

## **Church of St. Joseph of the Holy Family**

Individual Landmark

401-403 West 125th Street

Designation Date: June 28, 2016



*Church of St. Joseph of the Holy Family, east elevation. New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Church of St. Joseph of the Holy Family Designation Report. Photo by Sarah Moses, 2016.*

Founded as a “national” parish by and for the German residents of Manhattanville, the Church of St. Joseph of the Holy Family was dedicated in 1860, and is the oldest church building in continuous use north of 44th Street.

St. Joseph’s Rundbogenstil design reflects both the ethnic makeup of its original congregation and the rural nature of its surroundings in the 19th century. The Rundbogenstil was developed in the early 19th century as an authentic German style and is characterized by round-arched openings, broad, smooth expanses of wall surface and two simple ornaments typically concentrated at the cornice and around windows and doors. The simple design of the c. 1860 church features a single square bell tower and round-arched openings set within a framework of brick piers and bands. The 1889-90 addition by Peter and William Francis Herter retains the piers, bands and arched openings of the original in a more elaborate design that adds greater dimensionality through irregular massing.

The church remains largely unchanged. Prior to 1935 the stained-glass windows were replaced, and a niche was created above the entrance for a statue of St. Joseph. More recently, the side entrance was altered to accommodate an accessibility ramp. Today, St. Joseph of the Holy Family, on the cusp of Manhattanville and Central Harlem, serves a largely African American and Latino congregation.

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

[Read testimonies supporting the designation here.](#)