

# Children Illustrate Concern

By ROBERTA B. GRATZ

In the months that the fate of the historic Grace Church Houses on Fourth Avenue has hung in the balance, the 267 students of the Grace Church School have been watching, listening, debating—and drawing.

They've been committing to paper their impressions of the mid-19th century Gothic Revival facades in watercolor, in charcoal or just in pencil. Some of the pictures are representational and detailed, others are splashes of color and broad outlines. But they all reflect the architectural essence of the rare buildings that earlier this year were scheduled for demolition to make way for a new and badly needed school and church facility.

## Cooperative Effort

"Mostly the children are hoping they can have both the gym and the facades preserved," said headmaster Charles N. Arlin last night. More than a dozen of the pictures hung on the finely carved mahogany walls of the school's refectory where a reception was held to promote the effort to raise funds to preserve the facades and build a new facility behind them.

It is now some nine months since the Fourth Av. row was about to fall under the wrecker's ball. The early controversy was replaced by a remarkable cooperative effort among community, church and preservation leaders that, if successful, could turn out to be one of the city's most unusual preservation battles. But the fate of the facades still is uncertain.

More than half of the needed \$450,000 has been raised and the entire church complex has been added to the National Register of Historic Places, making it eligible for federal restoration funds.

Yet the battle will not be won until the full fund-raising goal has been met. If that does not happen, the church will proceed with its original and less expensive plan to demolish most of the Fourth Avenue row and build a new facility.

Nov. 1 is the deadline agreed upon by church, community and preservation leaders. The preservation plan should be ready for bids at the end of this month and until then it is impossible to know if the whole thing will work.

At last night's reception, which was intended as much to thank those who have pledged support as it was to inspire new donors, there was a spirit of hope.

The 1846 Grace Church and the Fourth Avenue facades which were added later were designed by James Renwick, credited with sparking this country's Gothic renaissance. Grace Church is an official city landmark which the Fourth Avenue row is not.

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