DESIGNATION MODIFIED
SEE ADDENDUM

Landmarks Preservation Commission
June 25, 2013, Designation List 465
LP-2260

CHURCH OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE, 8 Columbus Avenue (aka 8-10 Columbus Avenue, 120 West 60th Street), Manhattan. Built 1875-85; initial design attributed to Jeremiah O'Rourke; upper walls of towers, c. 1900; "Conversion of Paul" bas-relief by Lumen Martin Winter, 1958

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1131, Lot 31

On June 11, 2013, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a hearing (Item No. 2) on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Church of St. Paul the Apostle and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site.[1] The hearing was duly advertised according to provisions of law. Five people spoke in support of designation, including representatives of New York State Senator Brad Hoylman, Community Board 7, the Historic Districts Council, Landmark West! and the Society for the Architecture of the City. One person, representing Father Gilbert Martinez, CSP, spoke in opposition to designation.

Summary

The Church of St. Paul the Apostle, located at the southwest corner of Columbus Avenue and 60th Street in Manhattan, was built in 1875-85. Commissioned by the Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle, commonly called the Paulist Fathers, it is an austere and imposing Medieval Revival style design, loosely based on Gothic and Romanesque sources. The Paulists trace their origins to 1858 when Isaac Hecker traveled to Rome and received permission from Pope Pius IX to organize an American society of missionary priests. The following year, Archbishop John Hughes of New York asked Hecker's group to establish a parish on Manhattan's Upper West Side and a simple brick church was constructed. The new parish quickly outgrew this building and in the mid-1870s a new structure was planned by Jeremiah O'Rourke, a New Jersey architect with various Catholic churches to his credit. George Deshon, a Paulist priest who trained at West Point as a military engineer, took over the project by the early 1880s and probably simplified O'Rourke's original design. The rock-faced grey granite stonework was salvaged from various structures in Manhattan, including sections of an embankment of the Croton Aqueduct that was originally on the Upper West side and the Croton Distributing Reservoir at 42nd Street, as well as Booth's Theater, which stood at Sixth Avenue and 23rd Street until 1883. When the church was dedicated in January 1885, however, it was far from complete. The towers had yet to attain their current height and few major decorative features had been installed, including the jamb statues that flank the entrances and the stained glass windows. The American muralist Lumen Martin Winter designed the impressive marble and mosaic bas-relief in the broad recess between the towers. Commissioned to celebrate the parish centenary in 1959, this colorful artwork depicts the "Conversion of Paul" on the road to Damascus. During the 1960s and 1970s, the parish struggled financially. With bankruptcy looming in 1973, a proposal to demolish the church and replace it with an apartment building was considered. In the mid-1980s, however, only the west portion of the site was sold, as well as various development rights in 1984 and 2000. At this time, a major restoration of the Church of St. Paul the Apostle was begun and has been ongoing.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Paulist Fathers

Isaac Thomas Hecker (1819-88) founded the Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle, commonly called the Paulist Fathers, in 1858.[2] Born in New York City to Prussian immigrants, he converted to Catholicism in August 1844 at St. Patrick's Cathedral and became an ordained priest in London in 1849. Hecker served in the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, called the Redemptorists, and traveled widely as a missionary until his abrupt dismissal during an unauthorized visit to Rome in August 1857. A year later, with the support of four American-born Redemptorists – Fathers Francis Baker, George Deshon, Augustine F. Hewitt and Clarence Walworth – Pope Pius IX later granted Hecker permission to establish an independent society of missionary priests in the United States.[3] Most of his early associates were born in the in this country and were recent converts to the faith. [4]

Father Hecker returned to New York in 1858 and was elected superior of the Paulist Fathers, a position he held for three decades.[5] He believed the Catholic Church should adapt to changing social conditions, using various means to communicate its religious message. Through public events and preaching, he hoped to attract non-Catholics to Catholicism. One writer would later describe the Paulists as "direct and popular in their methods, and do not shrink from the closest engagement with social, philosophical and religious problems of the day. They are not retrospective, but merge themselves in the struggle and duty of the present."[6] The Paulist Press, originally known as the Catholic Publication Society, was established in 1866. It published the *Catholic World*, a monthly magazine; *The Young Catholic*, an illustrated monthly for children; and inexpensive penny pamphlets. These varied and popular publications helped broaden the organization's national reach and influence. An author in the *Catholic World* remarked: "There are cities and towns and villages of this vast continent in which the voices of the Paulists was never heard, and never may be heard; but their works from the press are there doing the Master's work in their name."[7]

An Upper West Side Parish

Many Catholic immigrants settled in New York City during the first half of the 19th century, creating the city's largest Christian denomination. Between 1840 and 1860, the number of Catholics reached 400,000 – mostly Irish immigrants. Under John Hughes, the city's fourth Catholic bishop, 61 parishes were established, including the Congregation of the Missionary Priests of St. Paul the Apostle, which originally served a large part of Manhattan's west side, from 52nd Street to 110th Street.[8] As additional parishes were formed, St. Paul's would relinquish some of its territory. For instance, when the Parish of the Blessed Sacrament was established on West 71st Street in 1887, the northern boundary was redrawn to 65th Street.[9]

In the late 1850s, construction of Central Park was just beginning and the blocks surrounding the site of the future church were mostly undeveloped. For a brief time, the Paulist Fathers rented a small frame house at 14 West 60th Street, between Eighth and Ninth Avenues,[10] which temporarily functioned as a chapel and residence. Hecker soon began to solicit funds from city residents, as well as from members of the national clergy, to erect a church and convent. Leading donors included Father Joseph Early of Georgetown College in Washington D.C. and George V(alentine) Hecker (1818-1888), Father Hecker's older brother and founder of Croton Flour Mills, for which the Heckers brand of flour is named. Thirty-two lots, bordered by Ninth Avenue, 59th Street and 60th Street, were purchased by the parish in 1859 for $40,000.[11]

An estimated 15,000 people attended the cornerstone ceremonies on June 20, 1859. Set back from Ninth Avenue and oriented towards 59th Street, the 3½-story brick building was completed in

November 1859.[12] It was described as "neat, firm and compact . . . constructed with regard to strength and durability rather than ostentation and mere outward show."[13] When the Church of St. Paul the Apostle was completed in 1885, this structure became the rectory. It was demolished in 1931 and replaced by the six-story Paulist Fathers Residence at 415-25 West 59th Street (Maginnis & Walsh, c. 1938, not part of the designation). A Sunday school was organized by the parish in 1864, followed by a children's library in 1864 and an elementary school in 1886. A separate building for the school was erected at 124-30 West 60th Street in 1891. Designed by architect Henry C. Palmer, it was later used as a Mission House, providing shelter and services to the homeless.[14] This building was demolished in the mid-1980s and the site is currently occupied by an apartment tower. A five-story convent was erected at 120-22 West 60th Street in c. 1949 (not part of the designation, see addendum). Located to the west end of the church's north aisle, this simple yellow brick building was designed by architect R. Marshall Christensen.

