

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



1153

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name North Presbyterian Church

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 525 West 155th Street [] not for publication

city or town Manhattan [] vicinity

state New York code NY county New York code 061 zip code 10032

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ruth Purpant
Signature of certifying official/Title

DSHPO

12/12/13
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register [] see continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register [] see continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Edson H. Beall

date of action

2.5.14

North Presbyterian Church

New York County, New York

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	TOTAL

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(enter categories from instructions)

RELIGIOUS FACILITY/ church & manse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGIOUS FACILITY/ church & school

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY

REVIVALS / Late Gothic Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Terra Cotta

other Terra Cotta & Limestone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

North Presbyterian Church

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location
- C** a birthplace or grave
- D** a cemetery
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by historic American Building Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Social History

Period of Significance:

1904 - 1927

Significant Dates:

1904, 1924

Significant Person:

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Bannister & Schell (architects)

Edwin Outwater (builder)

Eli Benedict (architect, Memorial Bldg.)

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other repository: _____

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Narrative Description of Property:

The North Presbyterian Church is located at 525 West 155th street, on the north side of the street between Broadway and Amsterdam avenue, in the borough of Manhattan in New York City. The Church is on the south side of the upper Manhattan neighborhood of Washington Heights. The primarily residential neighborhood is bounded by 155th Street on the south, the Harlem River to the east, Dyckman Street to the north, and the Hudson River to the west. Trinity Cemetery, associated with Trinity Episcopal Church in Manhattan, and the Episcopal Church of the Intercession, built in 1912, are immediately south of the building. The church and cemetery take up the entire south side of the street from Amsterdam Avenue to Riverside Drive. A six-story apartment building and the Greater File Chapel Baptist Church are east of North Presbyterian on 155th Street. Three five-story apartment buildings are located on 155th Street west of the memorial house. A gas station sits on the northeast corner of the 155th Street and Broadway intersection. This nomination includes the entire lot associated with North Presbyterian Church. The property includes the church and attached parish house and a separate memorial house to the west. The two buildings retain a high degree of integrity.

North Presbyterian Church is a rectangular building that takes full advantage of its 150' x 99.11' lot. The majority of the church roof is flat; the sanctuary is highlighted by a partial gable roof, and the parish hall has a partial side gabled roof. Only the façade is visible; the east and west elevations abut neighboring buildings. The building is divided into three main sections: a sanctuary on the east end, a central 110' entrance tower in the center, and the parish house on the west end. Though each section has a different design indicating its distinct function, the building is unified by the consistent usage of smooth, gray brick, limestone, and terra-cotta. A wide limestone band runs across the base of each of the three sections, anchoring the façade, and a terra-cotta band runs across the building between the second and third stories; these horizontal elements provide a clear visual connection between the disparate sections.

The sanctuary section is split into three parts (from east to west): a one-bay, three story tower, a wide front-gabled section with an enormous arched window, and a narrow, three story connector. The three-story tower is set off by two gray brick and limestone buttresses capped with terra cotta spires. The tower has an entrance with double wooden doors and a semicircular transom on the first floor. This inset entrance has a limestone surround. A band of terra cotta detailing with five four-lobed foils runs above the door between the two tower buttresses. Two small rectangular windows with limestone lintels are located on the second floor. Above the windows, a band of terra cotta runs across each of the two buttresses and into the sanctuary section. Two narrow, arched windows with flat, limestone caps are on the third floor. A band of terra cotta topped by decorative terra cotta crenellation with small, central spire caps the roofline. The central, front-gabled section is bound by two brick and limestone buttresses with terra cotta spires. This section features a very large, pointed-arch, stained-glass window with complex tracery. The inset window is surrounded with terra cotta. The band of terra cotta that extends across from the tower section frames the upper arch of the window. A triangular terra cotta tracery detail is located in the top of the gable. The gable is capped by a band of terra cotta, and has a terra cotta cross at the apex. The narrow connector has one small, arched window with a limestone cap on each of the first and second floors. The terra-cotta band divides the second and third floors. A circular window lights the third floor. A terra-cotta band capped by a pyramidal crenellation with a small spire tops the roofline.

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The central entrance tower section, which visually connects the façade, is set off by two, large gray brick and limestone buttresses. On the first floor, a half-flight of limestone steps ends at two sets of wooden double doors. A semicircular fanlight connects the two doors. The doors and window are framed by a terra cotta surround with a small, central spire. Above the door, a terra cotta band decorated by six four-lobed foils runs between the two buttresses. A pointed arched window with a terra-cotta surround and a six-lobed, terra-cotta foil in the arch is on the second floor; the terra cotta band running across the façade connects to this window. The freestanding, square tower begins at another terra-cotta band which marks the third story. The tower has identical detailing on each of its four sides. Two narrow, arched windows are at the base of the tower. Just above, six narrow lancet windows run around the tower – all but the two central lancets are blind. The lancet windows are connected by a terra-cotta arcade with engaged columns and pointed arches. Above the arcade, three large, louvered windows open into the belltower. Terra-cotta pointed arches with trefoil details cap the louvered openings. A gable with a three-lobed foil and crenellated parapet roofline caps the tower. A terra-cotta clock face sits in the center of the gable, which ends in a small cross. The top of the tower is adorned with four spires, one capping each of the buttresses.

