

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

DRAFT

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Church of St. Edward the Martyr

other names/site number _____

name of related multiple property listing _____

Location

street & number 8-14 East 109th Street

city or town New York

state New York code NY county New York code 061 zip code 10029

<input type="checkbox"/>	not for publication
<input type="checkbox"/>	vicinity

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 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register
 other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

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Name of Property

New York, NY

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | private |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - Local |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - State |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - Federal |

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | object |

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	0	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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/Religious Facility

RELIGION/Church-Related Residence

SOCIAL/Community Center

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/Religious Facility

RELIGION/Church-Related Residence

SOCIAL/Community Center

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY

REVIVALS/Gothic Revival

LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

NO STYLE

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE

walls: BRICK

roof: ASPHALT; METAL/Tin

other:

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Church of St. Edward the Martyr is a complex of three buildings sited on two parcels located at 8-14 East 109th Street in the East Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan, New York County, New York (Photo 1). The property is sited on the south side of East 109th Street and is bound by Madison Avenue to the east, East 108th Street to the south, and 5th Avenue and Central Park to the west. The surrounding lots are primarily occupied by brick and brownstone multi-story apartment buildings dating from the late-nineteenth to the early-twentieth centuries. The lots to the north on East 109th Street are occupied by a range of residential buildings, including late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century brick tenements, and a twenty-first-century mixed residential condominium. The church complex consists of three contributing buildings: a one-story, three bay wide Gothic Revival church (14 East 109th Street; constructed 1887 with 1902 and 1903 additions), a four-story parish house (14 East 109th Street; constructed 1902), and a two-story community center (8 East 109th Street; constructed 1961). The church and community center are separated by a narrow courtyard accessed by a simple Gothic Revival style portal with a wrought-iron gate.

Narrative Description

Church of St. Edward the Martyr, constructed 1887 with 1902 and 1903 additions

One contributing building

The Church of Saint Edward the Martyr is a modest one-story, three bay wide, late Gothic Revival style church constructed of red brick with terra-cotta and stone trim with a steeply pitched, front gabled roof (Photo 2). The front, north elevation is framed by brick buttresses with terracotta steps. The central, pointed-arch entrance consists of a double door made of oak panels with decorative cast iron hinges. A pointed-arch transom above contains three small stained-glass windows: two pointed-arch windows flank a stained-glass roundel, each set in a wood frame. The doorway is framed by a terracotta molding accented with terracotta blocks of alternating size. The projected molding that frames the arch contrasts with the flat, stone blocks located to either side of the doorway.

The entrance is flanked to either side by stained-glass lancet windows, each crowned with terracotta label moldings and stone sills. A pointed-arch portal framed by a terracotta label molding is centrally located above the entrance and contains two stained-glass lancet windows and a stained-glass roundel. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles and articulated by terracotta tile coping that terminates to either side of the gable in a carved terracotta boss.

The side, west elevation contains three modest, stained-glass windows and three gabled dormers. A small, narrow courtyard is located between the church and the community center. The courtyard is accessed by a brick Gothic Revival style portal with a wrought-iron gate framed by a stone surround. The portal's steeply pitched gable is articulated by stone coping, and the gable end contains a small, round-arch opening with a stone sill. The side, east elevation directly adjoins the rectory and parish house and contains three gabled dormers that mirror the west elevation.

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Interior

The interior of the Church of St. Edward the Martyr is accessed by a set of double doors that contain glass panels, a lock rail, and wrought-iron door handles. An interior, rectilinear vestibule constructed of oak provides access to the nave via three doorways. Each door has a glass panel above a lock rail with a recessed, wood panel below.

The plan of the church consists of a nave leading to the chancel, which contains the choir, followed by the sanctuary (Photos 4-6). The nave features plaster walls with pointed-arch windows throughout. Stations of the cross, executed in bas-relief, are located between the windows. A central aisle separates rows of wood pews on either side. An open-work scissor truss supports the ceiling. Two stained-glass windows flank the wood vestibule on the north, interior wall. The eastern window depicts a crowned, St. Edward the Martyr standing atop stone steps; the western depicts a haloed Christ standing in water.

The main body of the church is separated from the choir by a large, interior arch that rests upon clustered columns and frames the entrance to the choir. The choir is clad in oak wood carved with Gothic Revival motifs, including choir backs, canopies, and railings. The west, interior wall contains an organ console and a mural of St. Edward the Martyr within a pointed-arch frame. The floor of the choir is clad in Arts & Crafts style ceramic tiles, and the rib-vaulted ceiling is painted with Gothic Revival motifs.

The sanctuary is located up a series of marble steps from the choir and is demarcated by a second large arch supported on clustered columns. Its carved oak wood contains the same Gothic Revival motifs as the choir. The angled walls of the apse contain the credence and piscina above which a stained-glass window is located on either side casting light on the sanctuary's floor clad in Arts & Crafts style ceramic tile. Fixed at the rear of the apse is a large, marble altar inscribed with golden symbols. The words "Incense shall be offered unto my name and a pure offering" are inscribed on the marble retable. They are located on either side of the tabernacle. A cross is affixed on the top center of the altar. A grans reredos is to the rear of the altar. Its wood frame has Gothic Revival features, including pointed arches, canopies topped with pinnacles, and crockets and bosses. The reredos is divided into two registers that each house a series of glass mosaic panels. The lower, and shorter register houses solid gold mosaics with gold borders while the mosaics within the larger, upper panels are executed in softer tones. The upper register is divided into three large scenes with the central panel depicting a crowned figure of the Lord flanked by kneeling angels. The scenes on either side depict various haloed figures all in front of a blue sky which emanates out from the Lord's crown.

The church basement is accessed via the connected parish house to the east. This area, also known as the undercroft, is comprised of one large room with a pressed metal ceiling and a small kitchen in the southeast corner.

Parish House and Rectory, constructed 1902 with 2006 alterations

One contributing building

The Parish House and Rectory is a modest brick four-story, three bay wide, flat-roofed row building located just east of the church (Photo 3). The first story features an off-center entrance with a projected cornice supported by bracket-like consoles and paired one-over-one windows with cornice moldings and sandstone sills. The second, third, and fourth stories each contain three evenly spaced one-over-one, flat-headed windows with sandstone lintels and sills. A non-historic metal fire escape criss-crosses the façade. The building is crowned with a bracketed, pressed metal cornice.

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The first-floor interior houses the rector's office, a small multi-purpose room, and the sacristy. The second floor contains a large multi-purpose room, open-space offices, and a bathroom. The third and fourth floors contain two apartments each. All interior spaces have been heavily renovated except for the first floor.

Community Center, constructed 1961

One contributing building

The Community Center, located just west of the church, is a brick masonry two-story, three bay wide, flat-roofed building is constructed of painted, light-colored brick built in 1961 (Photo 1). It is made up of three-bays with a slightly protruding rectangular massing comprising the easternmost bay of the main facade. This mass houses the original location of the main, double-door entrance mounted with a painted label molding and one over one window located centrally above. To the west of this massing is a non-historic, metal-clad facade making up the remainder of the first floor with a second entrance located in the westernmost bay accessed by a ramp spanning the length of the metal facade all of which is not original to the building and provides a stark contrast to the light-colored brick. There are two one over one windows located on the first floor in the central bay affixed with metal grating. Two additional windows are located directly above these on the second floor with two more windows to the west located above the second entrance. These four windows on the second floor are visually connected by a slightly protruding stone sill spanning the horizontal width of the four windows and capped by a painted brick lintel also running the width of the windows laid in a soldier brick pattern. This simple window decoration also frames the window in the easternmost bay on the second floor. The building is capped with a non-historic, simple metal cornice.

