

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Grace Church

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

800 Broadway (Broadway, Tenth and Fourth Streets)

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

New York

VICINITY OF

18th

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

New York

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Grace Church in New York, Mr. Karl L. Dowhic, Business Manager

STREET & NUMBER

802 Broadway

CITY, TOWN

New York

VICINITY OF

STATE

New York 10003

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

New York County Hall of Records

STREET & NUMBER

31 Chambers Street

CITY, TOWN

New York

STATE

New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New York City Landmarks Commission/National Register

DATE

1966, 1974

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

305 Broadway

CITY, TOWN

New York

STATE

New York

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT (church)	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD (houses)	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Grace Church occupies the southern half of a long, narrow, trapezoidal block bounded by 10th, Fourth Avenue and Broadway, where Broadway turns and commences its westward slant across Manhattan. With its dramatic spire the church effectively dominates the northward vista at this turn in Broadway.

Constructed of marble, Grace Church (800 Broadway), is rectangular in plan, arranged behind a square tower set on the longitudinal axis. The main entrance, located at the base of the tower is surmounted by a gable and a rose-window followed, above the roof level, by the high traceried openings of the belfry. Rising above the belfry, the tower, embellished by corner pinnacles makes a transition from square to octagonal, terminating ultimately in a slender spire. The marble side walls of the nave consist of a rhythm of pointed-arch windows interspersed by buttresses surmounted by pinnacles. Behind the tower, a crenellated parapet forms the top of the church's bearing walls. The dramatically vertical, vaulted, interior space is adorned by 46 English stained glass windows of which the exceptionally large ones in the transepts and over the altar are particularly striking.

Located immediately north of the church but recessed further on the lot, the essentially square Rectory (804 Broadway), despite the symmetry of its basic shape and its gables, owes its asymmetrical appearance to the differentiating treatment of bay windows. The ecclesiastical character of the church has been carried over into this residence in the use of pinnacled corner buttresses, gables ornamented by crockets and finials, pointed arch windows and fine tracery. Projecting forward to form a vestibule, the main entrance, located in the central bay of the west (front) elevation, is crowned by a richly decorated gable and flanked by pinnacled, miniature, corner buttresses.

The Chantry, adjoining the south elevation of the church, and Grace House, connecting the church with the Rectory on the north, are both irregularly shaped additions skillfully designed at a later date in the same style. The narrow front (west) elevation of Grace House, dominated by a spired 3-story projecting bay, blends so subtly into the asymmetrical pattern established in the Rectory that it appears to be inherently part of the residence.

This description was provided by Lynn A. Beebe, New York State, Division for Historic Preservation.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1843-1846 BUILDER/ARCHITECT James Renwick, Jr. (1818-1895)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Grace Church is the first masterpiece of James Renwick, Jr., who would become, after Richard Upjohn, one of the foremost practitioners of the Gothic Revival style. As the new Medievalism eclipsed the Greek mode James Renwick was creating Grace Church and then Saint Patrick's Cathedral--two of the most impressive examples of this mid-century style in America.

Renwick's reputation was firmly established with this commission when he was only 25 years old. English in taste, based on the theories and designs of A. W. Pugin, Grace reflected those high moral values so typical of a romantic era. One contemporary critic wrote of "the architecture of Christianity, the sublime, the glorious Gothic." Perhaps the purest expression of these theories was ecclesiastical, the churches made a valiant attempt at archaeological accuracy--the "Gothick" houses and castles with cusps, crockets and turrets were confections that no medieval man would ever recognize.

Writing in the North American Review in 1844, architect Arthur Gilman stated that Richard Upjohn's nearly completed Trinity Church "surpasses any church erected in England since the revival of the pointed style."¹ Grace Church, began two years later on October 30, 1843, was under construction at the same time--in the opinion of contemporary Philip Hone destined to be "second only to the magnificent Trinity."² According to historian Phoebe Stanton,

Comparison of the two shows how rapidly competence in the Gothic style developed in the United States, for even if the difference between the tastes and personal styles of Upjohn and Renwick are acknowledged, Grace Church is more tightly knit, uniform, and less dry than Trinity... (The) major difference between the two lies in the way in which Renwick developed the ornamental possibilities of the style and reduced the amount of inert masonry in the elevation. It is tempting to link Renwick's design with the drawing in (Pugin's book) True Principles, but, though there are similarities between them they are not as obvious as in the case of Trinity... Grace Church is... too brilliant and too free to derive its character solely from the Pugin illustration.³

¹Stanton, Phoebe, The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture, John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, p. 56.

²Hone, Philip, The Diary of Philip Hone 1828-1851, Dodd Mead & Co., N.Y. 1910, p. 252.