The parish house to the west of the main entrance façade is three stories tall, four bays wide, and has a side-gabled facade. The western entrance bay is set off by two gray brick and terra-cotta buttresses capped with terra-cotta spires. The wooden double door capped by a semicircular fanlight has an arched terra-cotta surround and is reached by a half-flight of limestone steps. The second and third stories each have a single, narrow sash window; these floors are divided by a terra cotta band. A terra-cotta, triangular, stepped pediment caps the entrance bay. The remaining three bays have three sets of paired, sash windows on each floor. The windows on the two lower floors have limestone drip lintels. A narrow, terra cotta band divides the first and second floors. The three windows on the top floor have rounded terra-cotta caps with four-lobed foils topped by steep, triangular terra-cotta gables. Each has a small, three-lobed foil in the top of the gable, and is crowned by a decorative, four-lobed terra cotta spire. A shorter, terra cotta spire extends between each of the four gables.

The interior of the church complex is divided into (from east to west): a sanctuary, narthex/entrance hall, and a parish house. The primary entrance door in the central tower leads to narthex/entrance hall. From the entrance hall, eight wood paneled doors lead to the sanctuary on the west side of the space. The upper half of each door has glass panels with tripartite wooden lancet detailing. A clerestory made up of ten seven-by-five casement windows and wood paneling extend above the doorways to the balcony level. Two staircases lead from the center of the narthex to separate balcony entrances. The stairs retain their original railings and wood balusters with bronze light fixtures. The four balcony entrance doors on each side are visually connected by a repetition of the pattern of wood paneling and windows with tripartite wooden lancet detailing. Three stained glass skylights pierce the recessed, arched ceiling.

The sanctuary's auditorium style seating consists of original wooden pews that are curved around the main altar space. In addition to the seating on the sanctuary floor, the balcony provides seating around the north, south and west sides of the space. The primary wall features three plaster, pointed arches which are joined by grouped plaster columns. A stained-glass window with four lancets and three six-lobed foils decorates the central arch. Below the window, wood paneling mimicking the design of the parish house sits behind the altar. The choir sits on either side of the altar on raised platforms that retain their original wood paneling and choir book stands.

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Two large, pointed arched stained-glass windows on the north and south sides of the sanctuary light the room. Organ pipes are situated on the northwest and southwest corners of the room. The plaster ceiling is ribbed and contains one skylight that has eight panels of stained glass. The interior of the church has suffered some material deterioration due to problems with water infiltration.

The three-story parish hall is located west of the narthex/entrance hall. It is divided into a lecture hall, classrooms, and offices. The lecture hall, a two-story open space with a balcony surrounding the north, west and south sides of the room, is the primary space in the building. Three skylights light the space. Large classrooms occupy the first floor and are situated on the north and south sides of the main lecture space. Original wooden doors which have large, multi-pane transoms above each door span the entire length of the individual rooms; they can be opened to create one large space. The second floor contains more lecture rooms on the north and south sides of the space and a small open work area on the west side. The basement contains a large social hall; it was recently renovated. The open space is divided by cast-iron columns and has a multi-colored tile floor. Pressed metal ceiling tiles cover the ceiling and beams; hanging chandeliers light the room.

To the west of the church is the North Church Memorial House, which was built in 1924. The façade is visible, but the east and west elevations abut neighboring buildings. The two-story, four-bay, rectangular, flat-roofed building is constructed of gray brick and limestone. The design of the memorial house includes many of the same features and horizontal emphasis of the church, but is simplified. Similar to the church, a limestone band grounds the façade; the band extends halfway up the main entrance doors. The band is pierced by three basement windows with metal security bars. The entrance bay, set off by two octagonal buttresses, is located on the west end of the façade. The two entrance doors are capped by a pointed-arch fanlight. The doors and fanlight are framed by a limestone pointed archway. "North Church Memorial" is carved into a limestone panel located just above the doorway; a drip lintel highlights the panel. Above the panel, a pointed-arch sash window framed with a drip lintel lights an intermediary floor. A small lancet window sits just below the crenellated brick parapet that tops the entrance bay. The east section of the façade has a row of three windows with limestone drip lintels on both the first and second floor. Limestone bands stretch across the façade, continuing the horizontal bands on the church façade. Two bands run under the first floor windows, two run under the second floor windows, and a final band runs along the base of the parapet roofline. The parapet features three, small limestone panels with carved pointed, blind arches.

