

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



1036

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Riverside Church

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 478, 490 Riverside Drive & 81 Claremont Avenue [] not for publication

city or town New York [] vicinity

state New York code NY county New York code 61 zip code 10027

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide locally. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ruth A. Purpoint
Signature of certifying official/Title

DSHPO

10/18/12
Date

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
[] see continuation sheet
- [] determined eligible for the National Register
[] see continuation sheet
- [] determined not eligible for the National Register

[] removed from the National Register

[] other (explain) _____

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

12.12.12
date of action

Riverside Church

New York County, New York

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	0	TOTAL

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/ religious facility

RELIGION/ church school

SOCIAL/ civic

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/ religious facility

RELIGION/ church school

SOCIAL/ civic

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th & EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/

Gothic Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone & Concrete

walls STONE/ limestone (Church & wing)

STONE/ schist (gym)

roof METAL/ church (lead-coated copper)

& gym - OTHER/ terrazzo/fill/membrane

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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Riverside Church
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Narrative Description

The Riverside Church is a large neo-Gothic church, with a bell tower that also functions as a 22-story skyscraper with extensive interior spaces and elevator access, located at the southeast corner of Riverside Drive and West 122nd Street in Manhattan, atop a high bluff overlooking the Hudson River (Photograph 01). The church, occupying the northwest quadrant of the block, is oriented on a north-south axis, with the tower at midblock, and a one-story "cloister" passageway extending east from the tower to Claremont Avenue. Completed in 1930, the church was designed by the Boston architectural firm Allen & Collens in association with Henry C. Pelton of New York. Built by Marc Eidlitz & Son, Inc., of New York, it is steel-framed with a limestone exterior, with a stone and concrete foundation and a lead-coated copper roof. It was built as a new home for the former Park Avenue Baptist Church. The interior and exterior ornament is patterned on primarily French Gothic models, particularly Chartres Cathedral, assembled and adapted to the requirements of the Protestant congregation as viewed through the modernist and ecumenical principles of its leaders.

The nominated property also includes the Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Wing, an seven-story addition completed in 1959 (known then as the South Wing and renamed in 1985) to provide expanded space for offices and the church's extensive educational and community programs, including a theater and a large assembly hall. The architects were Collens, Willis & Beckonert, the successor firm to Allen & Collens. The MLK Wing is built to a roughly similar height as the street wall of the church nave on the other side of the tower, balancing it physically and architecturally, having a similar limestone exterior with selected and simplified neo-Gothic motifs.

Also included within the nominated boundary is the Stone Gym, a one-and-a-half story gymnasium building, located east of the MLK Wing at the northwest corner of West 120th Street and Claremont Avenue. Designed by New York City architect Louis E. Jallade and built in 1912 by the nearby Union Theological Seminary, the Stone Gym shares a late English Gothic style with neighboring seminary buildings, built in schist with limestone details, with a metal roof. It was gifted by Rockefeller to the Riverside Church in 1957, and renovated and reopened for community recreational purposes in 1962.

1930 Church and Tower Complex Exterior

The following description of the exterior of the 1930 church complex was largely written by Matthew Postal for the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission report designating The Riverside Church a New York City Landmark, May 2000; it has been edited and augmented, and is used with permission.

The 1930 church complex consists of three distinct sections: the nave, the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Tower, and the cloister extending east to Claremont Avenue. The west (Riverside Drive) facade is divided into two primary sections: the tower and the nave, which extends north from the lower floors of the tower. The main entrance, or West Portal, is located in the base of the tower (Photograph 02). At the top of steps, it consists of two historic double wood doors with transoms, over which are installed wood panels. Both the doors and panels are embellished with decorative metalwork. Over the center of each door is a single historic light fixture. In the

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open position, the double doors reveal an historic neo-Gothic style revolving door of wood and glass panels to the south, and an historic neo-Gothic double door with wood and glass panels to the north.