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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 is 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 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 the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☒ 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1887-1961

Significant Dates

1887

1902

1935

1952

1961

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Church: J. B. Snook & Sons, J. & R. Lamb,
George A. Bagge

Parish House: J. B Snook & Sons, J. B.
Roberts

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Church of St. Edward the Martyr complex, located at 14 East 109th Street in East Harlem, New York County, New York, is locally significant under **Criterion C** in the area of **Architecture** and meets **Criteria Consideration A** as a complex of religious buildings that includes a Late Gothic Revival style church, a parish house and rectory, housed in an early-twentieth-century row building, and a mid-twentieth-century community center. The Church of St. Edward the Martyr is an example of Late Gothic Revival style religious architecture in East Harlem and New York City and the earliest representative example in Harlem of the Anglo-Catholic architectural program adopted by some Episcopal congregations. The establishment of the church coincided with the rapid development of Harlem during the 1880s and was funded by prominent Manhattan Episcopalians, including John Jacob Astor and “Commodore” Elbridge T. Gerry, whose family took a leading role in the continued funding and development of the church. The rapid growth of the congregation and generous funding allowed the church to fully embrace Anglo-Catholic worship with the construction of a grand Gothic-inspired reredos and ornate woodwork designed by J. & R. Lamb, under the supervision of Charles Lamb, whose studio was among the most prominent decorating firms of the period. The church’s simple, steep-gabled façade, its stained-glass windows, and its central entrance all typify a modest, yet carefully planned, Late Gothic Revival style religious building. The period of significance begins in 1887 with the construction of the Church of St. Edward the Martyr and ends in 1961 with the construction of the community center, the third building in the complex.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Early History of East Harlem Land Development and the Establishment of St. Edward the Martyr Church

East Harlem was home to the Lenni Lenape prior to the Dutch settlement in 1658. The region was characterized predominantly by a sulfuric-smelling marshland, various small streams, and a wide, freshwater creek that cut across the region from present-day East 106th Street and the Harlem River to Fifth Avenue.¹ Due to these topographical features, the region remained sparsely developed for the better part of the nineteenth century. An 1865 sanitary inspection of the region carried out by the Council of Hygiene and Public Health of the Citizens’ Association counted a total of 1,820 buildings from East 86th Street on the south to the Harlem River on the north bounded by Sixth Avenue to the west and the East River to the east. Many of these buildings were located north of the Harlem Creek at about East 108th Street and from Fourth (Park) Avenue east to the Harlem River. All other regions were occupied by marshland, farmland, and/or informal wooden structures referred to as “shanties.”² Many of these early inhabitants were noted as American, Irish, and German and were referred to as a “church-going community.”³

As lower Manhattan grew so too did its transportation lines northward. Beginning with the railroad running on Fourth Avenue from Chambers Street in lower Manhattan (inaugurated in 1837), followed by a Harlem line of steamboats (1856), with the Third and Second Avenue elevated railroads following suit (opened in 1878 and

¹ Theodore Steinberg. *Gotham Unbound: The Ecological History of Greater New York*. First Simon & Schuster hardcover edition. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2014.

² Citizens’ Association of New York Council of Hygiene and Public Health. *Report of the Council of Hygiene and Public Health of the Citizens’ Association of New York upon the Sanitary Condition of the City*. D. Appleton and Company, 1865.
<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006554710>.

³ Ibid.

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1880 respectively). This influx of transportation access made the region of Harlem more noticeable—both for its underdeveloped land and its sulfuric stench. A series of sanitary reports surveying the region prompted the Board of Health in 1872 to oversee the infilling and draining of the land stretching from East 96th Street northward to East 110th and eastward from Fifth Avenue to the East River.⁴ This land reclamation effort facilitated the wide-spread speculative development of the region during the 1880s largely transforming it into one with streets lined primarily with tenements. It was amidst this burgeoning land development that Reverend Father Edward Wallace-Neil established the Protestant Episcopal church of St. Edward the Martyr. The small congregation met for the first time on St. Edward's Day, Sunday March 18, 1883, in the parlor of a two-family row house located at 181 East 109th Street.⁵ Father Wallace-Neil became the chaplain at a nearby hospital and a convent causing the numbers of his congregation to grow to nearly 800 individuals within one year.⁶ By 1885 the parish was officially incorporated and land at 12 East 109th Street was purchased for \$6,000 with the financial support of parishioners and friends.

Generous donations by John Jacob Astor, Dr. Rev. Charles F. Hoffman (then-rector of the Episcopal Church of All Angels), and Elbridge T. Gerry allowed the Church of St. Edward the Martyr to start the construction of its church.⁷

Church Construction and Expansion, 1887-1904

Plans were filed August 14, 1886, for the construction of a “one story, brick Episcopal church,” with George A. Bagge listed as the architect.⁸ The construction of the church predates the formal establishment of Bagge's architectural practice in 1890. He was later joined by Thomas P. Neville officially forming Neville & Bagge in 1892.⁹ The firm worked predominantly in residential construction, including row houses in the late nineteenth century and apartment buildings during the first decades of the twentieth century. They were also responsible for many store and loft buildings.¹⁰

A little over a year after the building plans were filed, the Late Gothic Revival church opened its doors on Advent Sunday, November 28, 1887 (Figures 1-3). The Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan is home to several Late Gothic Revival churches, and other distinctive examples of the style include St. Andrews Episcopal Church at 2067 Fifth Avenue (NRHP, 1980), the Church of All Saints Complex at 47 East 129th Street, Mother A.M.E. Zion at 140 West 137th Street (contributing to the Central Harlem North Historic District, NRHP 2024), and Abyssinian Baptist Church at 132-142 West 138th Street (contributing to the Central Harlem North Historic

⁴ “A City Plague Spot: Plain Facts for the Health Board. A Spot in New-York So Outrageously Offensive That Pigs Avoid It—Observations During a Tour Over the Harlem Flats—the Board of Health Denounced as Criminally Negligent.” *New York Times*. June 8, 1875.

⁵ “Fiftieth Anniversary of the Church of St. Edward the Martyr Choir: 1887 to 1937,” 1937. Church of St. Edward the Martyr Collection. Episcopal Church Diocese of New York Archives, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York, NY (hereafter cited as St. Edward the Martyr Collection, Episcopal Church Diocese of New York Archives).

⁶ “New York—Church of St. Edward the Martyr.” *The Churchman*, 9, (March 29, 1884): 9.

⁷ “Copy of Original Document Mutilated in the Past: The Undersigned Promises to Pay the Reverend Edward Wallace-Neil the Amounts Written Opposite Their Names for the Purposes of Buying Land on Which to Build a Mission Chapel in the Vicinity of 109th Street and Lexington Avenue, New York City,” unknown. St. Edward the Martyr Church Archives.

⁸ *The Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, vol. 38 no. 961, August 14, 1886.

https://rerecord.library.columbia.edu/document.php?vol=ldpd_7031138_004&page=ldpd_7031138_004_00000213&no=2.

⁹ Dennis Steadman Francis and Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, *Architects in Practice, New York City, 1840-1900* ([New York]: The Committee, 1979), 13, <http://archive.org/details/architectsinprac00fran>.

¹⁰ Landmarks Preservation Commission, “Architects' Appendix,” *Riverside-West End Historic District* (LP-1626), (New York, 1989), https://www.landmarkwest.org/Report_LPC_Riverside_West_End.pdf.

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District). By comparison, St. Edward the Martyr is the earliest representative example in Harlem of the Anglo-Catholic architectural program adopted by some Episcopal congregations.