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Statement of Significance:

The North Presbyterian Church, built in 1904-1905, is significant at the local level under Criterion A for its association with the development of the Washington Heights neighborhood in upper Manhattan. In anticipation of, and immediately following, the opening of the subway line to the area, the Washington Heights neighborhood grew dramatically during the early twentieth century. Completed months before the subway line, North Presbyterian Church was built to accommodate its original congregation in addition to the expected influx of new residents to the area. It is also significant under Criterion C as a highly intact example of a Gothic Revival church designed by Bannister and Schell, a prominent early twentieth-century architectural firm that specialized in religious buildings. It reflects new ideas about how modern city churches should be planned and designed, as well as a shift away from the heavy Romanesque Revival style to a more modern iteration of the Gothic Revival style.

Early History

The North Presbyterian Church congregation, founded in 1847, originally met at Ninth Avenue and 31st Street in Manhattan. In 1903, plans for the construction of the first Pennsylvania Station prompted redevelopment of the entire area surrounding the church. Over 500 buildings were scheduled to be demolished to make way for the new station and yards.¹ The plan caused a "flurry in religious property" as the church leaders and congregations of the sixteen religious institutions the station would displace rushed to find new locations. North Presbyterian sat directly on the block to be covered by Pennsylvania station.²

The Pennsylvania station plans prompted the church to sell its property. With the proceeds from the sale, approximately \$75,000, the church began making plans to relocate. The congregation opposed the sale and the move, but as the *New York Times* stated, it was "only a question of time."³ After a "patient investigation and deliberation," North Presbyterian Church's leaders decided to move the congregation to Washington Heights and merge with the Washington Heights Presbyterian Church congregation. Though the Washington Heights Church was located in a "noisy neighborhood," the leaders of North Presbyterian Church were attracted by the availability of land, the promise of a new public transit system, and the proximity to the wealthy Audubon Park suburb.⁴

The Washington Heights congregation formed during the 1840s as a Congregational church. They built their first small, wooden chapel on land purchased from the Audubons at the corner of 155th Street and 10th (Amsterdam) Avenue. In 1858, the congregation became Presbyterian and began making plans to build a new

¹ David Dunlap, *From Abyssinian to Zion: A Guide to Manhattan's Houses of Worship* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 159.

² "Flurry in Church Property Due to Railroad Development," *The New York Times*, January 18, 1902, 10.

³ "List of Plans Filed for New Structures and Alterations," *The New York Times*, April 21, 1904, 15; "Flurry in Church Property Due to Railroad Development," *The New York Times*, January 18, 1902, 10.

⁴ North Presbyterian Church, "The History of the Congregation" *North Presbyterian Church, Manhattan*, (1996). 6; "Two Congregations May Unite," *New York Tribune*, March 19, 1903.

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church; it was completed by 1862. After struggling through crises of leadership and finances, the congregation stabilized and began to grow during the late nineteenth century. The Washington Heights Church was likely impressed by the age, wealth, and size of the North Presbyterian congregation and took advantage of the opportunity to expand.⁵

The merger between the two churches was controversial. The Presbytery of New York, which served as the governing body for Presbyterian Churches in the five boroughs, voted three times against the consolidation of the two congregations. The Presbytery disapproved of the co-pastor leadership proposed by the congregations. After a close vote of 24 to 23 in July 1903, the merger was finally allowed; it was not formally approved until February 1905, when the new church was already under construction.⁶

Washington Heights Development

One of the last parts of Manhattan to be developed, Washington Heights was largely covered in forests and farmland through the mid-nineteenth century. By the 1840s, wealthy New Yorkers began building large country estates in upper Manhattan to escape from the dense, urban center. John James Audubon, a naturalist, author, and painter, purchased his estate in 1841; Trinity Church, located on Wall Street, established a country cemetery nearby two years later. Mourners reached the cemetery on foot, by public coach, or in private carriages. Within a decade, the idyllic country atmosphere began to erode. The Hudson River Railroad, completed in 1849, ran up the west side of Manhattan to a station on 152nd Street. For the first time, residents could reach lower Manhattan in less than an hour.⁷

During the 1850s, the Audubon family began selling off and developing its land. The increased availability of land, and the extension of Broadway north to 155th Street during the 1860s, spurred the development of a new residential suburb on the land. Known as Audubon Park, the suburb was home to upper-middle-class families. The majority of the homes, usually substantial rowhouses, built in the area catered to this wealthy clientele; middle and lower class families could little afford the expense and time required to live so far from the dense central city. By the late nineteenth century, the Washington Heights neighborhood consisted of little more than Audubon Park and the Trinity Cemetery.⁸ A small number of immigrants, mostly from eastern and western European countries such as Germany, Ireland, Russia, England and Austria, lived in modest homes scattered throughout the area.⁹

⁵ Audubon Park Historic District, "Washington Heights Presbyterian Church," available at <
<http://www.audubonparkny.com/AudubonParkWashingtonHeightsPresbyterianChurch.html>>.

⁶ "Two Congregations May Unite," *New York Tribune*, March 19, 1903; "North Church to go to Washington Heights," *The Sun*, July 1, 1903; "Don't Want to Face Cemetery," *The Sun*, October 3, 1903.