The tympanum, with a seated relief of Jesus, rests on two horizontal relief panels, with the upper one depicting a row of building facades. Between the doors is a trumeau, decorated with a single figure of "John the Beloved Disciple" set on a high base. The entrances and tympanum are framed by a series of five archivolt, each decorated with groups of figures, including religious leaders, philosophers and scientists (among them Albert Einstein and Charles Darwin). The door jambs, beneath the archivolt, are embellished with a single figure raised above a series of bases that diminish in size as they approach the doors (Photograph 03).

The jambs are framed by slender columns, crowned by capitals and gargoyles. From the capitals rise thin moldings that intersect above the top of the tympanum, forming a pediment. To the right and left of the portal, historic neo-Gothic copper frames, cut at the top with the words "The Riverside Church," contain messages about church schedules and leadership.

South of the main entrance is the entrance to the chapel. Reached by steps, the historic double doors, with elaborate metalwork, are flanked by two pairs of pillars. From these pillars spring two sets of archivolt, decorated with statues representing the months of the year. At center, directly above the tympanum relief of the Virgin Mary, are a pair of mirror-image angels. The tympanum rests on a single horizontal relief panel.

The nave rises approximately 10 stories. The west walls are divided by receding buttresses into three primary sections: from bottom to top, a single pointed arch window, an arcade of three windows divided by colonettes, and the clerestory, which features two side-by-side lancet windows below a rose window with tracery (Photograph 04). Stained glass is installed in each of the windows. At the base of the roof, above the top of the buttresses, a shallow stone-and-copper arcade extends around the top of the nave and apse. Where it passes each buttress, the arcade projects forward. The nave is crowned by a steeply pitched, standing-seam, lead-coated copper roof, which intersects with the base of the tower. A bronze statue, the "Angel of the Resurrection," with its trumpet in the air, stands on a raised base at the north end of the roof, facing north. (The angel was restored in 1997 after being toppled in a storm and damaged.¹)

Near the building's south end, above the main entrance, rises the tower. The west elevation, facing Riverside Drive, has projecting piers joined by a pointed arch, a pair of grisaille windows with pointed arches, statues of seven kings set into deeply recessed slightly pointed arched niches supported by columns with composite capitals, and a stained-glass rose window with ten lobes. Above the pointed arch are four windows flanked by buttresses. The colonettes that divide the four windows rise from a sloping base over a corbel table.

The base of the south elevation is mostly obscured by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Wing. Between the point where these structures intersect and the arcaded railing the upper halves of four slender stained-glass windows are visible. They are surmounted by three deeply recessed windows crowned by a pediment with a small circular

¹ Church Operations records, RCA Cage 2; "Lo, a Crane Shall Raise You Up," *New York Times* 1997.

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window at center. The lower portion of the east elevation, above the cloister, has a rose window with ten lobes (Photograph 05).

Above the ridge of the roof, the tower is divided into five sections. As it rises, each stage gradually diminishes in size. At each corner, set at an angle, is a slender niche supported by two columns. Set within each of the four canopied niches is a single statue. The base of these niches intersects with a stone-and-copper arcaded railing that extends around the tower's four elevations. The neo-Gothic fenestration does not reflect the stories contained within the tower. Above the arcaded railing, the sections are divided by string courses and setbacks, topped by a shallow conical roof. The primary fenestration rises as follows: two windows, four windows, three windows, four windows, five windows. All of the windows are set into arches with one or two sets of engaged Corinthian columns. The upper sections, housing the carillon, are the most elaborately decorated, featuring gargoyles and other neo-Gothic details. The top section incorporates pediments and pinnacles that extend above the metal roof. Radio antennae are also visible.

The north (122nd Street) facade of the church consists of the curved elevation of the apse flanked by two entrance pavilions (Photographs 06 and 07). The entrance at the building's northwest corner is known as the "Woman's Porch," after biblical women featured in its carving. Framed by recessed piers, the stepped entry is set into a round arch with recessed moldings that rises to a pinnacle, which culminates with a statue. The pinnacle bisects neo-Gothic style grillwork that extends between the piers. A string course that runs along the top edge of the grillwork extends onto and around the adjoining piers. Above the string course is a series of fully ornamented pinnacles and colonettes that extend up to and above the second story. The pavilion's west facade, on Riverside Drive, is treated similarly, with a single recessed window (covered with plexiglass), recessed piers, pinnacles, and colonettes above the first story.