Construction of the Church of St. Paul the Apostle

In the early 1870s, the Paulist Fathers made plans to erect a much larger building at the corner of West 59th Street, facing Ninth (now Columbus) Avenue. Since acquiring the site, many changes had taken place in the immediate neighborhood. Roosevelt Hospital, established in 1871, now occupied the block to the south and the streets to the west contained various businesses, including a cattle yard and slaughterhouse. Furthermore, the Ninth Avenue elevated railway was being extended to the Upper West Side. Though it only reached 30th Street in 1873, by 1876 a station had opened at 59th Street, opposite where the church would stand. Noisy conditions were anticipated and some parish members wanted to halt construction and leave midtown Manhattan. Hecker, however, advised against "hasty decisions" and the Paulists chose to remain at this location.[15]

Father Hecker wanted a monumental edifice, comparable to St. Patrick's Cathedral (begun 1853, a designated New York City Landmark), which was nearing completion on Fifth Avenue, between 50th and 51st Streets, as well as to various churches he had visited in Europe. In 1874, he hired an unnamed French architect, based in Lyon, to design the building. Father Alfred Young (1831-1900), who was currently assistant superior general, was chosen to supervise the project. Young, however, criticized the preliminary scheme, saying it "might do for the mausoleum of some heathen jurisconsult, but most certainly would never be mistaken for a Catholic church."[16] This would be the first of many conflicts concerning the design of the church.

Young then invited architect Jeremiah O'Rourke (1833-1915), of Newark, New Jersey, to design the church "in the early plain Gothic style."[17] The Paulists maintained close ties to New Jersey's Catholic community. Both Young and Baker attended Princeton University and upon the society's founding in 1858, Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley of Newark invited them to establish a local parish. Though they did not accept his offer, Bayley's successor, Bishop Michael Augustine Corrigan, would play an important role in the cornerstone and dedication ceremonies.

O'Rourke was born in Ireland; he studied architecture at the Government School of Design in Dublin and immigrated to the United States in 1850. He designed at least a dozen Catholic churches in New Jersey, including Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (1860) in Boonton, the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (1864) in Camden, and the Basilica of the Sacred Heart (begun 1899) in Newark.[18] O'Rourke & Sons was also responsible for the rectory (1904) of St. Agnes' Church at 143 East 43rd Street in Manhattan.

Sometime in 1876, O'Rourke submitted his plans to the New York Bureau of Buildings (NB 395-76). When the cornerstone ceremony was held with 20,000 people in attendance on June 4, 1876, the deep cellar had already been excavated and the new church was anticipated to become "a conspicuous object in the city's landscape."[19] The parish, however, faced significant financial

hurdles. With a debt of $75,000, the project was temporarily abandoned in late 1877.[20] Though construction resumed sometime later, O'Rourke would resign by 1882 and was replaced by Father George Deshon (1823-1903), who trained at West Point Military Academy (1839-43) and later served as a professor, as well as an Ordnance Officer. *The American Architect* would later report:

> Mr. O'Rourk [sic] drew up plans under the direction of Father Hecker and Father Deshon; but found himself in the awkward position of being instructed how to draw the plans on one side by the owner and having the owner also appear as chief of construction and superintendent of the work. His sphere of activity became more and more limited as time went on, until he finally was out altogether.[21]

O'Rourke and Deshon shared increasing disagreements about engineering matters, resulting in a "lawsuit" that was settled through consultation with outside experts who determined that the 60-foot-wide truss that Deshon proposed for the nave was safe, making him both "architect in charge of construction and chief mechanic."[22] During construction, Deshon was said to have taken:

> … a special interest in the matter of building; and a great deal had to be done in his time. The great church in New York was, it may be said, really his work. He superintended every detail of its construction and would spend days upon the walls while they were going up, to make sure everything was done carefully and thoroughly.[23]

Construction continued throughout 1883-84. By July 1884, the central stairs had been built and the barrel-vaulted ceiling in the sanctuary was being painted.[24] Towards the end of the year, the building was opened to accommodate the annual November-December Paulist fair. This popular charity event lasted four weeks and raised approximately $35,000.[25] On January 25, 1885, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle, the church was dedicated.

Design

The Church of St. Paul of the Apostle is a Medieval Revival style design, loosely reflecting Gothic and possibly Romanesque sources. Father Joseph L. Malloy, a member of the parish, wrote in 1950:

> More courage than mortar went into its foundations and Father Hecker was the guiding spirit whose appreciation of the architectural beauty of the great churches abroad and whose creative imagination were invaluable assets. He had recently returned from a trip to Europe where he had made an intensive study of the principal churches and basilicas, and he determined to build a large and beautiful church in which would be combined the art of the old world and the American genius of his own time.[26]

The Basilica of Santa Croce (Florence, begun 1295) may have served as Hecker's model.[27] These buildings share similar dimensions, unusually wide naves, arcades with pointed profiles, and windows that are set high on the outer walls so that the chapels and nave are illuminated from above.[28] While some observers saw the arrangement of the fenestration in spiritual terms, there was also a practical benefit. By eliminating the lower windows and building the stone walls "straight up" they hoped to diminish the "thunderous" sounds of passing elevated trains.[29]

Hecker wanted a practical design, one that would satisfy the needs of a growing congregation. During a recent trip abroad, he wrote:

> Why should we not have the same faith shaped into stone in our own land? But our wants differ from those which built these church [sic]. [Our] church [is] a preaching

> church. We can take style which best fits our wants, and adapt it to them, and not sacrifice our necessities to architecture.[30]

Nevertheless, he believed that the church should have a distinctive character: "I did not mean to have an imitation, a servile copy of this or that, but a church that should tell in its own way something of the life and spirit of our work to coming generations."[31]

O'Rourke began to prepare the initial drawings in 1875. The original plan resembled a 13th century French or English Gothic church, with a recessed entrance flanked by towers of different height and design. While this slightly lopsided configuration loosely recalled Chartres Cathedral (1193-1250) in France, it also suggests the primary facade of St. George's Church (1856, a designated New York City Landmark), a pioneering example of the Romanesque Revival style on Stuyvesant Square in midtown Manhattan.