⁷ George Bird Grinnell, "Audubon Park: A Brief History," available online at <
<http://www.audubonparkny.com/AudubonParkBriefHistory.html>>; New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Audubon Park Historic District Designation Report," Report prepared by Jennifer Most, On file at the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (2009), 8.

⁸ G.W. Bromley, *Atlas of the City of New York: Manhattan Island* (New York: G.W. Bromley and Co., 1891); New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Audubon Park Historic District Designation Report," 10.

⁹ New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Audubon Park Historic District Designation Report," 18.

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The completion of the Interborough Rapid Transit subway line to Washington Heights in 1906 opened it up to increased residential and commercial development. The neighborhood rapidly filled with apartment buildings, commercial buildings, and a significant number of new religious institutions to minister to the burgeoning population. By the early 1910s the area was densely covered with five- and six-story brick residential buildings, following the population boom that resulted from the newly opened public transit station.¹⁰ In addition, the expansion of Riverside Drive into the neighborhood in 1911 also helped further develop the area.¹¹

Architecture

The Trustees of the merged North and Washington Heights Presbyterian congregations began making plans to build a new, larger church near the Washington Heights Church. They had initially planned to purchase land immediately adjacent to the Church, but disagreed on the leasing arrangement with the landowner. As a corner location was no longer viable, the Trustees settled for six lots toward the center of the 155th Street block in December 1903. This location, overlooking the Trinity Church Cemetery, was looked upon as undesirable by some members of the North Presbyterian Church congregation. Though the complaint itself was well publicized in local newspapers, the no specific reasons were given for the negative reaction to the cemetery. Members threatened to complain to the Presbytery leadership, but the location was not changed.¹²

Soon after, church leaders commissioned the architectural firm of Bannister and Schell to create a design for the new North Presbyterian Church in Washington Heights. William P. Bannister, a New York native, joined in partnership with Richard M. Schell in 1899. They formed the firm Bannister and Schell and had an office at 69 Wall Street during the early twentieth century.¹³ Between 1903 and 1911, the firm designed tenements and store-and-loft buildings, but established a specialty in church buildings.¹⁴ The firm also designed Holyrood Church in Washington Heights (1911) as well as the former Harlem Savings Bank on East 125th Street (1907).¹⁵ Bannister later went on to start his own firm and continued to design churches such as the Lutheran Church of the Incarnation in Brooklyn as well as St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Queens.¹⁶

By the turn of the twentieth century, the Romanesque Revival style was becoming less common in church design as architects returned to the more conventional Gothic Revival style.¹⁷ Boston architects, led by Ralph Adams Cram, were at the forefront of this trend. Cram's work "virtually revolutionized the visual image of

¹⁰ G.W. Bromley, *Atlas of the City of New York: Borough of Manhattan* (New York: G.W. Bromley and Co., 1921).

¹¹ New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Audubon Park Historic District Designation Report," 11.

¹² North Presbyterian Church, "History," 7; "Site for a Church Edifice," *New York Tribune* December 30, 1903, 4; *The Sun*, September 26, 1903; *The Sun*, January 9, 1904; "Don't Want to Face Cemetery," *New York Tribune*, October 3, 1903.

¹³ W.T. Comstock, *Architecture and Building* 30-31 (1899), 171.

¹⁴ Office for Metropolitan History, "Manhattan NB Database 1900-1986," search for Bannister and Schell, available at <
<http://www.MetroHistory.com> >.

¹⁵ New York Landmarks Conservancy, "Sacred Sites Program: Consulting Grant Application Reviews and Recommendations," (New York City: The New York Landmarks Conservancy, 2006).

¹⁶ "William Bannister Dies; Architect for 50 Years," *New York Herald Tribune*, January 10, 1939, 14.

¹⁷ Robert Stern, *New York 1900: Metropolitan Architecture and Urbanism, 1890-1915* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983), 109-110.

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American Christianity” at the beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁸ In *Church Building: A Study of the Principles of Architecture in Their Relation to the Church*, published in 1914, Cram argued that designs for city churches had the unique opportunity to show their “adaptability to conditions essentially modern and almost without precedent.”¹⁹ Cram noted the early twentieth-century boom in church construction, and recognized that “the output of churches in fifteen years has been enormous, and a large proportion of these are probably destined to be enduring monuments.”²⁰ Cram insisted that city churches were a fundamentally new type of American building with unique design problems that required innovative solutions. North Presbyterian Church, designed and built within the context of these broader discussions, is representative of the turn to the Gothic and the challenges of church construction during the early twentieth century.

