

# A GOTHIC FACE IS SAVED

## POST PHOTONEWS

By Roberta B. Gratz

THREE YEARS AGO, the Gothic facade of the Grace Church Houses were scheduled for demolition to make way for a much needed new school facility.

Today those historic facades remain standing, their delicate splendor intact. A new school building stands behind them, providing the Grace Church School with a gym and extra classroom space it never had.

Most significantly, the completed project—designed by the architectural firm of Hutchins, Evans & Lefferts—stands as testament to one of the more successful preservation efforts the city has seen.

This week, the Landmarks Preservation Commission wrote the final chapter, designating the Gothic row on 4th Av. at 11th St. an official city landmark.

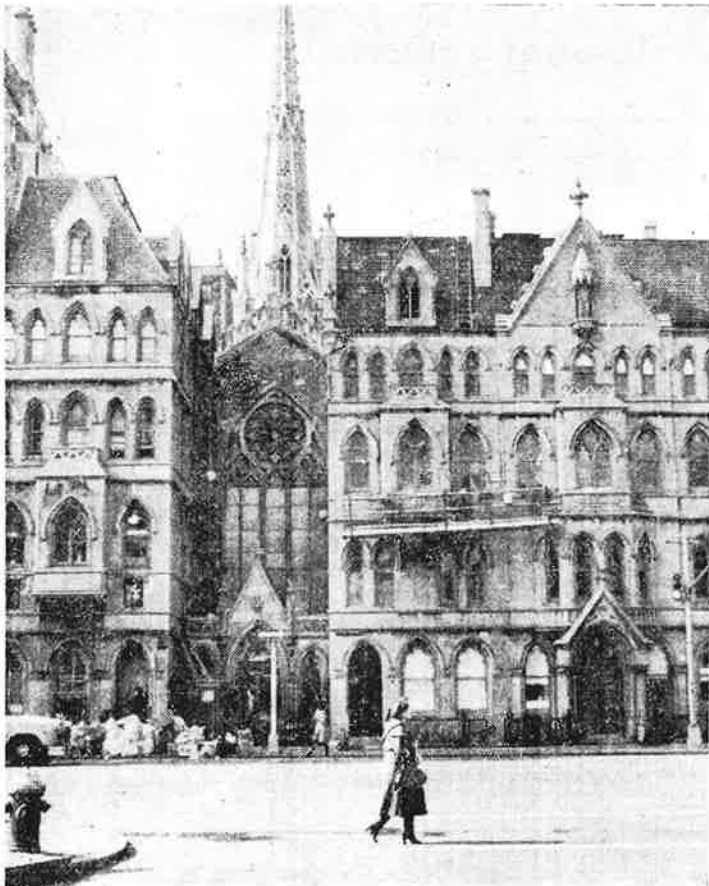
Ironically, the same commission 11 years ago avoided including those same facades—at the church's request—in its designation of the 1846 church at 10th St. and Broadway, designed by the noted 19th Century architect

James Renwick. The church, at the time, did not want a designation that would interfere with future building plans.

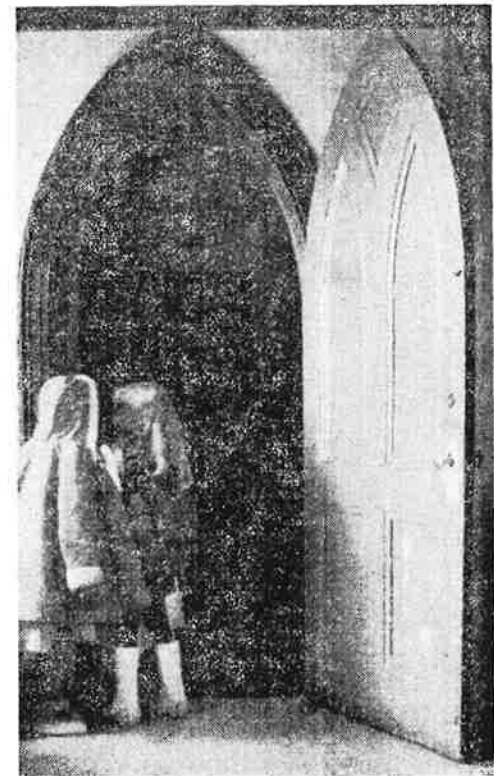
Yet, accompanying this week's designation was a certificate of appreciation to the church vestry and its rector, C. FitzSimons Allison, from Mayor Beame for "preserving a notable part of the city's architectural heritage while meeting the needs of the community."

Renwick, credited with sparking this country's 19th Century Gothic renaissance designed the facades years after completion of the church. He intended for them to complement the church itself. Grace Church was Renwick's first major work; later he was selected to design St. Patrick's Cathedral.

The preservation plan wound up costing some \$400,000 more than the demolition and new construction proposal. But, Whitney North Seymour Sr., a church warden, says that "just about that amount" was raised in outside contributions simply because it was a preservation effort. And the completed building provides more space than the original plan would have achieved.



Grace Church peeks through historic facades of Gothic-front buildings on Fourth Av.



Post Photos by Jerry Engel  
Gothic doorway at Grace Church School.