The Church of St. Paul the Apostle was planned for a large congregation that was anticipated to grow. Measuring 284 by 121 feet, the central portal is 16 feet wide and 30 feet tall. The 260-foot long sanctuary has eight bays and can hold approximately 4,400 persons, about half seated. The *Catholic World* observed: "And this realizes to the full the idea of the Paulist Fathers, that their church shall be a parish and preaching church, wherein all can take direct part in divine worship, and many at one time hear the word of god."[32] On the lower level an additional chapel-auditorium with 18-foot ceilings was built, as well as a crypt, where some of the earliest Paulists are buried. At the time of completion, it was the second largest church in New York City, surpassed by only St. Patrick's Cathedral, and later, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, begun 1889.

Contemporary architecture critic Marianna Griswold Van Rensselaer found the exterior "not remarkable" but praised the overall design because it:

> . . . naturally follows the ancient plan, and yet is one of the most sensible and non-medieval structures we have produced . . . I can hardly say with what "style" one should rank this church. We may call it Gothic, if we will, since its openings are pointed, but it shows no window tracery and no Gothic decoration, and its broad wall-spaces remind us of very different fashions of construction. Whatever its "style," its effect will certainly not be that of an imitated medievalism.[33]

The *New York Tribune* characterized the design in practical and spiritual terms: "It is an original conception. It is just such a church as the Fathers wanted and not a pet plan of the architect. It is the deliberate growth of their aesthetic and religious conclusions." The "doric severity and simplicity" was, likewise, interpreted as a critique of contemporary church design. The unnamed author asserted: the "meaning of St. Paul's to-day, architecturally, lies in a vehement protest against the trumpery, voluptuous ideals now prevailing in fashionable church buildings."[34]

<u>Materials</u>

Salvaged materials played a significant role in construction of the Church of St. Paul the Apostle. While such strategies probably were intended to reduce costs, the idea of transforming materials with prosaic origins into ones with a divine purpose parallels the congregation's reputation for attracting converts to Catholicism. The walls are "some 8 feet thick" and the original contract stipulated that the exterior surface be faced with red Connecticut granite.[35] Instead, rock-faced grey granite stonework of varying size, set in a random ashlar pattern, was used. These blocks were acquired from a section of the Croton Aqueduct (1837-42) at what was known as Clendenning Valley, between 92nd and 113th Streets, on Manhattan's Upper West Side. In the mid-1870s, new water pipes were being installed and the stone embankment was dismantled. On June 21, 1876 – two

weeks after the church cornerstone was laid – the Commission of the Sinking Fund authorized the city comptroller to sell the granite by auction or sealed bid. According to the *New York Tribune*:

> It was during the summer of 1875 – Father Deshon, Father Elliot and Father Rosencrans (son of General Rosencrans) were riding on an Eighth Avenue horse-car and came to a place where the abandoned aqueduct, pierced here and there for streets, loomed large in the landscape. A remark from Father Rosencrans brought Father Deshon to the spot where the stone was examined and subsequently purchased with an estimated savings of some $22,000.[36]

In 1890, the church towers were described as 94 feet tall. The *New York Times* later reported that 40 feet were going to be added, using stone from the Croton Aqueduct's distributing reservoir at Fifth Avenue, between 40th and 42nd Streets. The reservoir was decommissioned in the 1890s and demolition began in 1899. The estimated cost of this phase of construction was $10,000 and money was raised through an appeal for subscriptions. Henry C. Palmer, architect of the church school, supervised the work. At present, the height of each tower is 114 feet – suggesting that these newspaper's figures were exaggerated or that the addition was only partially completed.[37]

Another example of architectural recycling involved the wide central stairs facing Columbus Avenue. When Booth's Theatre (1869) at Sixth Avenue and 23rd Street closed in 1883, it was converted to a department store. As part of the renovation, some of the theater's stonework was apparently removed by the contractor and sold to the church, which erected a pair of quarter-turn staircases that meet at a generous landing outside of the main (center) doors, as well as a broad single staircase that descends to the lower level.[38]

The five metal-and-glass lighting fixtures that illuminate the three entrances were installed in mid-1960s. Each door has a single light, hung from the top of the arch, while the main doors are flanked by a pair of matching fixtures attached to the facade by elaborate metal brackets. These handsome fixtures were, again, not commissioned by the church but had been part of another building – the Savoy-Plaza Hotel on Fifth Avenue, between East 58th and 59th Streets. A late neo-classical work by the architectural firm of McKim Mead & White, this famous hotel welcomed guests from 1927 to 1965. The fixture above the main doors has straight sides and was probably hung inside the slender round arch that led from Fifth Avenue into the hotel lobby, while the rest, which narrow toward the base, flanked storefronts. During the 1966 demolition, they were acquired by Father Francis Xavier Ryan.[39]

<u>Church Decoration</u>

St. Paul's opened "with pomp and splendor" in January 1885. Nearly 4,000 people purchased $2 tickets to enter the building during ceremonies. Despite considerable fanfare, it was described by the *New York Times* and other newspapers as being "far from completion."[40] All of the stained glass was installed later and is partly visible from the exterior. The earliest windows are found in the chancel, directly behind the altar, and are part of the west facade. "Our Lady of the Angels," at center, was donated by George Hecker, Isaac Hecker's brother. Manufactured in London by Cox Sons, Buckley and Company, a firm specializing in ecclesiastical decorations, it was the first window unveiled, in May 1885.[41] A contemporary writer described the image of the Virgin as "equal to any done in our day, perhaps not surpassed by any window ever made."[42] Moreover, the *New York Times* claimed: "This is said to be the largest window in this country thus constructed. In fact, there are only three larger in the world, those in the cathedral at Milan."[43] To either side are single windows by the Franz Mayer studio of Munich, Germany, dating to 1888. Originally part of a group of four windows

fabricated for the church by the same firm, these windows represent the archangels and were likely designed by Anton Blaim (b. 1855), who worked with Mayer from 1876 to 1891.[44]