The apse is divided into two sections, separated by a sloping roof. The lower section has three groups of stained-glass ambulatory windows, divided by three receding buttresses crowned by triangular stonework. Each group consists of two lancet windows and a rose window with six lobes. The upper section of the apse, divided by five receding buttresses, has five stained-glass clerestory windows, each incorporating cusped lancet windows, a trefoil window and a rose window with six lobes. The apse windows on both levels are all covered with plexiglass.

Each buttress is crowned by a single niche, consisting of a pair of colonettes that support a round-arched pediment. Within each niche stands a single figure of an angel on a squat base. The top of the apse is crowned by the stone-and-copper arcaded railing, intersected by the top portion of each buttress, which is decorated with a finial and incorporates a water spout and projecting gargoyle that is connected to the niche below by a thin molding. Behind these finials is a taller finial, decorated with sprockets along each vertical edge. The rear finials are crowned by crouching gargoyles.

At the top of the receding buttresses that rise behind the Woman's Porch and the pavilion to the west of the apse are a series of slender windows flanked by colonettes. Between the top of the windows and the arcaded railing is a molding from which gargoyles extend out above each colonette. Atop the pavilions, behind the stone and

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copper railing, are two lanterns, each consisting of round arches set on colonettes. Partial walls have been inserted between the colonettes. The roofs of the lanterns, in stone treated to resemble tile, are each crowned by a single finial. The sloping north section of the roof rises to intersect with the ridge line. The seams of roof's sloping north end converge at the ridge line.

The east facade of the nave is only partially visible from Claremont Avenue. The lower portion is obscured by the cloister and the Union Theological Seminary's McGiffert Hall (not part of the nominated property), an L-shaped neo-Gothic dormitory facing both Claremont Avenue and 122nd Street. The upper part of this elevation is identical to the west, consisting of five bays and similar stained-glass fenestration (Photograph 08). From the playground between the nave and McGiffert Hall can be seen a lower level of the east facade, containing two pointed-arch windows in each bay. Where the nave and cloister passage meet, there is a two-story flat-roofed addition, called the Control Building when it was constructed in 1957 for building managers' offices. It now also contains a gift shop on the cloister level (Photograph 09). This structure, which is not visible from the street and is reached through the cloister passage, faces the playground and rear of McGiffert Hall. It has three bays of quadripartite, aluminum-framed multi-light windows with stone mullions, similar to those in the contemporaneous MLK Wing.

The cloister passage extends east from the base of the tower to Claremont Avenue. It is a one-story structure with four bays facing south (the original fifth bay is incorporated into the northeast corner of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Wing), surmounted by a blind arcade (Photograph 10). Each bay has a pointed arch, flanked by Corinthian colonettes. Above each capital projects a limestone gutter. Within each arch are pointed-arched and circular grisaille windows. Both types have diagonal grids of leaded glass. A door on the south side of a pavilion at the east end serves as the handicapped entrance, with non-historic double doors, flanked by engaged columns set into a pointed arch, opening south. Above this side entrance is an historic bronze and glass lighting fixture.

The cloister entrance, reached by two steps, faces Claremont Avenue (Photograph 11). Set into a recessed arch with serpents to either side, the entrance consists of two historic wood doors and a non-historic metal and glass revolving door. To either side of the doors are historic smaller versions of the copper announcement frames seen by the West Portal on Riverside Drive. Above the cloister entrance are three figures of saints set into recessed niches with pointed arches, and corner buttresses with blind arcades. Where the east and south facades meet is a statue of Maasaeiah—Keeper of the Threshold in the Book of Jeremiah—set on a raised pedestal below an elaborate elongated crown that extends up to the bottom of the blind arcades. The north facade, similar to the south one, with vents in the additional exposed lower space in each bay, is almost entirely concealed by McGiffert Hall. A single full window bay opens onto the interior playground.

