St. Mary's Protestant Episcopal Church, Parish House, and Sunday School
Individual Landmark
517–523 West 126th Street
Designation Date: May 19, 1998

St. Mary's Protestant Episcopal Church. Photo by Lorraine Colbert

St. Mary's Protestant Episcopal Church has been in continuous service for almost 175 years, on
its original site. In 1823, the village founders solicited the Rev. William Richmond, rector of St. Michael's in Bloomingdale, who had been conducting services in a mission school in Manhattanville for three years, to help them organize this parish and a free school.

A white wood frame church building with a steeple was constructed in 1824–26, facing Lawrence Street (today West 126th Street). Several generations of Manhattanville's founding families have worshiped at St. Mary's, including Jacob Schieffelin, who laid out the village's roads, and his wife Hanna Lawrence, whose surname marked the street on which they donated the land to erect the first church building.

In 1831 , in deference to the poor constituents of its parish, St. Mary's abolished pew rentals, becoming the first "free pew" Protestant Episcopal church in the city. The parish house, when erected as a parsonage in 1851, housed the village's first resident clergyman. In 1890, St. Mary's commissioned a Sunday School building, now located at the rear of the church, by architect George Keister. In 1908–1909, the frame church was replaced by the present English Gothic style brick church designed by Theodore E. Blake, with the prestigious Carrere & Hastings firm. Despite the urbanization of the surrounding area, the St. Mary's complex of church, Sunday School, and white frame parish house, surrounding a garden, evokes the early days of the village of Manhattanville.

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