The outer windows in the chancel are by the noted American muralist and stained-glass designer John La Farge (1835-1910) who played a leading role in the church's decorative program from 1884 to 1899. These vibrantly-colored windows complement the domed tabernacle on the high altar, designed by architect Stanford White in 1888-90. A 1950 guide to the interiors described the La Farge glass as "a work in color second to none in the world."[45] La Farge and Hecker developed a friendship in the 1850s. He produced a portrait sketch of Hecker and later consulted on the floor plan. La Farge received many notable commissions during the late 19th century, contributing murals and stained glass to Trinity Church in Boston, as well as St. Thomas' Church, the Church of the Ascension and the Judson Memorial Church, all in Manhattan. At the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, La Farge executed 14 clerestory windows, installed on both sides of the nave in 1888. Each 27 by 14 foot window is highly decorative, incorporating a jeweled-cross motif. He also was responsible for similar imagery in the five slender lancet windows at the center of the Columbus Avenue facade and the lunette above the center entrance, which depicts Byzantine-style columns and probably dates from the 1890s.[46] Lancet windows were frequently used in 12th century Gothic churches. O'Rourke's original design had five squat pointed arches with three lancet windows centered beneath a large rose window. In the final arrangement, the rose window was replaced by a row of five lancet windows set behind a screen of pointed arches supported by slender stone columns with composite (possibly unfinished) capitals.

Sculptural Features

Each of the side entrances that face Columbus Avenue are flanked by statues. Dating from before 1895, they may be attributed to Darius Colombani (1850-1900), an ecclesiastical designer, and the sculptor Giusseppi Morretti (1857-1935). Both artists immigrated to the United States from Italy in the 1880s and collaborated on various commissions for the Catholic Archdiocese of New York. In 1893, they installed the Altar of St. Catharine of Genoa in the "first niche to the right of the chancel." The possibly unfinished shrine was described by the *New York Herald* as "one of the most magnificent in all New York."[47] A month later, the same newspaper reported that they were designing a dozen portraits of the apostles to decorate the columns that support the vaulting in the main apse. Although this project was not pursued, portraits of saints, each identified on the base, flank both entrances and are most likely by the same artists. The south (left) portal displays life-size stone representations of St. John, St. Teresa, St. Philip Nervi, St. Benedict, St. Clare, and St. Anthony of the Desert. The north portal (right) features St. Alphonsus, St. Catherine, St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, and St. Vincent Ferrer. The six bases that flank the main doors remain empty.

An 18-foot by 60-foot bas-relief fills the horizontal recess between the towers, directly above the center portal's pointed arch. O'Rourke proposed a rose window above the main entrance, but Hecker requested changes that permitted the eventual insertion of this brightly-colored artwork in late 1958.[48] Designed by Lumen Martin Winter (1908-82), in consultation with the architect Howard Swenson (1903-81),[49] it depicts St. Paul's spiritual awakening (at right) during his journey from Jerusalem to Damascus in 31-36 A.D.[50] At left, God floats above Jesus and Mary, who travel together in a four-wheeled chariot pulled by an ox and lion, representing the evangelists St. Luke and St. Mark. St. Matthew, taking the form of a winged angel, and St. John, represented by a flying eagle, accompany them, as well as the original four "doctors" of the western church: St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine and St. Gregory.

Lumen Martin Winter was a well-known American illustrator and muralist. Born in Kansas, he began his career in the 1930s working for the Works Progress Administration and later lived in

Larchmont, New York. He received many religious and civic commissions, such as the tomb of Isaac Hecker, installed in the north aisle of the church in 1959, and a 1960s mural for the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Commissioned to mark the centennial of the founding of the Paulist Fathers, this 50-ton panel was fabricated in Pietrasanta, Italy, in June 1958 and dedicated in December 1958. By this time, the elevations must have been quite dirty and the *New York Times* said the bold colors would "brighten up an old church dingy with city grime."[51] The various figures were deeply carved in white Roman travertine marble that hardens over time, while the contrasting Venetian mosaic background, executed with 15 shades of blue and green, was chosen to evoke the colors of the Mediterranean sea, where Paul traveled as a missionary.[52]

Recent History

The Church of St. Paul the Apostle has always merited the attention of New Yorkers. Situated on the corner of a prominent midtown avenue, this monumental edifice is difficult to overlook and many articles have been written about the congregation and its activities. The *New York Tribune* reported in 1885 that during the period of construction, "it was commonly supposed that a fortress was constructing there. It was a fortress in one sense – a spiritual one – for it was the home of the Paulist Fathers."[53] Such observations were probably inspired by the somewhat severe character of the rock-faced granite elevations, but also, possibly, because of George Deshon's training as a military engineer. In 1893, *King's Handbook of New York City* called it "one of the greatest Catholic Churches . . . forms one of the strongest fortresses of Catholicism in New York City."[54] Three decades later, *Rider's New York City*, a guidebook, remarked that Deshon's transformation of O'Rourke's original Gothic design into a Roman basilica was "one of the most impressive specimens of this type in America."[55] The building would be recognized in 1957 as one of the "Landmarks of New York," a program founded by the New York Community Trust to identify significant historic structures and a plaque was installed in the north entrance.[56]

A public hearing was held to consider the Church of St. Paul the Apostle (8 Columbus Avenue: Block 1131, Lot 31) for designation as a New York City Landmark on June 14, 1966. At the time, there were two additional buildings on the site: 124-30 West 60th Street and 120-22 West 60th Street. During the 1960s the parish struggled financially and with bankruptcy looming a proposal was made in 1973 to demolish the building and sell 70% of the site for commercial development. A year later, this controversial strategy was approved by the parish council and the Paulist Father's General Assembly "in order to increase effectiveness and make [the parish] financially viable."[57] Despite interest from at least one real estate developer, the project did not proceed. *New York Times* architecture critic Ada Louise Hutxtable wrote in 1975: "One of the city's most impressive architectural white elephants, St. Paul the Apostle on Ninth Avenue, with a galaxy of ecclesiastical arts, has been kept out of the hands of the developers only by the building recession."[58]

