



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North New York NY 10007 TEL: 212-669-7700 FAX: 212-669-7960
www.nyc.gov/landmarks



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CONTACT: Lisi de Bourbon
212-669-7938

TWO ITALIAN GOTHIC-STYLE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES IN HARLEM DECLARED NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS

Church of All Saints and St. Aloysius Roman Catholic Church, Both Symbols of Harlem's Rapid Growth at the Turn of the 20th Century, Are City's First Catholic Churches To Be Designated in 25 Years

The Landmarks Preservation Commission voted unanimously today to designate as individual New York City landmarks the Church of All Saints, including its parish house and school, and St. Aloysius Roman Catholic Church, the first time in 25 years that a Catholic church has earned this distinction.



The Church of All Saints, located at 47 E. 129th St., (photograph attached) was designed by James Renwick Jr., the architect of St. Patrick's Cathedral and Grace Church, two of New York City's most renowned churches. The dramatically massed and finely detailed building, inspired by 12th-century Italian Gothic churches, was constructed between 1883 and 1893; the parish house and school were completed in 1889 and 1904, respectively.

St. Aloysius was designed by Renwick's nephew, William W. Renwick, and constructed between 1902 and 1904 at 209-217 W. 132nd St. With its intricately decorated polychrome façade, St. Aloysius is considered one of New York City's most distinctive Catholic church designs.



"It is an honor for this Commission to designate All Saints, its parish house and school and St. Aloysius as New York City landmarks," said Chairman Robert B. Tierney. "These breathtaking buildings have had a distinctive presence in Harlem for the past 100 years. With this decision today, the churches will continue to anchor the community for generations to come."

Both churches were constructed at the turn of the 20th century to accommodate Harlem's growing immigrant population, which consisted mostly of Irish, Germans and Italians. The parish that would come to be known as All Saints was founded in 1879. Its congregants first met for several months in abandoned streetcar barns at 129th St. and Third Ave., and subsequently

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moved twice before relocating to the basement chapel of the new church in 1886. Renwick's nephew, William W. Renwick, is responsible for the design of the school.

St. Aloysius, named after St. Aloysius Gonzaga, a 16th-century Italian Jesuit who died treating victims of the plague, was organized in 1899. The original parishioners met at another location in Harlem until the church was completed. The façade, considered one of William W. Renwick's most important commissions, consists of alternating bands of red brick, celadon-colored glazed brick and glazed "granitex" (with the color and texture of gray granite) terra cotta with cobalt blue accents.

The facades of All Saints combine mixed tones of light and dark brick, terra cotta and stone, with a spirited assortment of window shapes and sizes. The Madison Avenue façade of the church's school building features terra-cotta moldings that are similar to those that William Renwick added to the front façade of St. Aloysius. The terra cotta used on both churches was made at the famed New York Architectural Terra Cotta Company in Long Island City, Queens.

While there are numerous Catholic Churches in historic districts throughout the City -- such as St. Veronica's in Greenwich Village and the school building of Our Lady of Loreto Church in NoHo East -- the last time the Commission granted individual landmark status to a Catholic church was St. Monica's Church in Jamaica, Queens in 1979. Other designated churches include St. Ignatius Loyola (1969) in Manhattan, Saint Patrick's Church (1968) on Staten Island, and Saint Jean Baptiste Roman Catholic Church (1979) in Manhattan.

To obtain high-resolution versions of photos of the churches, please call Lisi de Bourbon at 212-669-7938.

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission is the largest municipal preservation agency in the United States. Created in 1965, the Commission is dedicated to preserving New York City's architectural, historical and cultural treasures and protects more than 23,000 buildings in all five boroughs, including 1,150 individual landmarks, 107 interior landmarks, nine scenic landmarks and 85 historic districts.