

St. Paul's Chapel

Individual Landmark

1160 Amsterdam Avenue

Designation Date: September 20, 1966



St. Paul's Chapel. Photo: Lorraine Colbert

St. Paul's Chapel attains an altogether pleasing dignity from its beautiful proportions and handsome architectural details. This brick building with limestone trim is highlighted with terra cotta ornament, and ornamental bronze carefully integrated into an harmonious ecclesiastical design. Because of its Greek cross plan, surmounted by a high drummed dome over the crossing, and its four columned portico (porch) with a Florentine gable, this Byzantine chapel displaying much Italian Renaissance detail, makes an attractive contribution to American architecture.

This small chapel is set within a landscaped area east of Low Memorial Library and is well sited among the buildings on the Columbia University campus. Flanking the low rise of steps leading into the main porch are two handsome bronze torchers. The unusual columns of the vaulted portico, instead of having classic capitals, are topped by winged cherubs. Large bronze doors, handsomely enframed, provide a fitting entrance for the chapel. At the east end, the building terminates in a semi-circular apse. The north and south transept walls are pierced by large, arched windows of great beauty.

The chapel, bearing the inscription, "For the Church of God," was a gift of Olivia and Caroline Stokes, in memory of James Stokes and his wife Caroline Phelps. The 24 windows in the drum of the dome are adorned with the coats of arms of notable old New York families, whose names are associated with the history of the University, including Philip Van Cortlandt, Abraham de Peyster, Gerard Beekman, DeWitt Clinton, and William C. Rhineland.

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