

Church of All Saints (Roman Catholic), Parish House, and School

Individual Landmark

47 East 129th Street

Designation Date: January 30, 2006



Church of All Saints (Roman Catholic), Parish House and School. 47 East 129th Street (aka 50-52 East 130th Street, 2041-2053 Madison Avenue, 41-45 East 129th Street). New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. Photo by Carl Forster.

The Roman Catholic Church of All Saints, with its lively and animated design, and exceptionally fine ornament, was created by one of New York's leading 19th century architects, James Renwick, Jr., of the firm of Renwick, Aspinwall and Russell. Among the many churches he designed during his long career, the Church of All Saints has been called his best.

Constructed over the course of several years, the church (1883-93), parish house (1886-89), and school (1902-04) formed an important anchor for the rapidly expanding Harlem neighborhood when they were built and continue that role today. Renwick, architect of the original Smithsonian building in Washington, designed many of New York City's most beautiful and well-known churches, including Grace Church and St. Patrick's Cathedral.

The Church of All Saints is his most fully evolved Italian Gothic Revival style design, an unusual stylistic choice for a late 19th century church in New York. The building displayed the texture, shape and color variations that were so important during that period due to the influence of the writings of John Ruskin. The facades of All Saints combine the mixed tones of

light and dark brick, terra cotta and stone, with an assortment of window shapes and sizes in a building which is both spirited and inspiring.

The neighboring parish house displays elements of the Venetian Gothic Revival style, with its stone balconies pierced by pinwheeling designs, and its narrow windows topped by filled gothic arches. The school building, located north of the church along 130th Street, and completed several years later by Renwick's nephew, William W. Renwick, displays a simpler version of the Gothic Revival style, with plain brick wall surfaces juxtaposed with light-colored stone and areas of elaborate terra cotta ornament.

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