In 1984, Lot 31 was subdivided and the west section (approximately 115 feet in length), as well as some development rights above the church, were sold to a developer. At this time, the building at 124-30 West 60th Street was demolished. The lot (formerly 22, now condominiums), extends south to West 59th Street and is occupied by a 51-story apartment building (1986).[59] The remaining development rights were sold in 2000.[60]

The Church of St. Paul the Apostle was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991.[61] In circa 2000, the light-colored oak panel entrance doors on Columbus Avenue were replaced with complementary doors. Roof repairs and re-pointing of the upper level of each tower were completed in 2011. The mosaic bas-relief was also cleaned. Scaffolding and netting currently covers

the north elevation, extending along West 60th Street. Repairs to the main roof and elevations are continuing.[62]

Description

The Church of St. Paul the Apostle stands at the southwest corner of Columbus Avenue and West 60th Street. Faced with mostly grey and pink-tinted granite, the south tower adjoins and is partly obscured by the neighboring apartment building. At the northwest corner of the site, facing West 60th Street, is the former convent. This simple yellow brick building adjoins the west end of the north aisle but does not contribute to the architectural or historical character of the church (not part of the designation, see addendum).

Historic: Columbus Avenue facade: central bay, light-colored stone stairs to landing and main entrance, wood doors, stained-glass tympanum, entrance flanked by metal-and-glass lighting fixtures, five stained-glass windows set behind arcade; side tower bays, stairs to raised side entrances, stone statues flank side entrances, wood doors.
West 60th Street facade (hidden by scaffolding at time of designation): areaway, windows, roof.
South facade: this facade is mostly obscured by neighboring buildings except from a mid-block parking lot on West 59th Street where clerestory windows and roof are partly visible.
West facade (apse): visible above the adjoining structure at 120-22 West 60th Street.

Alterations: Blue mosaic and white marble bas-relief installed in 1958; free-standing sculpture (artist not identified) near corner of Columbus Avenue and West 60th Street; lower section of south facade and south tower incorporated into (and hidden by) adjoining apartment tower.

Researched and written by
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NOTES

[1] The Church of St. Paul the Apostle (LP-0283) was previously heard at a public hearing on June 14, 1966 (Item No. 15).

[2] Several biographies of Isaac Hecker have been published. The most recent is David J. O'Brien, *Isaac Hecker: An American Catholic* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992). Others include Walter Elliot, *Life of Father Hecker* (1891), accessed online at http://books.google.com, and Joseph McSorley, *Isaac Hecker and His Friends* (New York: Paulist Press, 1952/1972).

[3] "Dismissed," viewed at http://archive.catholicherald.co.uk/article/28th-february-1958.

[4] "An American Order of Priests," *Chicago Tribune*, August 21, 1870, 6; "Converts: Distinguished Protestants Who Have Become Catholics," *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 28, 1878, 1.

[5] An early reference to Hecker identifies him as the "Superior of the Congregation of Missionary Priests of St. Paul the Apostle." See "New Jersey Items," *New York Daily Tribune*, September 7, 1858, 7.

[6] "A Great Church Dedicated," *New York Tribune*, January 26, 1885, 3.

[7] "The Dedication of the Church of St. Paul," *Catholic World* 40 (March 1885) viewed at books.google.com, 842.

[8] "Our Parish," viewed at www.stpaulthe apostle.org.

[9] The Church of the Blessed Sacrament is located at 152 West 71st Street. The current building, by Gustave E. Steinbach, was completed in 1919. It replaced an 1887 building by Napoleon Le Brun, see McSorley, 196.

[10] Rev. Joseph L. Malloy, *The Church of St. Paul the Apostle in New York* (The Paulist Press, c. 1950). Other significant studies on the church include: Helene Barbara Weinberg, "The Work of John La Farge in the Church of St. Paul the Apostle," *The American Art Journal* 6 (May 1974), 18-34; and "The Church of St. Paul the Apostle," National Register of Historic Places, prepared by Chris Jenks and Mark A. Weber for New York Landmarks Conservancy, certified October 10, 1991.

[11] O'Brien, 184.

[12] McSorley, 121.

[13] "Missionary Church of St. Paul the Apostle," *New York Herald*, November 28, 1859, 5.

[14] See Liisa and Donald Sclare, "Historic Architecture Survey Report: St. Paul the Apostle Roman Catholic Church & Mission House," submitted to Landmarks Preservation Commission, probably mid-1980s. This report identifies the architect as Harry Palmer.

[15] "Voices from the Pulpits: A Great Temple Dedicated," *New York Herald*, January 26, 1885, 1. The section of Ninth Avenue north of 59th Street was renamed Columbus Avenue in 1890.

[16] Alfred Young joined the Paulists in 1861, see O'Brien, 364.

[17] Cited by Weinberg, 19.

[18] After briefly serving as the United States Supervising Architect in Washington D.C., where O'Rourke was responsible for a number of post office buildings, he founded Jeremiah O'Rourke & Sons, which included his sons William P. O'Rourke, Joseph B. O'Rourke, and Louis J. O'Rourke.

[19] "Correspondence," *The American Architect and Building News* (June 24, 1876), 206. Also see: "Laying a Cornerstone," *New York Herald*, June 5, 1876, viewed at fultonhistory.com; "Blessing a Corner-Stone," *New York Tribune*, June 5, 1876, 5.

[20] "The Paulist Fathers' New Church," *New York Tribune*, November 30, 1877, 8.

[21] In late 1883, Deshon was identified as the "architect of the building, and who has superintended its erection." See "A New Roman Catholic Church," *New York Tribune*, November 30, 1883, 8; "A Notable Work of Decoration," *The American Architect* (July 27, 1910), 28.

[22] Ibid; *The American Architect*, 29.