It is not known to what extent Bagge worked with Father Wallace-Neil when designing St. Edward the Martyr, but its construction in the Late Gothic Revival style exemplified Father Wallace-Neil's devotion to building a congregation with a religious foundation in Western European faith. This style was commonly chosen for Anglo-Catholic congregations as it implemented Gothic forms representative of the identity of Anglicanism within the Catholic tradition of the church prior to the Reformation. Pointed arches, flying buttresses, and stained-glass windows were all characteristic features of Anglo-Catholic churches and were all used on the church's facade.

The controversial Anglo-Catholic style of worship became popular in America during the mid-nineteenth century particularly in urban areas. This style of worship placed a particular emphasis on the restoration of the liturgical and devotional expressions of Roman Catholic practice and doctrine. Such expressions manifest themselves in the use of altar candles, incense and eucharistic vestments. Other key interior features of Anglo-Catholic worship include the central placement of the altar where the bread and wine are blessed during the Eucharist. Elements such as a crucifix (a cross with a depiction of Christ), stations of the cross and a clearly refined, ornate chancel are all fundamental Anglo-Catholic elements that would eventually be found at St. Edward the Martyr. Their first church services were performed in the Anglo-Catholic style, and they became the first church in Harlem to have a vested choir wearing the cassock and surplice garments in their choral service. While this style of worship did cause some controversy in the press and in Episcopal-church circles upon the opening of St. Edward's, it appealed to "Commodore" Elbridge T. Gerry who decided to fund the church, becoming its first warden in 1887. Gerry was named after his grandfather who was a former Massachusetts governor and U.S. vice president. He graduated from Columbia University in 1857 and began practicing law in 1860. Seven years later he married Louisa Livingston and together they had six children living at Fifth Avenue and East 61st Street in a mansion designed by Richard Morris Hunt to house his library of 30,000 law books. Gerry was a longtime Tammany Hall member and notably cofounded the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in 1875. Later he became the president of the New York Yacht Club from 1886-1892 where he was known as the "Commodore." Gerry amassed many real estate properties throughout New York and in 1890 he conveyed a one-story frame building located on the lot immediately to the east of St. Edward the Martyr for use as the parish house.

This building only remained in use for a few years until plans were filed for a new, four-story brick building in 1894 with J. B. Roberts listed as the architect. The original plans stated the building was to include a lecture room and dwellings running the same length of the church. The lecture room would have been located on the first floor with dwellings on floors two, three, and four. Not much is known about this original four-story parish house building.

In 1902, with the consent of the rector and vestry, Gerry hired the architectural firm of J. B. Snook & Sons to draft plans for the expansion of the church and the parish house (Figure 4). Snook & Sons were well-known among prominent New York families having worked on houses for members of the Vanderbilt family and the old Grand Central Terminal. Jonathan B. Snook died a year before St. Edward's expansion project so his son, Samuel B. Snook, led the design. Samuel was known for his religious designs having worked on the Episcopal Church of All Angels (demolished) hired by the Dr. Rev. Charles F. Hoffman who had also donated to St.

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Edward's. Samuel also designed the Tabernacle Church of Brooklyn (demolished).¹¹ His plans increased the size of St. Edward's to occupy the whole of the lot lengthening the building's footprint southward from a depth of 75 feet to 100 feet. The additional 25 feet provided the church with a choir and sanctuary which became the location of a finely decorated chancel under the supervision of Charles R. Lamb, a prominent designer of ecclesiastical interiors. Charles Lamb was a leading member of his father's firm, J & R Lamb Studios, established in Greenwich Village, New York in 1857. Still in operation, it is the oldest continuously run decorative arts company in America. Charles was known as an architect and a sculptor having designed the Dewey Arch which stood in Madison Square from 1899-1900, erected for a parade honoring Admiral George Dewey. Charles married Ella Condie who was also a notable muralist and stained-glass artist who would go on to work at the studio as well. While the studio eventually chose to focus solely on stained-glass under the direction of Charles' son Karl, they originally made murals, mosaics, monuments, and furnishings for churches, temples, residences, and government and academic institutions. All interiors for St. Edward the Martyr were designed by Lamb and remain largely intact. This includes the choir, sanctuary furnishings, stained glass, the grand reredos with glass mosaic, marble, and metal work. The interiors were highly praised upon their unveiling, and the *New York Tribune* described in detail the new decorations that now clearly reflected St. Edward's Anglo-Catholic worship practices. Particular focus was given to Charles' dramatic use of color and the reredos' mosaic:

From a nave of dark green color, absolutely without ornamentation...to the choir. [W]here all the oak furniture, with the canopied stalls, is in dark malachite green. The walls above are in harmonious greenish tones, enriched with foliage and ornamentation...Here, from the cool tones of the church and choir, the eye is brought forward to the vividly gold yellows of wall and furnishings, the focus of all being the pure white altar, with its golden symbols, and the great mosaic above of the figure of Our Blessed Lord, with attendant angels. The marble steps supporting the retablo have been selected with greenish tones to act as support to the pure white of the altar.¹²

While the original paint is no longer present, the choir stalls, wood furnishings, altar, marble steps and reredos all remain.¹³

The parish house alteration consisted of expanding both the cellar and the first floor to meet the new length of the church at 100 feet. Both the cellar and the first floor were connected to the church by a doorway with a newly constructed bathroom placed in the southeast corner of the cellar and a stage constructed centrally on the first floor. The expanded floorplan allowed for a reading room with a bathroom in the southeast corner, and a vestry room also with a bathroom in the southwest corner. The remaining floors were not expanded at this time.¹⁴

The work came to fruition through the concerted efforts of architects, designers, rector Wallace-Neil, and senior warden Gerry. According to the *New York Tribune* their cooperation "resulted in one of the most effective and

¹¹ Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*. Los Angeles: New Age Pub. Co., 1956. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000451430>.

¹² "Almost A New Church: Decorations in St. Edward the Martyr, in East 109th-St." *New York Tribune (1900-1910)*. December 14, 1903.

¹³ H.C. Potter. "Diocesan News." *The Churchman* 88 (December 1903): 703, 776-77.

¹⁴ J. B. Snook & Sons. "Plans of Church and Parish House of St Edward the Martyr 12-14 East 109th St N.Y. City." Undated. St. Edward the Martyr Collection, Episcopal Church Diocese of New York Archives.

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churchly interiors, not only in New York, but probably in this country.”¹⁵ The *Tribune* article went on to state that the unique decoration “preach[ed] in itself the doctrines of the Church, and capable of leaving an impression which will enhance the words of a ritual.” The expanded church was dedicated on Thanksgiving Day in 1903 and was seen as a manifestation of a harmony of interests that was sure to uplift the congregation.

Neighborhood Change and the Growing Congregation, 1908-1937

Shortly after the expansion of the church and parish house, Father Wallace-Neil died, on August 5, 1908. At about the same time, the surrounding neighborhood began to transform with tenements constructed on the lots to the west of the church and throughout the neighborhood. Elbridge T. Gerry hired a new rector, Father Percival Cook Pyle who was noted as a humble, spiritual leader who appealed to the changing demographics of the neighborhood. Under his purview, the parish hired an organist and welcomed a large congregation of people from the British West Indies who preferred the services at St. Edwards because it reminded them of their church practice at home. In 1920, the second, third, and fourth floors of the parish house were expanded to the same length as the church, and in 1927, a gym was constructed spanning the second floor to accommodate the Lake Delaware Boys’ Club summer camp. The Gerry family established this club for local boys welcoming them into the parish house to use the gym and play in a bowling alley they had constructed in the parish house cellar.¹⁶ By the late 1930s, the neighborhood had become increasingly West Indian and Puerto Rican. In response to the tensions and uprising in Central Harlem during 1935 (wherein throngs of Harlem residents took to the streets protesting the continued inequality and gross oppression within their community sparked by the arrest and treatment of a young Puerto Rican boy at a local five-and-dime), St. Edwards opened its door to a local Spanish-speaking congregation.¹⁷ This was done to “assist our Spanish and Puerto Rican fellow-churchman to worship our Lord without fear of conflict.”¹⁸ This is the first instance of a Spanish-speaking service held within the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of New York and further reflects the changing character of the neighborhood and the way St. Edward the Martyr responded to these changes.