Bannister and Schell’s English Gothic design for the North Presbyterian Church took advantage of the 150 foot frontage along 155th Street. One of the problems faced by contemporary church architects was the ever-increasing number of community and religious organizations and educational missions that growing churches were expanding to include. Bannister and Schell resolved this by effectively dividing the building in half by function and in the design of the façade; a 110-foot tower divides the sanctuary from parish house, but also provides a visual connection between the disparate sections. This also allowed for an optimal amount of natural light for both the religious and educational sections of the building. North Presbyterian’s new pastor, Rev. Dr. Wilson D. Sexton, had participated in the process of building a new church before and may have had some influence in the development of this arrangement.²¹

The smooth, gray brick and terra cotta façade chosen by Bannister and Schell represented a clear rejection of the Richardsonian Romanesque style and an alignment with proponents of the modern Gothic Revival style. Cram argued that materials for city churches “must be refined and delicate, rough stone is barred and in its place must come stone that has a smooth and well-dressed surface, or brick, if it is used properly.” In addition, the delicate archways, false buttresses, and terra cotta detailing offered an uplifting appearance that had been absent in the heavy Romanesque style.²²

When the North Presbyterian Church was nearing completion, the *New York Tribune* proclaimed that “In size, convenience and wealth of novel details the building is perhaps second only to the new Broadway Tabernacle.” It praised the division of the building which expressed the different demands of “modern church work,” while still maintaining a unified design. The Church was completed by September 1905, except for furnishing, and at a cost of \$275,000, including the land purchase. Edwin Outwater was the builder, and Professor Collins P. Bliss

¹⁸ Douglass Shand-Tucci, *Church building in Boston, 1720-1970: With an Introduction to the Work of Ralph Adams Cram and the Boston Gothicists* (Concord: Rumford Press, 1974), 49.

¹⁹ Ralph Adams Cram, *Church Building: A Study of the Principles of Architecture in Their Relation to the Church* (Boston: Marshall Jones Company, 1914), 69.

²⁰ Cram, *Church Building*, 241.

²¹ “Church and Religious News and Notes: Another Magnificent Church Building Near Completion – More Fall Openings,” *New York Tribune*, May 24, 1905.

²² Cram, *Church Building*, 73.

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was the superintendent of construction. A series of building dedication services took place between November 5th and 24th in 1905.²³

Church Growth

Much of the former North Presbyterian Church congregation moved to the Washington Heights area, although some congregants stayed in lower Manhattan. The new congregation grew rapidly during its first decade in Washington Heights, increasing from 664 members in 1906 to 1,471 by 1918. Many of the new members lived within walking distance of the church. In the 1920s, the church held the distinction having the fourth largest congregation in the Presbytery of New York City.²⁴

The Memorial House, a two-story church annex dedicated to the men who died in World War I, was built adjoining the church in 1924 at a cost of \$50,000.²⁵ Eli Benedict, the architect, was a member of the congregation.²⁶ Benedict had practiced architecture in New York City since 1903. He had become interested in designing church buildings during his service as an elder for North Presbyterian Church. His designs for religious institutions include the Olmstead Avenue Presbyterian Church in the Bronx (1912) and the Sunday School building for the Mount Washington Presbyterian Church in the Inwood neighborhood of Manhattan (1914).²⁷

In his design for the Memorial House, Benedict respected the original design for the North Presbyterian Church. Benedict used similar materials and massing, but created a simpler, more streamlined gray brick and limestone façade for the Memorial House. He incorporated the Church's architectural vocabulary, such as vertical buttresses around the entrance bay and horizontal elements across the façade, to establish a clear connection to the original building. The Memorial House was built to serve as a community center and included a gymnasium, swimming pool, classrooms, and a kitchen.²⁸

In 1927, North Presbyterian Church merged with the St. Nicholas Avenue Presbyterian Church congregation. The St. Nicholas Avenue Church, formerly known as Lenox Presbyterian Church, had been built in 1905. However, population and demographic change within the neighborhood had been substantial in the twenty years since the church was completed. The former St. Nicholas Avenue Church building was purchased by the St. James Presbyterian Church, one of New York's oldest African-American congregations.²⁹ As a result of the

²³ "List of Plans Filed for New Structures and Alterations," *The New York Times*, April 21, 1904, 15; North Presbyterian Church, "Dedicatory Services of the North Presbyterian Church, Washington Heights," (Washington Heights, N.Y.: North Presbyterian Church, 1905); "Church and Religious News and Notes: Another Magnificent Church Building Near Completion – More Fall Openings," *New York Tribune*, May 24, 1905.

²⁴ North Presbyterian Church, "History," 7-8.

²⁵ North Presbyterian Church, "History," 7-8; Office for Metropolitan History, "Manhattan NB Database 1900-1986," search for Eli Benedict, available at < <http://www.MetroHistory.com> >.

²⁶ "Eli Benedict," *The New York Times*, July 17, 1941.

²⁷ Henry Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, eds., "Eli Benedict," *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Detroit: Omnigraphics, 1994), 50.

²⁸ North Presbyterian Church, "History," 7-8.

