

Church of Notre Dame

Individual Landmark

405 West 114th Street

Designation Date: January 24, 1967



Church of Notre Dame. Photo by Lorraine Colbert

The Church of Notre Dame is a magnificent stone structure designed in the elegant French neoclassic style of the early 19th century. The architects' refined sense of scale has skillfully imposed on this comparatively small site atop Morningside Heights an image of true monumentality.

This church on the corner of Morningside Heights and West 114th Street expresses a square building, Greek Cross in plan, by the shallow eastern portico and the semicircular apse. The principal facade on the east is dominated by a handsome pedimented portico, carried on four fluted Corinthian columns. The pediment and cornice are strengthened by well-detailed modillions. The order and regularity of this style are seen in the repetition of the principal portico motif in shallow projection on the south side. Here, four pilasters take the place of the columns of the east front, while their height and the pediment above them are similar, and reinforce the quality of symmetry. Another feature reminiscent of French antecedents is the band of swagged garlands, which follows the entablature for the entire perimeter of the building, similar to that on the Church of the Madeleine in Paris, and so typical of 19th century classicism.

The original section of the church was built by Dans & Otto between 1909 and 1910. This section survives in the semicircular apse around which Cross & Cross constructed the main body of the church as it stands today. The work on this part of the church continued from 1914 until 1928, when it was finally discontinued. If the architects had been able to realize their plans for a large dome over the main mass of the building, the silhouette of the church would have been more nearly reminiscent of Soufflot's Pantheon in Paris, which was surely one of its models.

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