From 1935-1936, the new Rector, Father Alex P. Frenchman, had the sanctuary repainted, and the choir and nave refurbished to restore it to Lamb’s 1902 interior.¹⁹ A parishioner also had a new set of Stations of the Cross installed the following year as an anonymous gift. By 1937, the financial burden had shifted from earlier major donors such as Mr. Gerry to the parish congregation of considerably lesser means, resulting in the replacement of the hired choir, choir master, and organist with volunteers. Even though Commodore Gerry had set up a trust in 1911 to provide income for the rector or priest, the increasing financial need became burdensome.

The Years as a Mission and Increasing Community Involvement, 1951-1977

By 1951, St. Edward’s was no longer able to sustain itself as a self-supporting parish. The parish as a corporate entity was therefore dissolved, and the church became a mission of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the

¹⁵ “Almost A New Church: Decorations in St. Edward the Martyr, in East 109th-St.” *New York Tribune* (1900-1910). December 14, 1903.

¹⁶ Judith Mason. “Brief History of the Church of St. Edward the Martyr.” Unpublished manuscript prepared by a seminarian at General Theological Seminary in the files of the Church of Saint Edward the Martyr. New York, New York, 1983. St. Edward the Martyr Collection, Episcopal Church Diocese of New York Archives.

¹⁷ Irma Watkins-Owens. *Blood Relations: Caribbean Immigrants and the Harlem Community, 1900-1930*. Indiana University Press, 1996.

¹⁸ Mason. “Brief History.”

¹⁹ “Fiftieth Anniversary of the Church of St. Edward the Martyr Choir.”

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Diocese of New York. Recognizing the need for a church more reflective of its community, St. Edward the Martyr became the first officially designated mission for Puerto Ricans in the Episcopal Diocese of New York in 1952.²⁰ The diocese employed the Reverend Esteban Reus-Garcia as an assistant to Reverend Drury L. Patchell. Rev. Reus-Garcia came from his former post as archdeacon of the Episcopal missionary district in Puerto Rico and was a familiar face to many congregants. By 1955, a full Spanish language service had been developed at the parish. The church continued its influence within the community hosting street sweeping initiatives, summer camps, and a safe place for children to play whether it be in the parish house's second floor gym or the basement bowling alley (Figure 5). As the mission increased its community efforts, the diocese decided they needed more space and purchased the two tenements on the lots immediately to the west of the church for demolition in 1961 (Figure 6). They offered relocation services to the tenants providing cash payments to those who self-relocated or writing letters to public housing developments requesting housing for others.²¹ The demolition of the tenements was met with some misgivings by neighbors.²² Built in place of the tenements was a two-story, utilitarian community center designed by Mazza & Seccia (Figure 7). The center opened in March 1963. It housed a gymnasium for basketball and ballet classes as well as a day care center.²³ By 1963, the diocese had plans drawn for the sealing of the church's entrance which required the removal of the exterior vestibule. The entrance was sealed with brick allowing access to the church only through the parish house on the east. The strategic closing of the main entrance allowed for more attentive monitoring in a neighborhood experiencing severe disinvestment and a serious rise in crime. Beginning at some point in the 1950s, the facade of the church and parish house were painted beige resulting in frequent requests for facade maintenance and paint upkeep. The community center was also painted to match.

By 1977, the mission successfully became a self-sustaining parish again under the leadership of Rev. James N. Lodwick. Incorporated as "The Rector, Churchwardens and Vestry members of the Church of St. Edward the Martyr, New York City, Inc."²⁴ This allowed the church more direct control over its finances and the perceived needs of the congregation.

Recent History

Today the parish continues its efforts within the neighborhood through their Los Angeles de El Barrio (El Barrio Angels) program offering social services for immigrants including legal services, social services, and English lessons.²⁵ Church services are still held in English and Spanish. The parish house has undergone various renovations on the second through fourth floors with the second and third rented out to nonprofit tenants while the Sexton and Rector maintain residences on the third and fourth floors respectively. The entrance to the church was reopened thanks to a grant provided by the New York Landmarks Conservancy and Upper Manhattan Historic Preservation Fund in 2006. The new entrance does not replicate the turn-of-the-century

²⁰ Elizabeth Ann Price. "Episcopalian Mission to Aid Puerto Ricans: First in New York Diocese Being Created from a Once Wealthier Parish." *New York Herald Tribune* (1926-1962). February 18, 1952. Further research in this area could potentially yield additional significance under Criterion A; however, existing documentation on the church's association with Hispanic heritage does not rise to the level of significance in the area of Ethnic Heritage.

²¹ "Contract Between the Relocation and Management Associates, Inc. and The Board of Managers of the Diocesan Missionary and Church Extension Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New York." October 3, 1960. St. Edward the Martyr Collection, Episcopal Church Diocese of New York Archives.

²² John H. Gill, "Letter from John H. Gill, Vicar to Archdeacon McEvoy," New York, NY, May 18, 1961. St. Edward the Martyr Collection, Episcopal Church Diocese of New York Archives.

²³ Diocesan Bulletin. "Bishop Dedicated New Parish House at St. Edward." May 1963. Episcopal Diocese of New York. St. Edward the Martyr Collection, Episcopal Church Diocese of New York Archives.

²⁴ Mason. "Brief History."

²⁵ "Episcopal Church of St. Edward the Martyr – New York City." Accessed March 11, 2022.

<http://www.nycago.org/organs/nyc/html/stedwardmartyrepis.html>.

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projecting vestibule but rather focuses on the original 1887 doors of the church. Images from a 1990s conditions survey depict a deteriorated facade with peeling paint and recommendations to remove the paint entirely which was eventually done but not without causing more damage to the brick which remains to be fixed. The 1963 community center to the west of the church has had major renovations since St. Edward's started leasing the building out to the Yorkville Common Pantry (YCP) in 1990. The YCP has since constructed an exterior ADA ramp, and a metal facade spanning most of the first floor. The most extensive renovation took place when they split the taller second story into two separate floors creating more space for their offices.

The construction of St. Edward the Martyr and its subsequent renovations and additions demonstrate the dynamic history of East Harlem. With the original church building constructed within a sparsely populated region, the rapid development of surrounding buildings was reflected in the congregation's growing numbers and the eventual addition of the parish house and church expansion. The ornate interior decoration welcomed an Anglo-Catholic community predominantly of Western-European descent until the mid-1930s when many West Indians moved to the neighborhood and took solace in a style of worship that was familiar to them. As the neighboring community continued to change, so too did the congregation and the services they offered. By the late 1950s the church's membership consisted predominantly of both Black and Puerto Rican immigrants for whom the diocese built a community center since the parish house could no longer meet the needs of the after-school programs and community events they wished to provide. The eventual return to a parish from a mission and the improved safety of the neighborhood all saw the eventual unsealing of the church doors and the removal of the exterior paint to display the building's modest Late Gothic facade more closely resembling its original form once again. The ornate interior decoration remains central to the congregation's worship and indicative of their unique place in East Harlem's ecclesiastical history.

