

ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHAPEL, 290 Henry Street, Borough of Manhattan. Completed 1829.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 267, Lot 19.

On October 19, 1965, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of St. Augustine's Chapel and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 60). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. One witness spoke in favor of designation. The attorney for Trinity Parish also spoke at the hearing.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

St. Augustine's Chapel, formerly All Saints Church, is one of those interesting churches of the Federal Period which clung conservatively to the basic Georgian church form. In the Federal manner, its central tower is projected forward to break the gable-end while the main cornice extends completely around the building and tower. At the tower a small pediment parallels the angle of the roof. Here, at smaller scale, is repeated the design of St. Paul's Chapel on Broadway with the interesting exception that pointed Gothic windows are introduced above the balcony level.

The Chapel is built of small stones with the upper windows handsomely trimmed and banded to the stone walls with brick. This fine Chapel, belonging to Trinity Parish, is a splendid example of the best in the masonry tradition. It is embellished with wood at the cornices and eaves where the cost of cut stone would have proven prohibitive. The wood spire was not completed when the church was built and although a small, wood belfry was added in the 'eighties, it was removed a few years ago. The building is an excellent example of the ingenuity of our early architects in adapting to the needs and resources of the young Republic the richness and dignity of the best English models.

The history of a small parish church, such as this, is the history of a neighborhood, not necessarily a history of notables but a record of an earlier time and an earlier way of life. It is best remembered for the fact that it was considered a progressive church where liturgical matters were concerned.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission recognizes that the Landmark on the property in question (and the Landmark Site) is wholly used for religious and directly related charitable purposes by Trinity Parish and that the needs of Trinity Parish for such uses may change in the years ahead, entailing alterations in the existing structures or the creation of other structures on the Landmark Site. By this designation of the Landmark above described and the Landmark Site on which it is located, it is not intended to freeze the structure in its present state or to prevent future appropriate alterations needed to meet changed requirements of use for religious and directly related charitable purposes. The Commission believes it has the obligation and, indeed, it has the desire to cooperate with owners of Landmarks who may wish to make changes in their properties. In this connection the Commission wishes to state at this time that it recognizes that Trinity Parish may want to erect new buildings in the future on its grounds at St. Augustine's Chapel. The Commission recognizes that Trinity Parish may also wish to make exterior alterations to its existing buildings at St. Augustine's Chapel. The Commission looks forward to working with the representatives of Trinity Parish when the Church desires to erect new buildings on its grounds or to make exterior alterations on its existing buildings.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

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

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, Saint Augustine's Chapel is a fine example of the small, masonry parish church, that it displays an unusual and interesting feature in the introduction of Gothic windows into a building which, in general, adheres to the Georgian tradition of architecture and that it served for many years as the very attractive Chapel for a small section of the urban community.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 8-A of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark St. Augustine's Chapel, 290 Henry Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 267, Lot 19, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.