined with a homogeneity which is remarkable. The feeling is generally that of the English Perpendicular style, particularly at the high narrow entrance end. The pointed windows at the sides, however, with their flamboyant tracery, seem to belong to the earlier Decorated Period while the tower, with its square headed belfry, louvers and open-work crenellations, suggests the Tudor antecedents which are so well expressed in the small parish buildings at the rear. A small turret rises up at the southeast corner of the tower and is crowned by a small spire.

The long, narrow nave is beautifully expressed on the exterior. This simple, straightforward solution belies the belief that the Gothic style, as executed today, need necessarily lack the Gothic Spirit. This spirit is the essential quality sought by so many of our architects today and yet found by so few.

The Chapel of the Intercession was formerly the Church of the Intercession, founded in 1847. The present edifice was completed in 1914. The altar contains 1,563 stones from all over the world. The surrounding cemetery holds the remains of many New Yorkers, some of the most famous being Clement Clarke Moore, author of "Twas the Night Before Christmas," naturalist John James Audubon, the first John Jacob Astor and many of his family., and Alfred Tennyson Dickens, son of Charles Dickens.

The NYC 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 Parish, and that the needs of Trinity Parish for such uses may change in the future, 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 NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission believes it has the obligation and, indeed, 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 Parish may want to erect new buildings in the future on its grounds at the Chapel of the Intercession. The Commission recognizes that Trinity Parish may also wish to make exterior alterations to its existing buildings at the Chapel of the Intercession. The Commission looks forward to working with the representatives of Trinity Parish when the church desires to erect new buildings on its grounds, or to make exterior alterations on its existing buildings.

[Read the full NYC LPC Designation report here.](#)