[23] "George Deshon Obituary Notice," *Thirty-Fifth Annual Reunion of the Association of the Graduates of the United States Military Academy*, June 14, 1904, viewed at http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Places/America/United_States/Army/USMA/AOG_Reunions/35/George_Deshon*.html.

[24] "Catholic Church Work," *New York Times*, July 6, 1884, 9.

[25] "The Great Paulist Fair," *New York Times*, December 19, 1884, 5.

[26] Malloy, 5.

[27] Robert A.M. Stern, Thomas Mellins and David Fishman, *New York 1880: Architecture and Urbanism in the Gilded Age* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1999), 770.

[28] The nave in Sta. Croce, Florence, is 19 meters (62 feet) wide and St. Paul's is 64 feet wide. The facades also have similar widths, 39 meters (127 feet) and 121 feet.

[29] "Voices from the Pulpits."

[30] Cited by Weinberg, 19.

[31] "A Great Church Dedicated," 3.

[32] "The Dedication of the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, In New York," *Catholic World* (March 1885), 836-837.

[33] Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer, "Churches," (January 1885), reprinted in *Accents As Well As Broad Effects: Writings on Architecture, Landscape and the Environment, 1876-1925* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 195-96.

[34] "A Great Church Dedicated, 3."

[35] "A Notable Work of Decoration," 27.

[36] "A Notable Work of Decoration," 28. The *New York Tribune* claimed that most of the stone "was taken from the streets in the immediate neighborhood." See "A New Roman Catholic Church, *New York Tribune*, November 30, 1883, 8.

[37] "Will Extend Its Towers," *New York Times*, April 28, 1900, viewed online at Proquest; Malloy, 7.

[38] "In the Catholic World," *New York Times*, July 27, 1884, 3.

[39] The site is currently occupied by 767 Fifth Avenue, the former General Motors Building (Edward Durrell Stone, 1964-68).

[40] "Voices from the Pulpits"; "The New Church of St. Paul," *New York Times*, January 24, 1885, 2.

[41] The ecclesiastic artists Cox & Son were active 1837-41. They merged with Buckley & Company in 1881 and remained active until at least 1903. Also see "In the Catholic Church," *New York Times*, May 11, 1885, 2.

[42] "The Dedication of the Church of St. Paul," viewed at books.Google.com.

[43] "A New Church Window," *New York Times*, May 10, 1885, 3.

[44] This information was shared by Wilfried Jaekel at Mayer-of-Munich, letter to author, May 2012.

[45] Malloy, 15. For additional information and photographs of the interiors, see: Wilfrid E. Anthony, "The Church of St. Paul the Apostle, New York," *Christian Art* 3 (June 1908), 101-117, viewed at books.google.com.

[46] Weinberg, 26-27.

[47] "Her Shrine Superb," *New York Herald*, November 25, 1893, viewed at fultonhistory.com.

[48] O'Brien, 364.

[49] "Howard Swenson, 78, Architect, Consultant," *New York Times*, May 26, 1981, D12.

[50] Paul's conversion is described in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 22, verses 3-16, in the New Testament. Letter from Father Gilbert Martinez, CSP, to Michael Owen, received by email, June 21, 2013.

[51] "Sculpture in Honor of Paulists To Adorn West 59th St. Church," *New York Times*, July 7, 1958, 30.

[52] "Paulists Bless Vast Sculpture," *New York Times*, December 8, 1958, 40; William Claxton, Jr. "Meeting a Challenge," *American Artist* (January 1959), 55-75.

[53] *New York Tribune*, January 26, 1885, 4.

[54] *King's Handbook of New York City* (Boston: Moses King, 1893), 361-362.

[55] *Rider's New York City* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 2nd edition, 1923), 319.

[56] "Trust's Landmarks of New York," viewed at http://www.nycommunitytrust.org/Historicalplaques/tabid/362/Default.aspx

[57] "West Side Church to Be Torn Down," *New York Times*, May 19, 1974, 46.

[58] Ada Louise Hutxtable, "Our "Expendable" Churches Are Too Good to Expend," *New York Times*, November 30, 1975, 179.

[59] The Mission House was demolished in 1985 and the west portion of the site, as well as the development rights, was used to erect an apartment building at 427 West 59th Street (aka 124-30 West 60th Street). At 2-6 Columbus Avenue, a subsequent apartment building (c. 1998) adjoins the church and cantilevers slightly over the south tower. This lot was not part of the site heard by LPC on June 14, 1966.

[60] Letter from Father Gilbert Martinez, CSP, to Michael Owen, received by email, June 21, 2013.

[61] National Register of Historic Places, Church of St. Paul the Apostle, New York, National Register OMB# 1024-0018, certified October 10, 1991. This report lists the convent at 120 West 60th Street as "non-contributing."

[62] Christopher Gray, "Renewal and Change, Esthetic and Liturgical," *New York Times*, December 20, 1992, R5; "West Side is Getting High-Rise," *New York Times*, January 11, 1985, A13; and "Selling Condos in a Rental Market," *New York Times*, September 11, 1998, B10.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Church of St. Paul the Apostle has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, history, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that the Church of St. Paul the Apostle is one of largest and most monumental religious buildings in Manhattan; that it was built for the Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle, commonly called the Paulist Fathers, between 1875 and 1885 and is an austere and imposing Medieval-Revival style structure, reflecting both Gothic and Romanesque sources; that it was designed by Jeremiah O'Rourke, a New Jersey architect with many Catholic Churches to his credit; that O'Rourke was replaced in the early 1880s by Father George Deshon; that Deshon, a Paulist priest who trained as a military engineer at West Point Military Academy, supervised construction and probably simplified O'Rourke's original design; that the grey rock-faced granite is arranged in a random ashlar pattern and was salvaged from at least three sources in Manhattan: an embankment of the Croton Aqueduct on the Upper West Side, the Croton Distributing Reservoir at Fifth Avenue between 40th and 42nd Streets, and Booth's Theatre, which stood at Sixth Avenue and 23rd Street until 1883; that Isaac Hecker founded the Paulists in Rome in 1858; that under Archbishop John Hughes of New York a parish was established in 1859 and a small brick church was erected on West 59th Street; that Hecker also organized the Catholic Publication Society, later called the Paulist Press, to expand the organization's reach and influence; that when the building was dedicated in January 1885 it was far from complete; that the towers had yet to attain their current height and few of the major decorative features had been installed, such as the stained glass windows (many by John La Farge) and the jamb statues that flank the side entrances on Columbus Avenue; that to celebrate the parish centenary a colorful mosaic bas-relief (1958) by Lumen Martin Winter, titled the "Conversion of Paul," was installed in the broad recess between the towers; and that during the 1970s the congregation contemplated demolishing the building but instead the site's development rights were sold in 1984 and 2000 and a major restoration program is now ongoing.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Church of St. Paul Apostle, 8-10 Columbus Avenue (aka 120 West 60th Street) and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1131, Lot 31, as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Frederick Bland, Michael Devonshire, Michael Goldblum, Christopher Moore,
Margery Perlmutter, Elizabeth Ryan, Roberta Washington, Commissioners