²⁹ Dunlap, *From Abyssinian to Zion*, 212.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

North Presbyterian Church
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

Section 8 Page 6

merger with St. Nicholas, the North Presbyterian Church became the third largest Church in the Presbytery. A 1935 roll of the North Presbyterian Church included over 950 members.³⁰

Eventually the congregation fell into decline due to the changing demographics and development of the neighborhood. Many members moved to newer suburbs and the size of the congregation declined. In 1957, it reached a low of 267 members.³¹ The neighborhood, and the congregation, experienced some growth in the 1960s and 1970s as more African Americans began to move to the area and in the 1980s with the move of Dominicans to the neighborhood. In recent years, the church has also welcomed a Ghanaian Presbyterian congregation.³²

Four years after the national program was created, a Head Start branch began operating from the church and memorial hall in 1969. The church managed the program until 2009, when an outside organization took over operations. The church underwent a restoration in the early 2000s to repair roof and water damage and restore main public spaces, including the lecture hall and social hall.

The North Presbyterian Church stands as an intact example of a modern Gothic Revival church constructed during the fast-paced development of the Washington Heights neighborhood during the early twentieth century. Its modern plan addressed the problem of expanding social functions and missions, common in twentieth century churches, through a tripartite Gothic design. It is locally significant for its association with the rapid urbanization of Audubon Park, and the attractiveness of the Washington Heights neighborhood to a congregation that had been historically associated with the lower west side of Manhattan.

³⁰ North Presbyterian Church, "Membership roll, 1935, North Presbyterian Church, New York," (New York: North Presbyterian Church, 1935).

³¹ North Presbyterian Church, "History," 7-8.

³² Manny Fernandez, "New Winds at an Island Outpost," *The New York Times*, March 4, 2007.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

North Presbyterian Church

Name of Property

New York County, New York

County and State

Section 9 Page 1

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

North Presbyterian Church

Name of Property

New York County, New York

County and State

Section 9 Page 2

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

North Presbyterian Church

Name of Property

New York County, New York

County and State

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for this nomination is shown as a heavy black line on the accompanying map.

Boundary Justification

The boundary incorporates the entire lot on which the North Presbyterian Church has historically been located.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

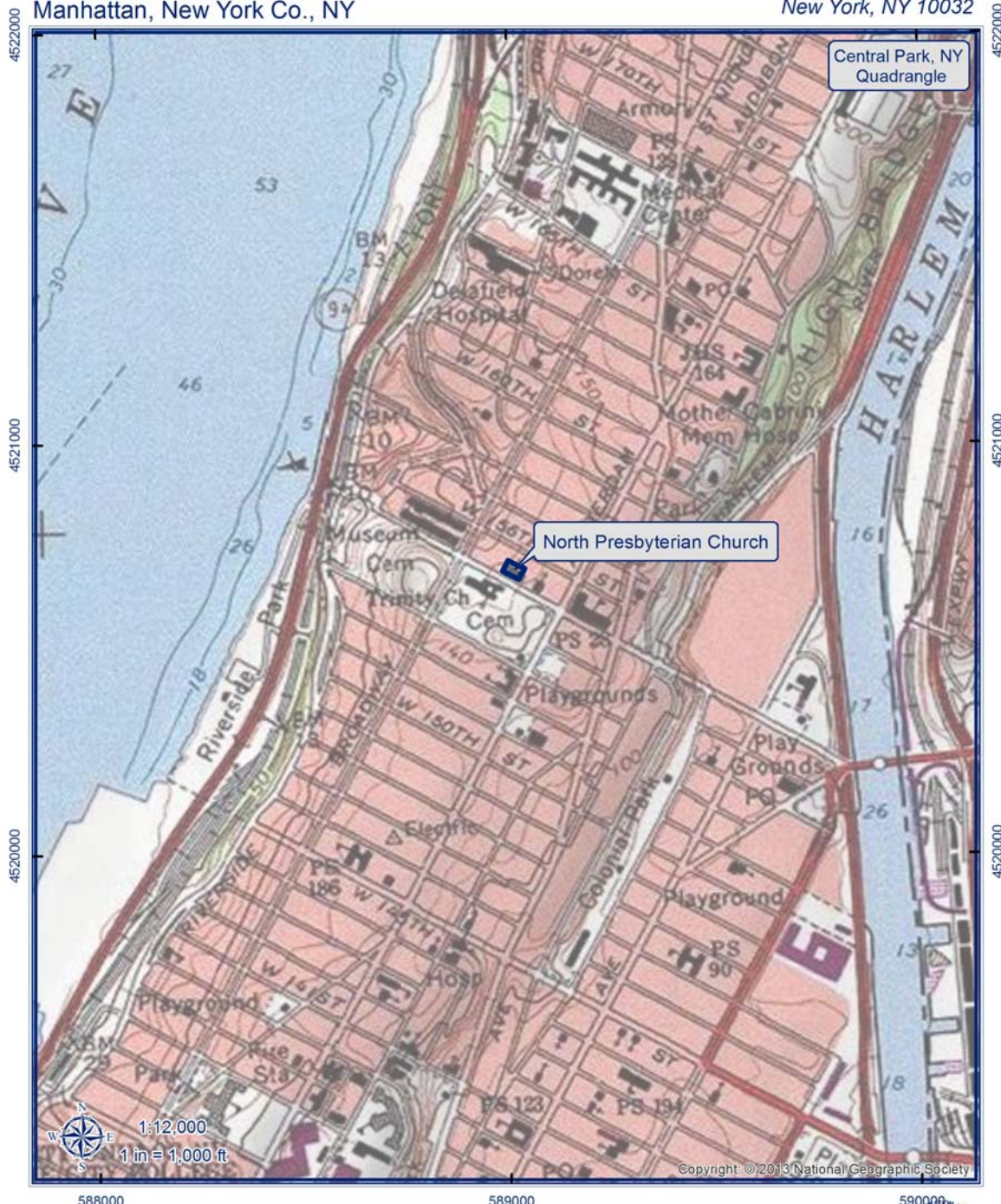
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