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Irma Watkins-Owens. Blood Relations: Caribbean Immigrants and the Harlem Community, 1900-1930. Indiana University Press, 1996.

Elizabeth Ann Price. "Episcopalian Mission to Aid Puerto Ricans: First in New York Diocese Being Created From a Once Wealthier Parish." New York Herald Tribune (1926-1962). February 18, 1952.

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John H. Gill, "Letter from John H. Gill, Vicar to Archdeacon McEvoy," New York, NY, May 18, 1961. St. Edward the Martyr Collection, Episcopal Church Diocese of New York Archives.

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"Episcopal Church of St. Edward the Martyr – New York City." Accessed March 11, 2022.
<http://www.nycago.org/organs/nyc/html/stedwardmartyrepis.html>.

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 Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

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Name of Property

New York, NY

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Acreage of Property 0.24

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 40.795748 | Longitude: -73.949150 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries were selected based on the two parcels owned by the congregation that encompass the entirety of the church complex. The easternmost parcel contains the former school building/community center, and the westernmost parcel contains the church and the parish house/rectory.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lindsay Papke (edited by Jeff Iovannone, PhD, NYSHPO)

organization Columbia University, Graduate School of
Architecture, Planning and Preservation

January 2025

street & number 1172 Amsterdam Avenue

date _____
telephone (212) 854-3414

city or town New York

state NY

zip code 10027

e-mail lindsaypapke@gmail.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

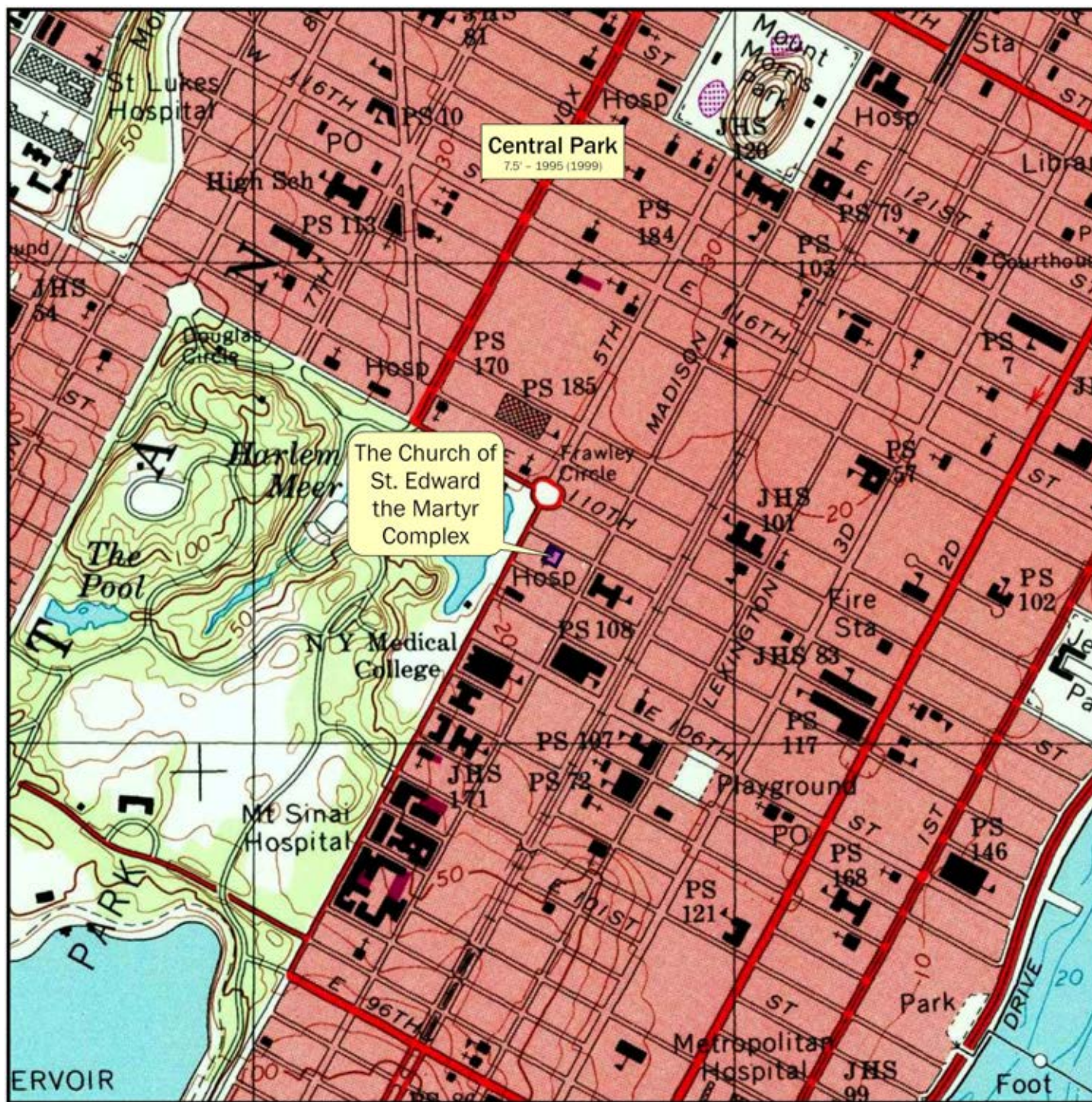
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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1:12,000

0 500 1000 ft



The Church of St. Edward the Martyr Complex



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N

Mapped 12/30/2024 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

DRAFT – Church of St. Edward the Martyr

Name of Property

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1:1,200



Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N



Nomination Boundary (0.24 ac)

New York State Orthoimagery Year: 2021



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

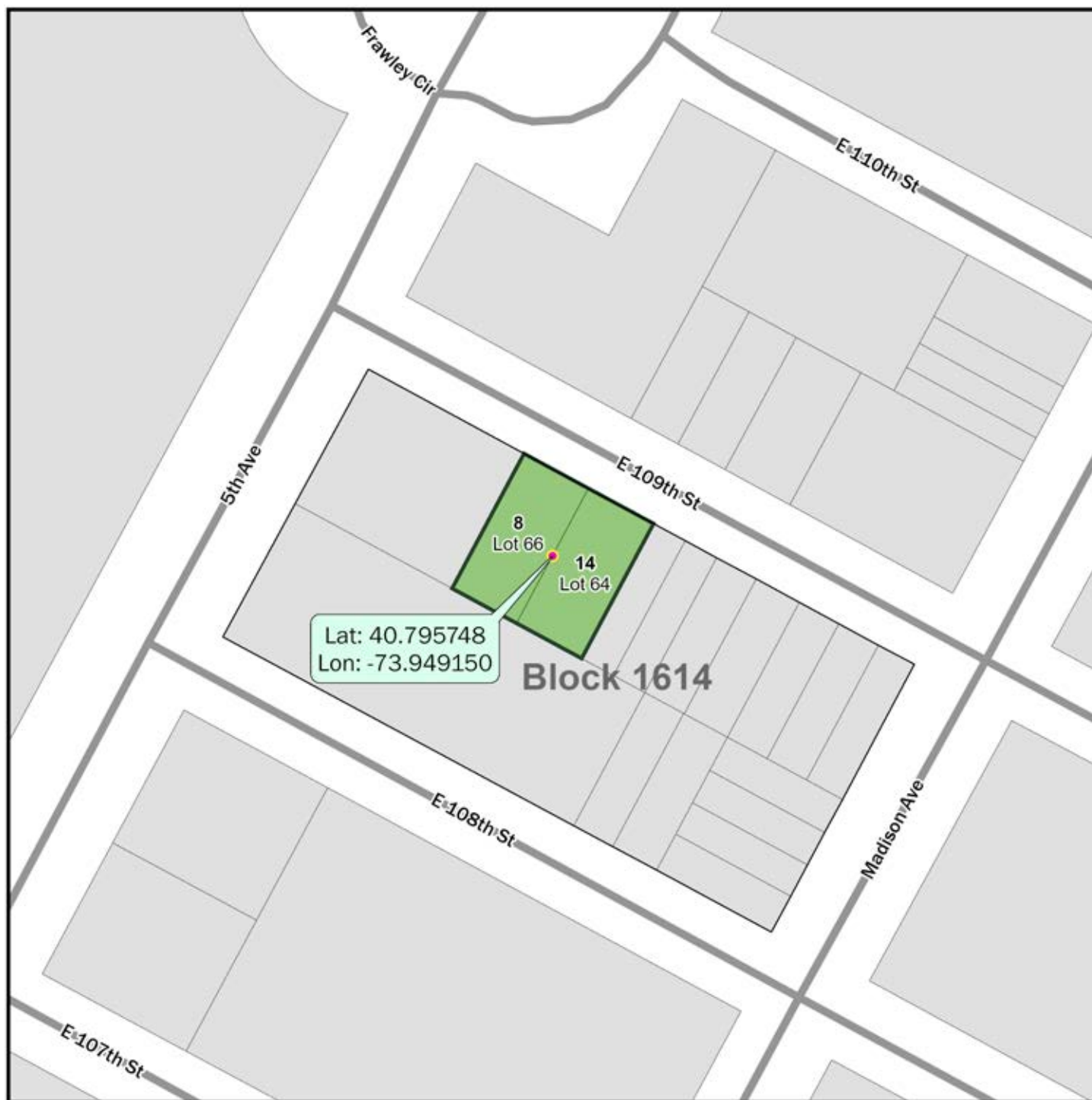
Mapped 12/30/2024 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