Church of St. Paul the Apostle
8 Columbus Avenue (aka 8-10 Columbus Avenue, 120 West 60th Street)
Borough of Manhattan Block 1131, Lot 31
Columbus Avenue (east) facade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2013

Church of St. Paul the Apostle
View from Columbus Avenue and 59th Street
Photo: Landmarks Preservation Commission, c. 1966

Church of St. Paul the Apostle
Columbus Avenue facade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2013

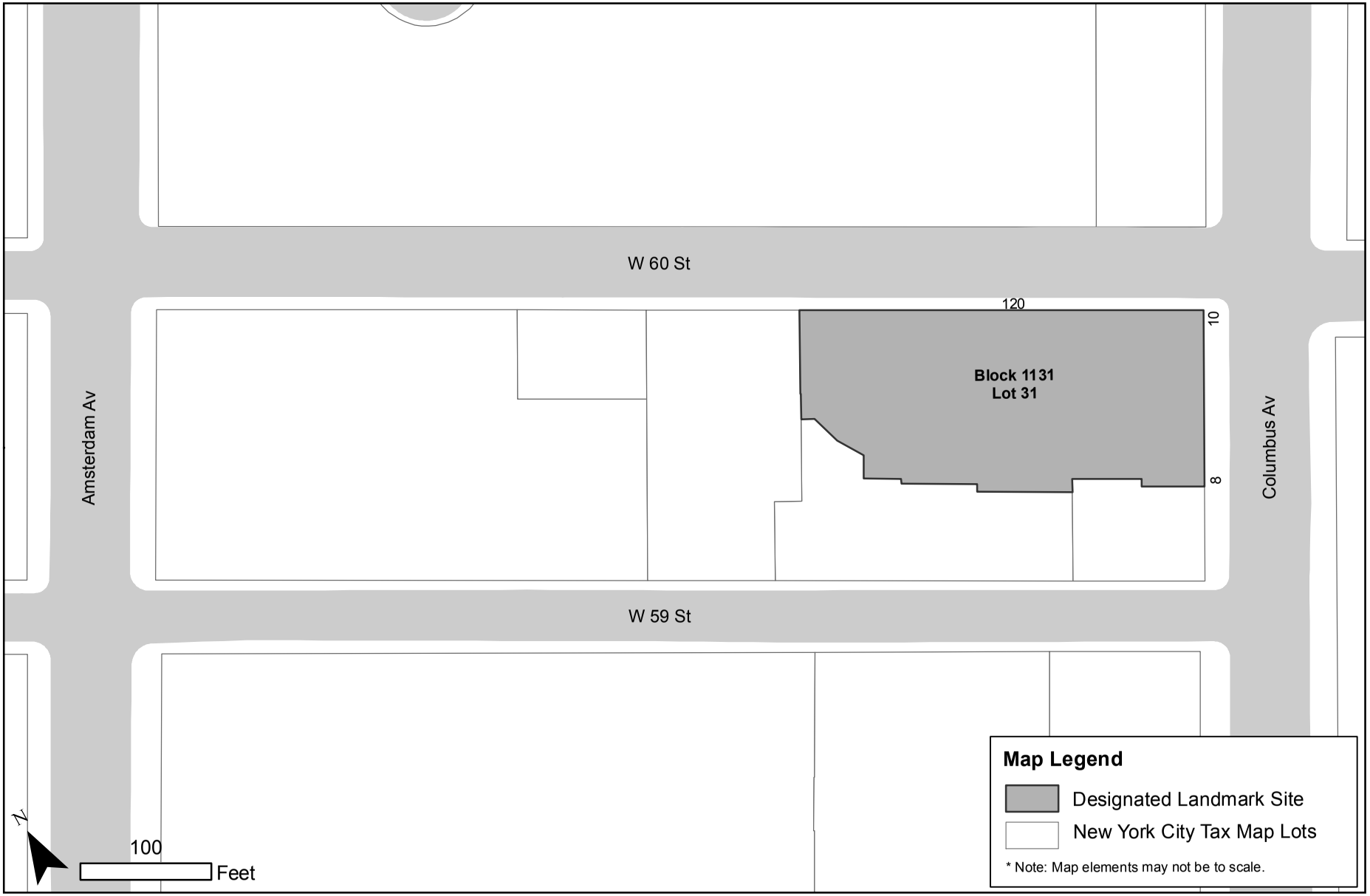
Church of St. Paul the Apostle
Columbus Avenue facade
Upper: south/center entrance
Lower: north entrance, corner of 60th Street
Photos: Christopher D. Brazee, 2013

Church of St. Paul the Apostle
Columbus Avenue facade
Main (center) entrance, entrance to lower level
Photos: Carl Forster, 2007; Matthew A. Postal, 2012

Church of St. Paul the Apostle
Columbus Avenue facade
Left: south entrance
Right: north entrance
Photos: Carl Forster, 2007

Church of St. Paul the Apostle
Left: south facade, from West 59th Street
Right: 120 West 60th Street (not part of the designation, see addendum)
Photos: Christopher D. Brazee, 2013; Carl Forster, 2007

Church of St. Paul the Apostle
Views of West 60th Street
Upper: Carl Forster, 2007; Lower: Christopher D. Brazee, 2013



CHURCH OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE (LP-2260), 8-10 Columbus Avenue (aka 120 West 60th Street)
Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 1131, Lot 31

