

Hold Hearings on Fate Of Grace Church Houses

By ROBERTA B. GRATZ

Hundreds of persons filled a meeting room at City Hall today as the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a hearing to determine whether Grace Church should preserve a row of Gothic revival buildings instead of tearing them down, as it proposes, to build a gymnasium for its school.

Representatives of the Joint Emergency Committee to Save Grace Church Houses told the commission that the church should consider alternate proposals for building the gym in the existing buildings and preserving the facades.

They were supported by Fred Rathe Jr., Deputy Commissioner of the State Park and Recreational Dept., who said: "I voice the hope of the state that a solution can

be found for saving the facades and building a new building."

But Dr. Benjamin Minifie, rector of the church, said that preserving the facades would cost \$300,000 more than the \$900,000 already budgeted for the gym.

He also said it was "illegal and un-American to demand the church" spend the extra money.

The church, built in 1865 and situated at Broadway and 10th St., has been designated an architectural landmark. Proponents of saving the row buildings, erected around the same time on Fourth Av. behind the church, contend they should be designated as landmarks, too, because they form an architectural unit with the church.

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