DRAFT – Church of St. Edward the Martyr

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1:1,200

0 50 100 ft

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N



Nomination Boundary (0.24 ac)



Tax Parcels

New York City Parcel Year: 2023



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

Mapped 12/30/2024 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

DRAFT – Church of St. Edward the Martyr

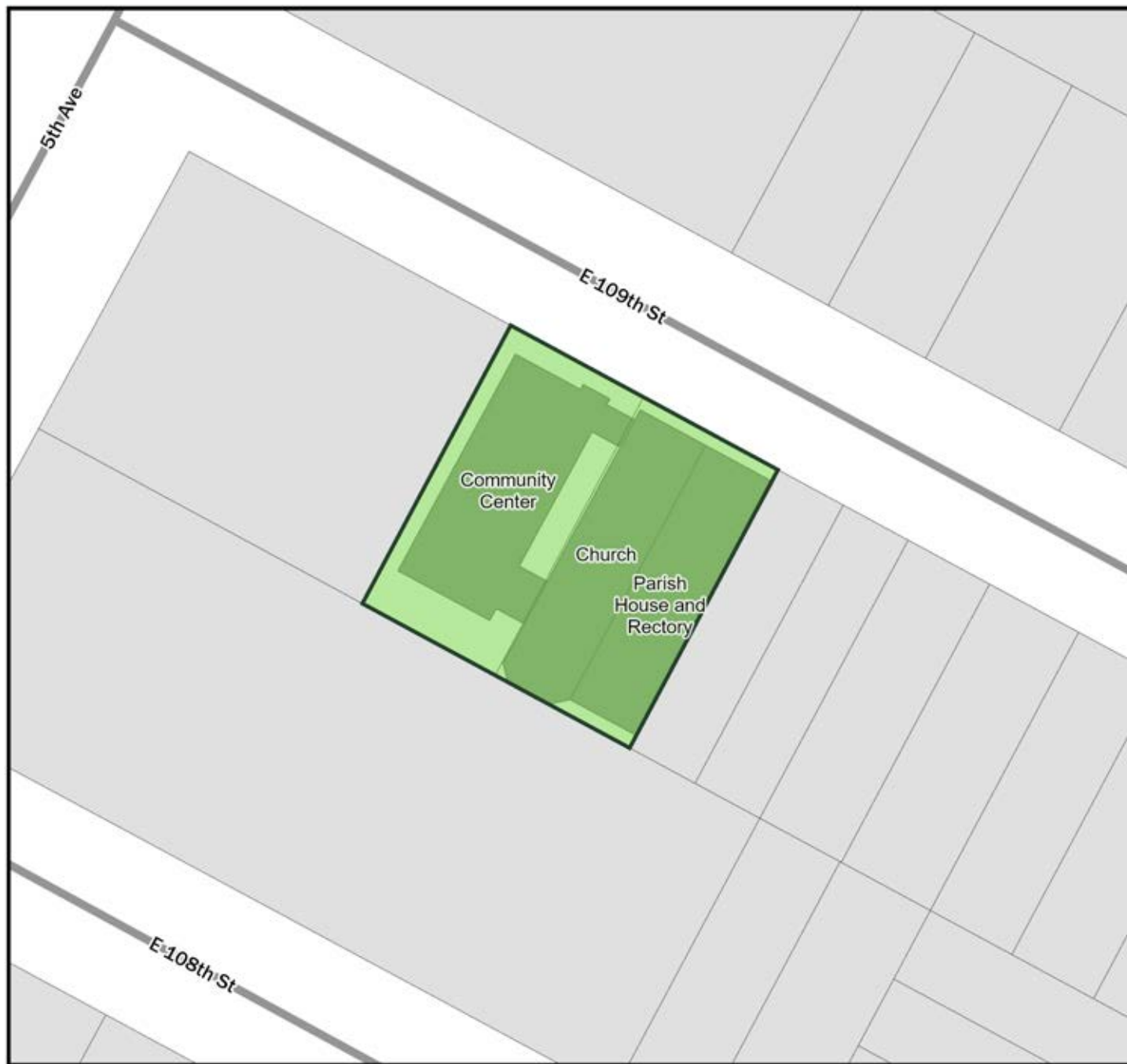
Name of Property

New York, NY

County and State

Building Key Map

See nomination form for details



1:600



Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N



Nomination Boundary (0.24 ac)



Tax Parcels

New York City Parcel Year: 2023



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

Mapped 12/30/2024 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

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Name of Property

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Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Church of St. Edward the Martyr

City or Vicinity: New York

County: New York

State: NY

Photographer: Lindsay Papke

Date Photographed: May 19, 2022; July 24, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

0001 of 0000: Overall view of property including church and rectory, looking southeast.

0002 of 0000: Front elevation of church, looking south.

0003 of 0000: Front elevation of parish house and rectory, looking south.

0004 of 0000: Interior view of church, looking south.

0005 of 0000: Interior view of church showing the choir, looking south.

0006 of 0000: Interior view of the church showing the nave, looking south.