North Presbyterian Church
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

Section 10 Page 2

North Presbyterian Church
Manhattan, New York Co., NY

525 West 155th Street
New York, NY 10032



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



 North Presbyterian Church

Tax Parcel Data:
NYC PLUTO
<http://www.nyc.gov/>



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

North Presbyterian Church
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

Section 10 Page 3

North Presbyterian Church
Manhattan, New York Co., NY

525 West 155th Street
New York, NY 10032



589000

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



North Presbyterian Church

Tax Parcel Data:
NYC PLUTO
<http://www.nyc.gov/>



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

North Presbyterian Church
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

Section 11 Page 1

Additional Information

Name of Property: North Presbyterian Church
City: New York
County: New York
State: NY
Name of Photographer: Jennifer Whisenhunt
Date of Photographs: February - April, 2013
Location of Original Digital Files: 525 West 155th Street

NY_New York County_North Presbyterian Church_001
South façade, camera facing northwest

NY_New York County_North Presbyterian Church_002
South façade of Church Memorial House, camera facing north

NY_New York County_North Presbyterian Church_003
South façade, camera facing northeast

NY_New York County_North Presbyterian Church_004
Narthex, camera facing north

NY_New York County_North Presbyterian Church_005
Narthex from top of stairs, camera facing south

NY_New York County_North Presbyterian Church_006
Sanctuary, camera facing east

NY_New York County_North Presbyterian Church_007
Sanctuary, camera facing east

NY_New York County_North Presbyterian Church_008
Sanctuary, camera facing northeast

NY_New York County_North Presbyterian Church_009
Sanctuary, camera facing west

NY_New York County_North Presbyterian Church_010
Lecture hall, camera facing northwest

NY_New York County_North Presbyterian Church_011
Lecture hall, camera facing north

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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Section 11 Page 2

North Presbyterian Church
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

NY_New York County_North Presbyterian Church_012
Social hall, camera facing south

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 3

North Presbyterian Church
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State



THE NEW BUILDING OF THE NORTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.
At No. 525 West 155th-st.

“Church and Religious News and Notes: Another Magnificent Church Building Near Completion – More Fall Openings.” *New York Tribune*. May 24, 1905.