Designated: June 25, 2013

Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 09v1, 2009. Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, JM. Date: June 25, 2013

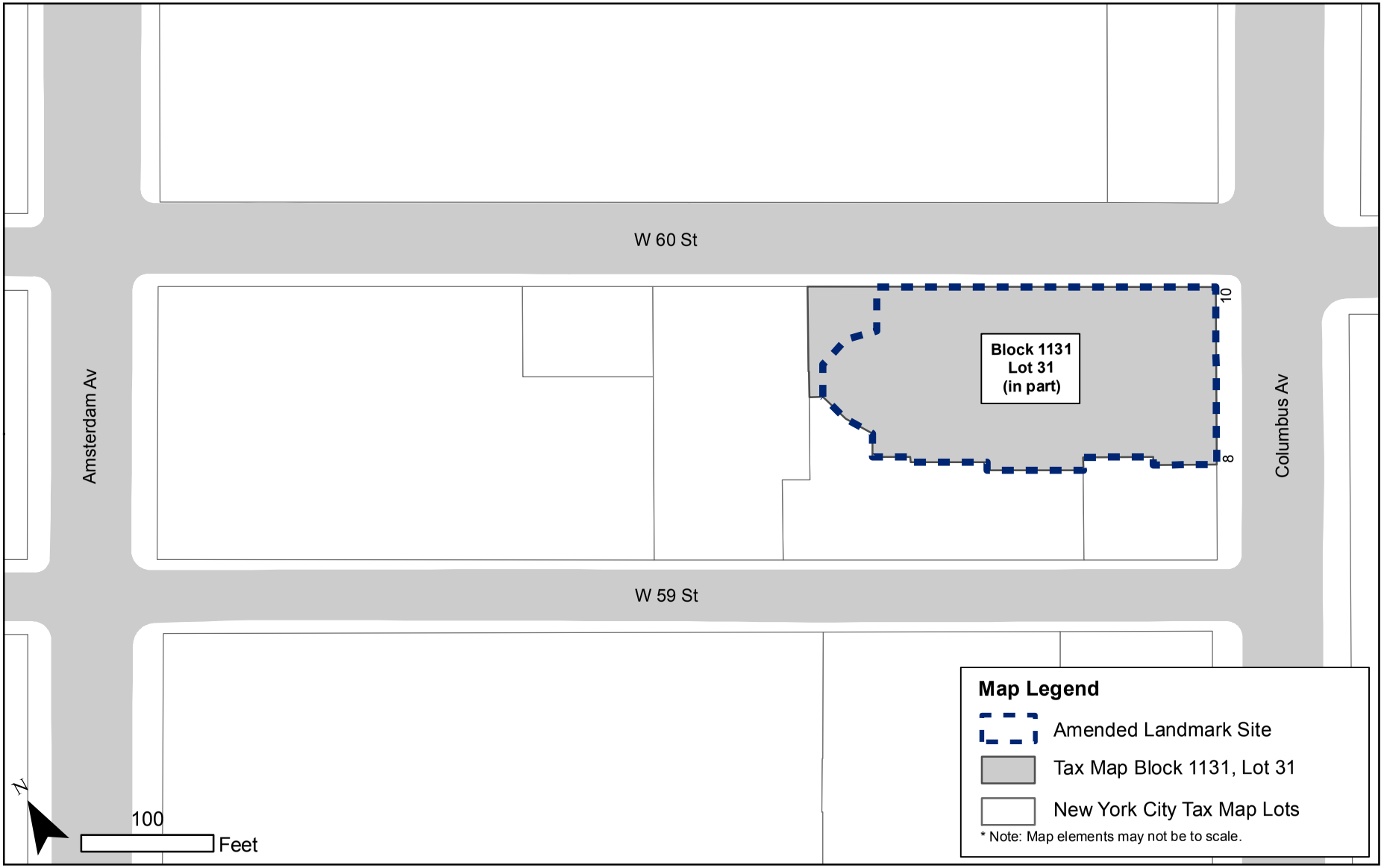
Landmarks Preservation Commission
July 23, 2013; Designation List 465A
LP-2260-A

AMENDMENT to CHURCH OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE, 8 Columbus Avenue (aka 8-10 Columbus Avenue, 120 West 60th Street), Manhattan. Built 1875-85; initial design attributed to Jeremiah O'Rourke; upper walls of towers, c. 1900; "Conversion of Paul" bas-relief by Lumen Martin Winter, 1958.

Amended Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1131, Lot 31 in part, consisting of the land beneath the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, including the West 60th Street areaway.

On June 25, 2013 the Landmarks Preservation Commission designated as a Landmark the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, 8 Columbus Avenue (aka 8-10 Columbus Avenue, 120 West 60th Street), Manhattan. On July 23, 2013 the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing (Item No. 2) to modify the boundaries of the Landmark site. The hearing had been duly advertised according to provisions of law. Two people spoke in support of the modification, including representatives of Community Board No. 7 and the Historic Districts Council. The Commission also received letters from the New York Landmarks Conservancy and Father Gilbert Martinez, CSP, supporting modification. On July 23, 2013, based on a discussion, eight commissioners voted unanimously to modify the Landmark site, from 8 Columbus Avenue (aka 8-10 Columbus Avenue, 120 West 60th Street), Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1131, Lot 31, to 8 Columbus Avenue (aka 8-10 Columbus Avenue), Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1131, Lot 31 in part, consisting of the land beneath the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, including the West 60th Street areaway. The Commissioners found that the former convent at 120 West 60th Street did not contribute to the architectural and historical character of the church and that this five-story yellow brick building should be excluded from the designation. A map of the new landmark site is appended hereto.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Pablo Vengoechea, Vice Chair
Frederick Bland, Michael Devonshire, Joan Gerner, Michael Goldblum
Margery Perlmutter, Elizabeth Ryan, Commissioners



CHURCH OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE (LP-2260A), 8 Columbus Avenue (aka 8-10 Columbus Avenue).
Landmark Site: Formely Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 1131, Lot 31, now Lot 31 in part, consisting of the land underneath the described church and the 60th Street areaway,

Designated: June 25, 2013
Landmark Site Modified: July 23, 2013

Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 09v1, 2009. Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, JM. Date: July 23, 2013