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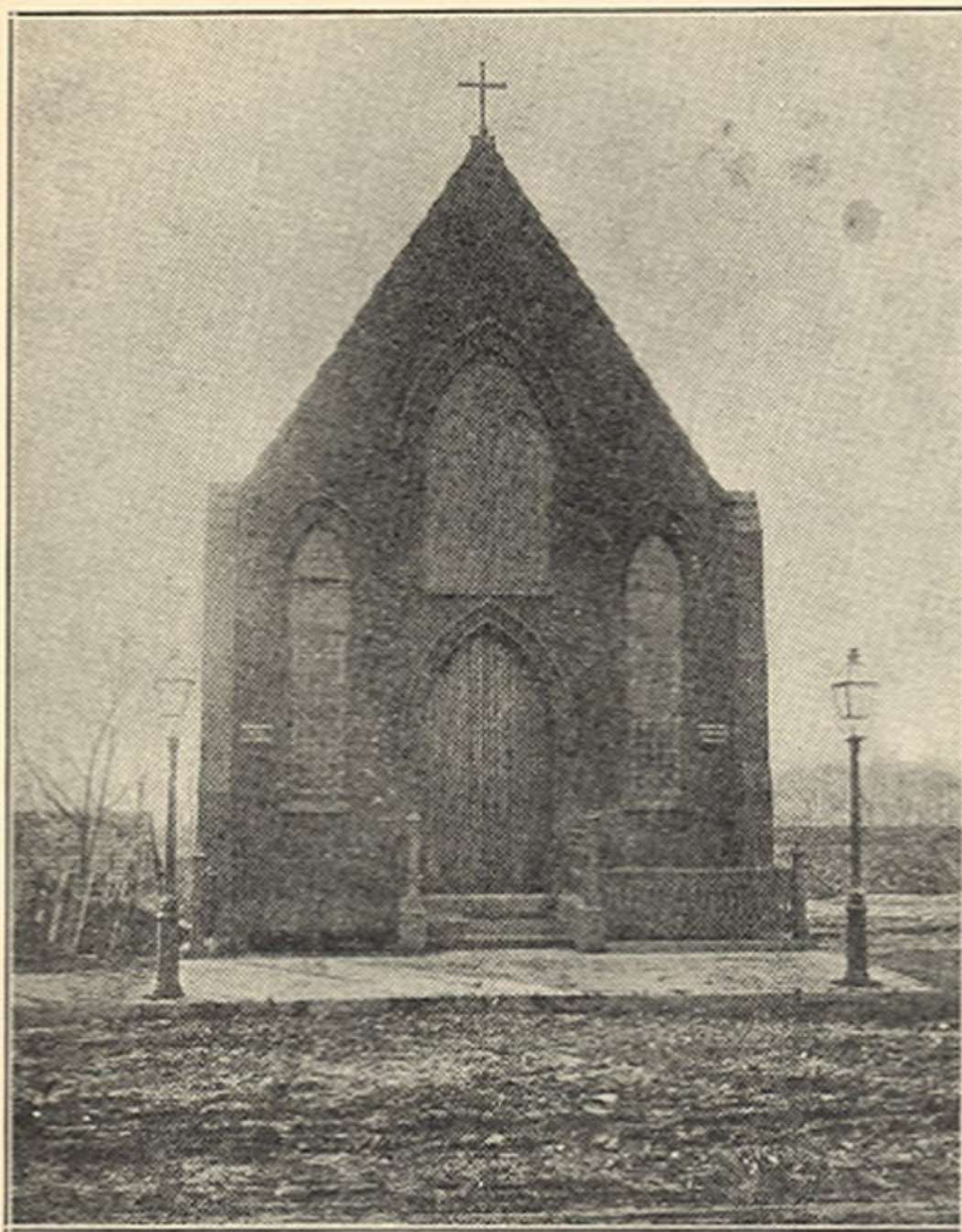


Figure 1. 1887 photo of church house looking south.

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Figure 2. Church nave, looking north, 1958.

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Figure 3. Church interior, looking south, 1958.

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Figure 4. Tax photo showing church and rectory looking southeast, ca. 1940.

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Figure 5. Group of St. Edward the Martyr young boy's baseball team in the church's youth summer program in front of the parish house, ca. 1955, looking east.

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Figure 6. View of the church and rectory before construction of the community center, looking southeast, 1961.

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Figure 7. View of church and community center after construction, looking southeast, ca. 1963.

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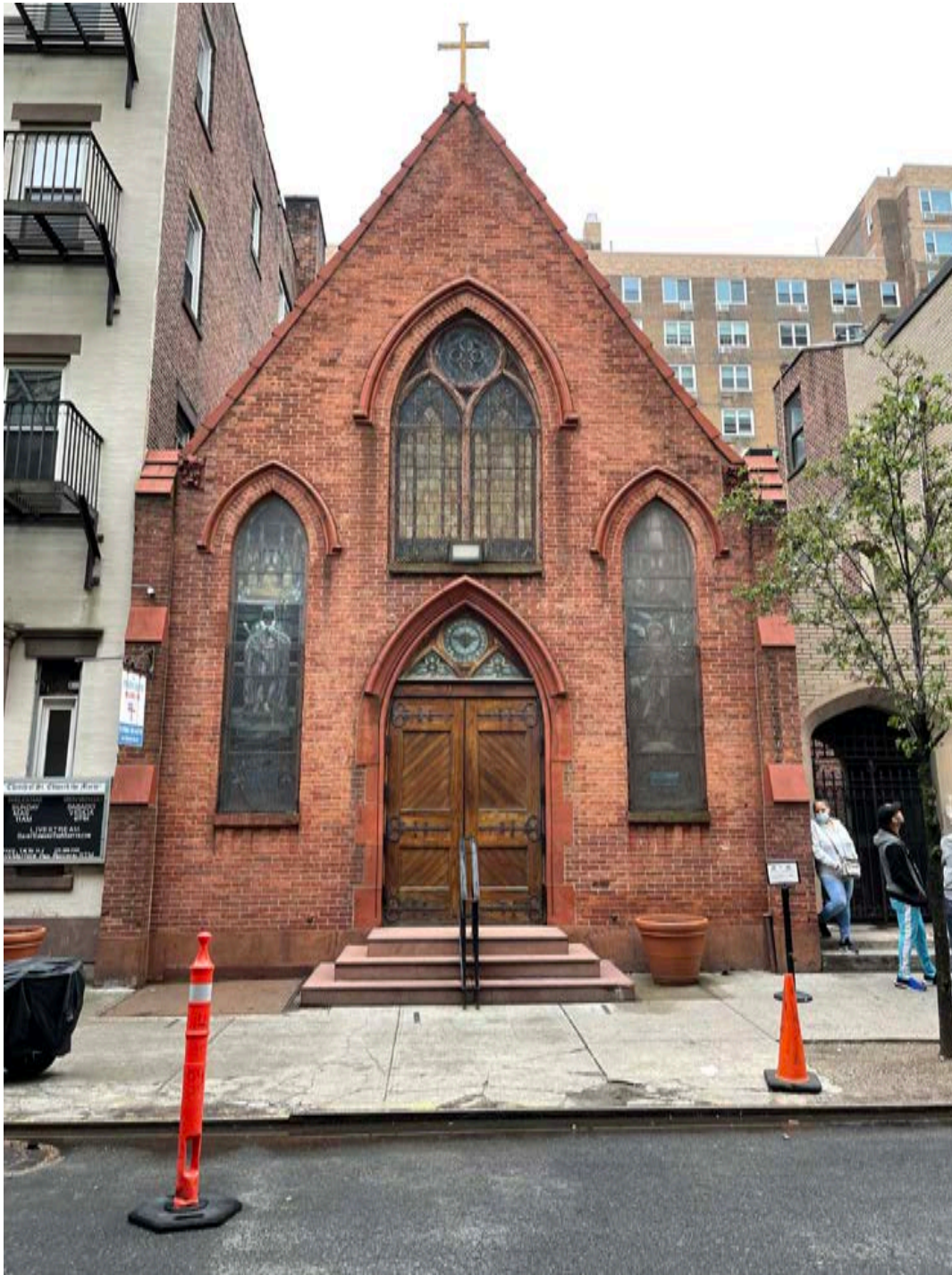


