

Landmark Rescue Falters

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By ROBERTA B. GRATZ

The Greenwich Village Planning Board has voted against asking the Landmarks Commission to "immediately" arrange to designate the Gothic revival buildings Grace Church plans to demolish for new school facilities. The vote last night was 14-8.

The church at Broadway and 10th St., built in 1843, is a designated landmark. The Fourth Av. buildings the church plans to demolish are not so designated, even though they form an architectural unit with the church.

The entire church complex was designed by James Renwick, credited with sparking this country's 19th Century Gothic renaissance. He was the designer of St. Patrick's Cathedral.

"Although everyone is very upset by the church's decision to demolish those buildings," a board spokesman noted after the meeting, "we just couldn't take responsibility for placing Grace Church in a position of spending more for preservation if we couldn't help raise the funds."

Church plans call for replacing two of the Gothic structures with a two-story building providing a gymnasium and classrooms. The facilities have long been needed by the church's elementary school.

The plans have been the center of heated controversy, with disagreement centering on how much more it would cost the church to preserve the Gothic facades and at the same time build new facilities. Church architects claim it would cost more than \$300,000, while proponents of alternative preservation plans say it would cost considerably less.

Dissension was not confined to the community. The church vestry Wednesday night voted 7 to 5 for the demolition plans. Wiltsey North Seymour Sr., a senior vestryman of the church and a longtime leader of city preservation efforts, tried to persuade the church leadership to follow a preservation course.

Although some non-church funds were available for saving the Gothic facades, Seymour said yesterday, "Nobody has come forward to volunteer funds. That could have made a difference, especially if a community group has said it would start by passing the hat in the Village."