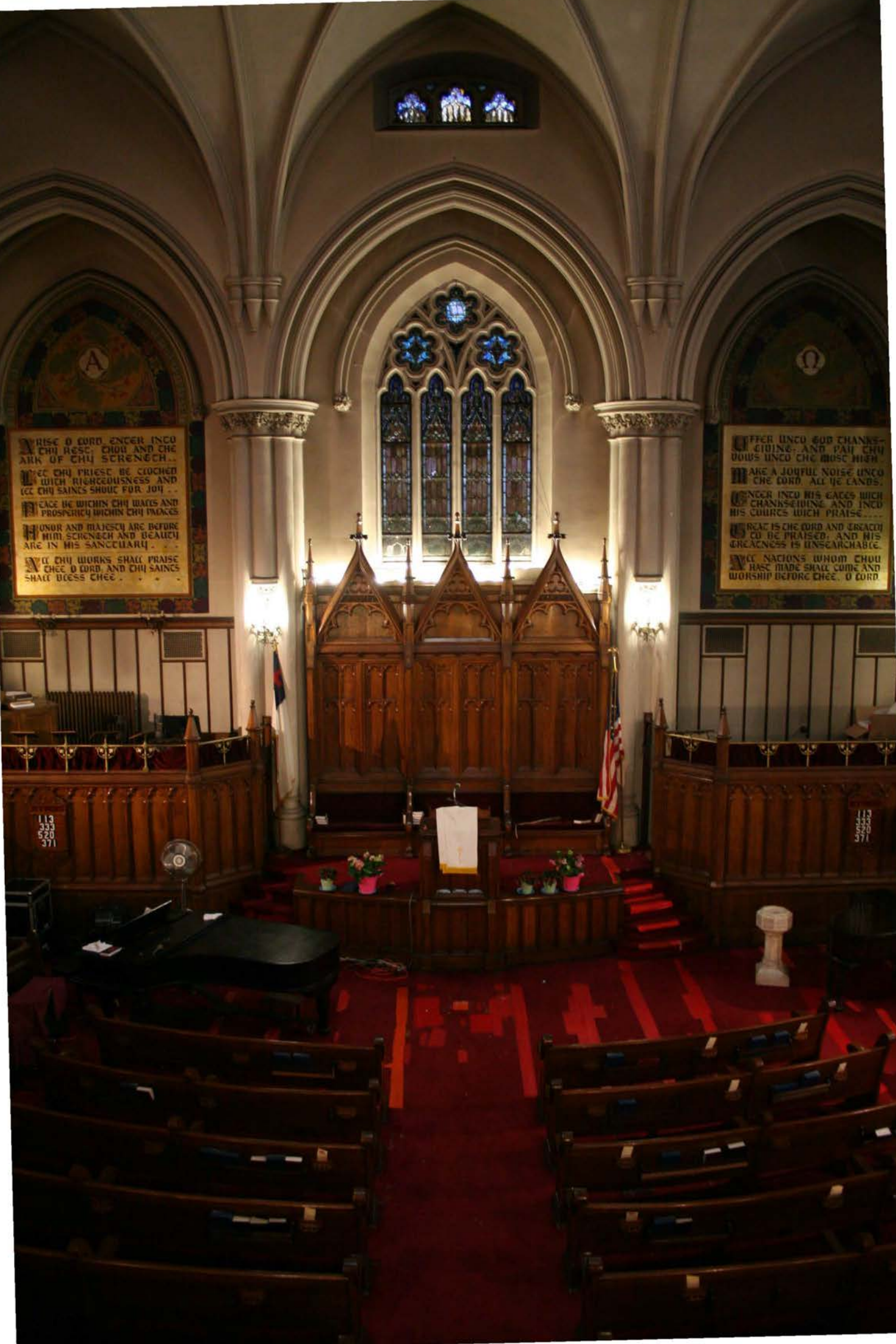


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LET THU PRIEST BE CLOTHED
WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS AND
LET THU SAINTS SHOUT FOR JOY ..

PEACE BE WITHIN THU WATERS AND
PROSPERITY WITHIN THU DWELINGS

HONOR AND MAJESTY ARE BEFORE
HIM. STRENGTH AND BEAUTY
ARE IN HIS SANCTUARY ..

ALL THU WORKS SHALL PRAISE
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: North Presbyterian Church

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, New York

DATE RECEIVED: 12/20/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/21/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/05/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/05/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13001153

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 2-5-14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



FIELD SERVICES BUREAU • DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
STATE AND NATIONAL REGISTERS OF HISTORIC PLACES PROGRAM

STATEMENT OF OWNER SUPPORT

Before an individual nomination proposal will be reviewed or nominated, the owner(s) of record must sign and date the following statement:

I, Trustees of North Presbyterian Church, am the owner of the property at
(print or type owner name)

521-529 West 155th Street New York, NY
(street number and name, city, village or town, state of nominated property)

I support its consideration and inclusion in the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

John F. ... 3/20/13
(signature and date) *President*

Mailing Address:

North Presbyterian Church
525 West 155th Street
New York NY 10032

Revised 5/09

NYC
Landmarks Preservation
Commission

Robert B. Tierney
Chair

October 23, 2012

Kate Daly
Executive Director
kdaly@lpc.nyc.gov

Ms. Ruth Pierpont, Deputy Commissioner
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Peebles Island
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

1 Centre Street
9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

212 669 7926 tel
212 669 7797 fax

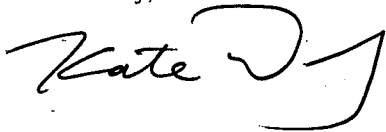
Re: North Presbyterian Church, Manhattan, New York

Dear Ms. Pierpont:

I write on behalf of Chair Robert B. Tierney in response to your request for comment on the eligibility of the North Presbyterian Church, located at 525 West 155th Street in Manhattan, for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

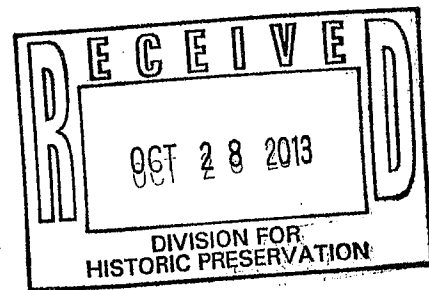
The New York Landmarks Preservation Commission's Director of Research Mary Beth Betts has reviewed the materials submitted by the Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau and has determined that the North Presbyterian Church appears to meet the criteria for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Kate Daly

cc: Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Mary Beth Betts, Director of Research





**New York State Office of Parks,
Recreation and Historic Preservation**

Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189
518-237-8643



Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor

Rose Harvey
Commissioner

13 December 2013

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to enclose six National Register nominations, all on discs, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Rockaway Courthouse, Queens County
New York Bible Society, New York County
North Presbyterian Church, New York County
Temple of Israel Synagogue, Queens County
St. Anselm's Roman Catholic Church and School, Bronx County
Bellevue Country Club, Syracuse, Onondaga County

Please feel free to call me at 518.237.8643 x 3261 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office