³Stanton, pp. 65-68.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See continuation sheet).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	5,8,5,2,0,0	4,5,0,9,2,8,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Bounded on the West by Broadway; on the north by Lot 9 (806 Broadway); on the east by Lots 30-33 (102, 100, 98 and 94 Park Avenue South, a/k/a Fourth Avenue), the rear of the lots of Grace Church Houses (92, 90 and 88 Park Avenue South, a/k/a Fourth Avenue) and Lots 37-39 and 41 (86, 84, 80-2 Park Avenue South, a/k/a Fourth Avenue); on the south by East 10th Street. Building lots, together, from the south-west corner; north 240.4'; then east 150'; then south approximately 245'; then west 152.8'.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Carolyn Pitts, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service - Historic Sites Survey Division

DATE

4/19/77

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street, NW.

TELEPHONE

202 523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington, D. C.

STATE

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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In Stanton's opinion Grace Church is "less monumental than Trinity and more elegant in its wealth of decorative detail."⁴

"Upjohn was a man of modest parentage, and his early training was as a cabinetmaker and as an apprentice in an English architect's office. Renwick, on the other hand, was the son of a Columbia College professor who had married into the Brevoort family, and, brought up in luxurious surroundings, he took the diversions of the rich for granted. His contemporary as an undergraduate at Columbia, George Templeton Strong, a remarkable diarist with a sharp eye for the arts and a sharper tongue, thought him the "most windy of all the bags of conceit and coxcombry that every dubbed themselves Architect." If St. Patrick's Cathedral is Renwick's most conspicuous ecclesiastical edifice, Grace Church in New York (it was completed when Renwick was only twenty-eight in 1846) is his most conspicuous architectural accomplishment, a moody and picturesque Gothic structure with a handsome parish house and rectory adjoining it. Most of Renwick's contemporaries were greatly impressed by it, though Mayor Hone was shocked at the prices for which pews were sold and the pew rents that were charged. (Owning a pew in those days was like owning a cooperative apartment now; a family paid for its pew and then had to pay the equivalent of "maintenance" to retain it for its private use.) "The new church at the head of Broadway is nearly finished and ready for consecration," Hone wrote in his diary.

This is to be a fashionable church, and already its aisles are filled...with gay parties of ladies in feathers and "mousseline-delaine dresses" and dandies with moustaches and high-heeled boots; the lofty arches resound with astute criticisms upon "Gothic architecture" from fair ladies who have had the advantage of foreign travel, and scientific remarks upon "acoustics" from elderly millionaires who do not hear quite as well as formerly.

⁴Ibid., p. 60

(Continued)

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There was a competition for Grace Church, though it appears that family position and favoritism got Renwick the job. His only qualifications as an architect were training as an engineer and employment on the building of the Erie Railroad and the Croton Aqueduct. He was, in a sense, part of the tradition of the gentleman amateurs who had built (or initiated) the buildings in the Nation's capital and the great mansions on the James. Strong, who could not find it in his heart to say a good word for Renwick, wrote of a conversation about Grace Church with its architect:

"If the infatuated monkey showed the slightest trace or germ of feeling for his art, one could pardon and pass over blunders and atrocities so gross as to be palpable even to my ignorance; but nature cut him out for a boss carpenter and the vanity and pretension that are endurable in an artist are not be endured in a mechanic, and especially not in one who is a mechanic in spite of his ennobling vocation, and degrades, vulgarizes, and pollutes every glorious idea of form of the successive eras of Christian art that he travesties and tampers with, as a sacrifice to the stolidity of building committees and his own love of fat jobs and profitable contracts.

He had many fat jobs. He designed hotels and stores, asylums and hospitals, apartment houses, row houses, and a workhouse for prisoners. He designed the main building for Vassar College, basing it on the Tuileries. But as a young man he was caught up in the prevailing romantic preoccupation with keeps and dungeons illuminated by flashes of lightning and ringing with the clash of sword on shield."⁵

Later in the century (1877-79) the property on the Fourth Avenue side was developed by Renwick's firm and after his death by the Architects Heins and LaFarge, who designed St. John the Divine. The structures included a Chantry (1879), Grace House (1880), Grace Memorial House (1882-83), Clergy House (1902), and a Choir School. History has been kinder to Renwick than his critics. Grace Church is as much a masterpiece as his Smithsonian Castle on the Mall in the Nation's capital.

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Photographs and Their Descriptions

Location: Grace Church, New York, New York

Photo credit: Sidney Bradford, NPS; N. Y. Landmarks Commission

- Photo description:
1. Side View
 2. Same as above
 3. Same as above
 4. Same as above
 5. Side windows
 6. Front facade
 7. Chancery-Grace House
 8. Same as above
 9. Same as above
 10. Same as above
 11. Same as above

