

Holyrood Episcopal Church- Iglesia Santa Cruz

715 West 179th Street, Manhattan
Tax Map Block 2176 Lot 30

Built: 1911-1916

Architect: Bannister & Schell

Style: Gothic Revival

Proposed Action: Propose for Calendar, January 19, 2021



Holyrood Episcopal Church-Iglesia Santa Cruz
LPC, 2020

Holyrood Episcopal Church-Iglesia Santa Cruz is architecturally significant as a sophisticated and well-executed Gothic Revival design by the architectural firm of Bannister & Schell, and it is culturally significant as an important social, cultural, and religious anchor for the Washington Heights's Latino/a community for the past 40 years.

When built in 1911-16 at the corner of West 179th Street and Fort Washington Avenue, the church was part of the intense development of Washington Heights as the population of Manhattan moved northward and as the neighborhood transitioned from sparsely settled to a thriving residential area. It has remained an important resource within the community as its congregation has changed to reflect the influx of residents from the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and other Spanish-speaking areas. In recognition of its role in this community the church is now known as Holyrood Church – Iglesia Santa Cruz, adding the Spanish translation to its name. Recently it has also become a center for the hearing impaired.

Holyrood parish was founded in 1893 by Rev. William O. Embury, chaplain at a nearby home for girls. The congregation's first church was built in 1895 and located at Broadway and West 181st Street. The parish quickly outgrew the small building and in 1911 commissioned the well-respected architectural firm of William F. Bannister and Richard Schell to design the present-day church. Most of the firm's religious properties followed a similar pattern as seen in Holyrood with a large central window and late Gothic details.

The Gothic Revival style was often used by the Episcopal Church at that time with its renewed 19th-century interest in English medieval design. Constructed of rough-faced stone with a profusion of intricate terra cotta decorative details, the church exhibits a traditional arrangement of nave, side aisles, clerestory, and apse. Holyrood's impressive front facade is dominated by a large arched stained-glass window with geometric tracery. This window is flanked on each side by a stepped buttress topped by a tall pinnacle. These two pinnacles extend high above the parapet and dominate the roofline.

Today Holyrood Episcopal Church – Iglesia Santa Cruz is remarkably intact and exhibits excellent integrity of design and materials. Minor alterations have included ramps and railings for universal accessibility and the addition of signage. It has remained an important social and cultural resource for the diverse neighborhood, particularly the Spanish-speaking community. The church hosts many community activities and outreach programs while continuing to serve its Episcopal congregation with services in English, Spanish, and American Sign Language.



(Proposed) Holyrood Episcopal Church-Iglesia Santa Cruz | LP-2649



Legend

- Proposed Landmark Site
- Building Footprints
- New York City Tax Lots

Address: 715 West 179th Street
 Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 2176, Lot 30
 Proposed for Calendaring: January 19, 2021