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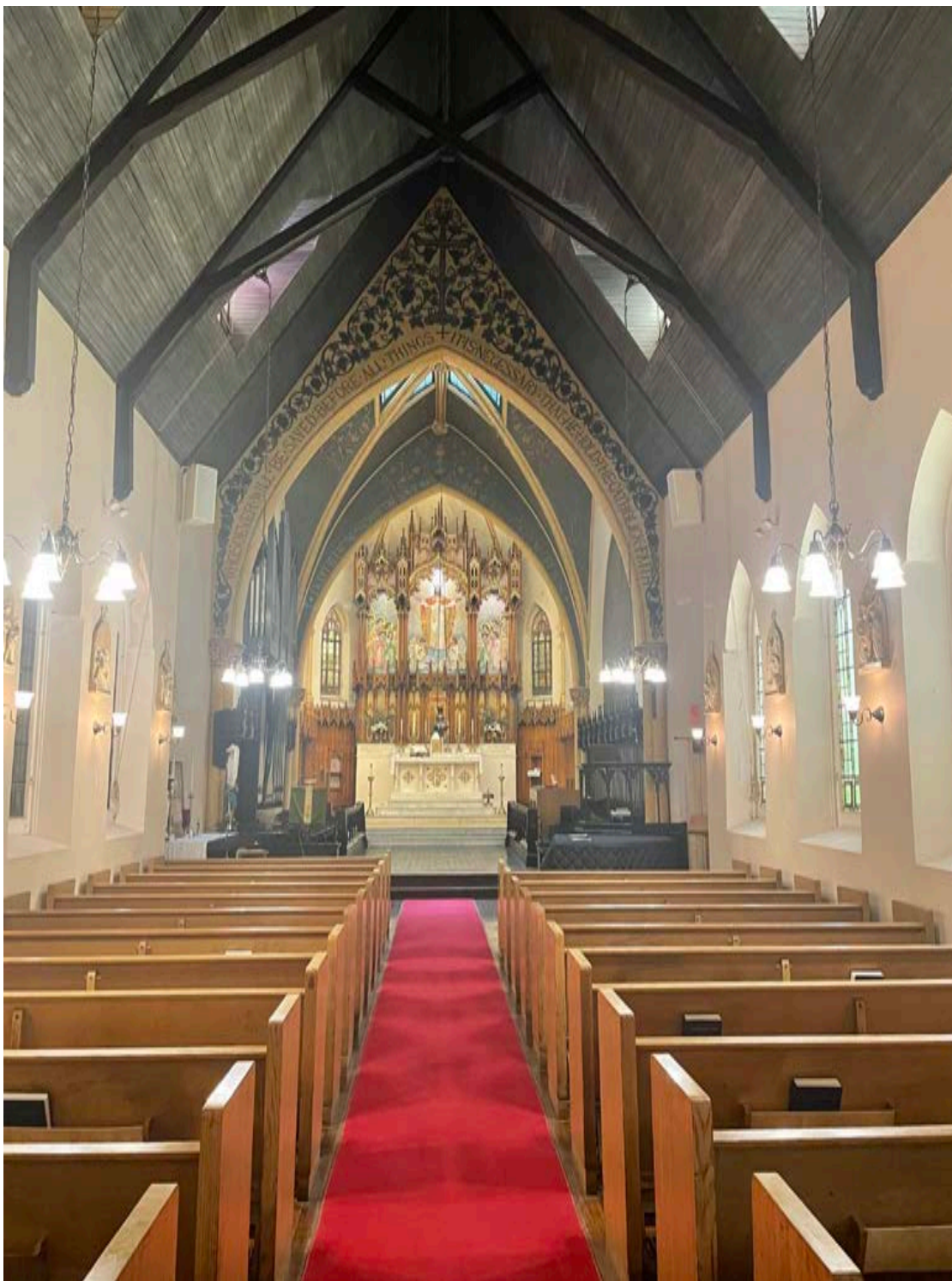


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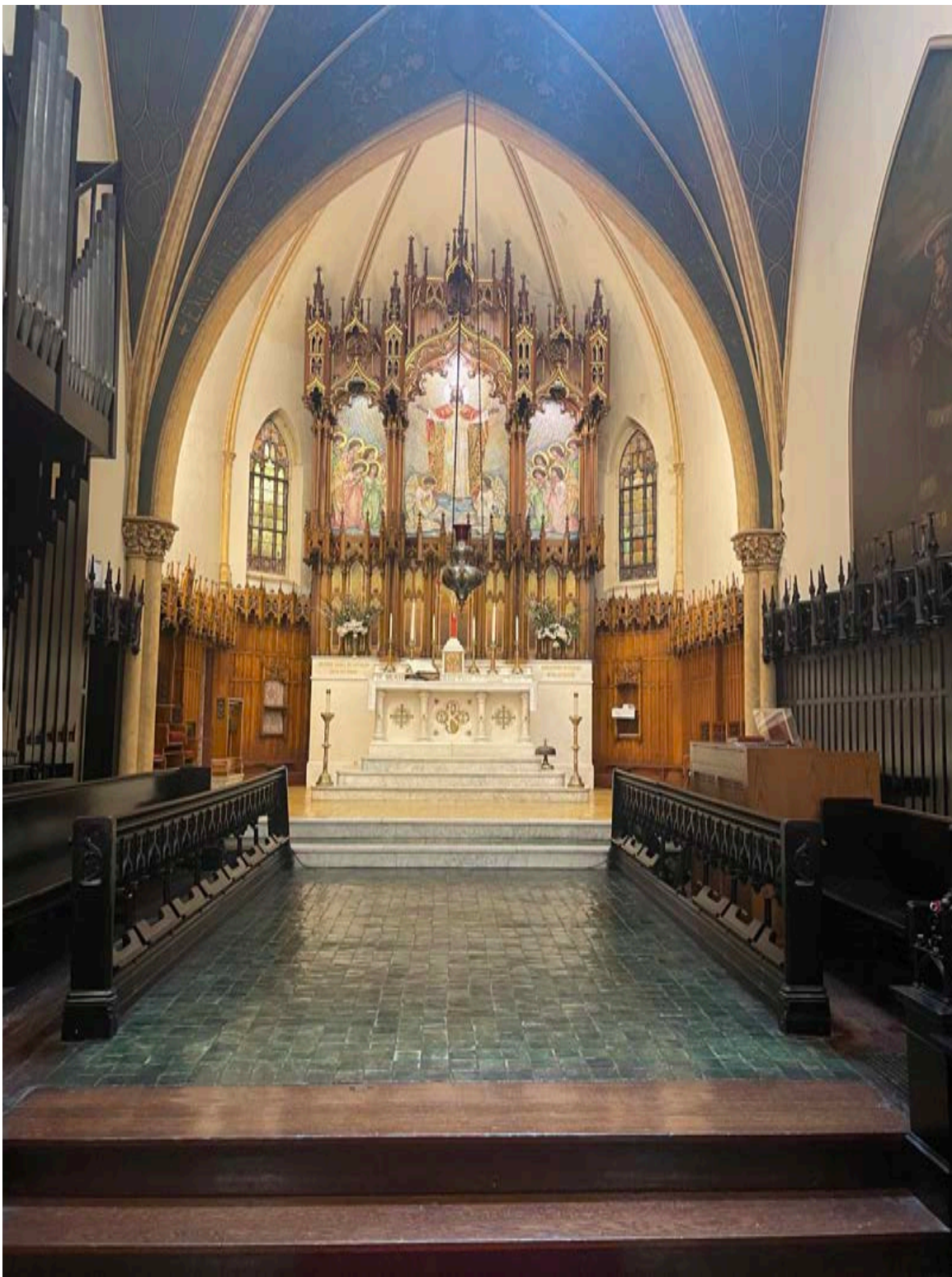


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