The Narthex Interior

The West Portal of the church on Riverside Drive leads into the narthex, a vestibule with four vaulted bays, finished in limestone with Guastavino tile in the vaults (Photograph 12). The vault ribs spring from the piers without capitals. From a vaulted aisle to the left, five iron double doors lead to the nave. To the right, at the

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west end, is a stone spiral staircase leading downward and a passageway to the chapel. At the center of the south side is an alcove for the four elevators of the tower. At the east end are stairs leading both up and down.

In the east wall above the stairs are two stained glass-windows, which, along with the two smaller pointed-arch grisaille panels in the lower stairwell below, are the only ones at the Riverside Church not created expressly for it. The large upper windows are believed to date to the early 16th century, and to have come originally from a church in Flanders from which they were salvaged during the French Revolution. Church publications state that the panes with English inscriptions were "painted on old glass."² The windows were previously installed in the chancel of The Riverside Church's predecessor church, the Park Avenue Baptist Church. Each window is composed of a pair of cusped lancets with a trefoil over each, and crowned by a quatrefoil. The panels represent scenes in the life of Jesus.

In the northeast corner of the narthex is a mortuary chapel, a small chamber with tiled vault ceiling and a triptych containing a painting, "Christ in Gesthemane" (1890) by Heinrich Hofmann. There is a grisaille stained-glass window in its east wall. The chapel, originally known as the Christ Chapel, was renamed the Gesthemane Chapel in 1959.³

At each end of the narthex is a niche with a statue of an angel: at the west end, atop a colonette engaged in the wall between the two entrance revolving doors, and at the east, one above the solid stone banister and between the stained-glass windows.

The Nave Interior

The church's nave interior is composed of a rectangular body and a semicircular chancel surrounded by an ambulatory at the north end, with two levels of galleries at the south end (Photograph 13). The entire nave interior is 89 feet wide, 215 feet long and 100 feet high. The interior, patterned on French and Spanish Gothic prototypes adapted to the Protestant church's requirements, is finished in Indiana limestone, with vaults of Guastavino terra-cotta tile and a marble floor.

Main Body and Aisles

Of the 89-foot width of the nave, the main body between the piers is about 60 feet, with narrow aisles to each side. There are five bays along the length of the nave, each with three main sections. From bottom to top, the sections of each bay are: a pointed arch opening onto the aisles, with a pointed-arch stained-glass window in the aisle wall; a triforium gallery; and a clerestory window (Photograph 14).

The bays are separated by composite piers with engaged columns that rise to Corinthian capitals in the middle of the clerestory, from which spring the ribs of the ceiling vault. In each bay, the pointed arch opening into the

² *Church Monthly*, July 1932, 437.

³ *Carillon* 1 no. 23 (10 Nov. 1959), 5.

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aisle rests on columns engaged in the piers. The Corinthian capitals of these columns are ornamented with scenes drawn from the Book of Jeremiah, beginning in the southwest corner pier (engaged in the nave wall), continuing in the southeast corner, and then alternating west and east sides from south to north, concluding in the northeast corner pier, engaged in the rear wall to the right of the chancel rail.

Along the aisle walls, corresponding to each bay is a slightly recessed pointed-arch window of stained glass. Each is set within a larger arch form in the wall that, punctuated by double engaged columns, reflects the piers and arches separating the aisle and nave. The 10 aisle windows, five on the east side and five on the west, are set in armatures based on windows of Chartres Cathedral, but the subjects of the windows were originated for the Riverside Church, and produced by the studio of Reynolds, Francis & Rohnstock of Boston.

From south to north along the east aisle, the windows' themes are International Character of Religion (Photograph 15); Christ and Humanity; Scholars; Music and Children; and from south to north along the west aisle, Agriculture; Reformers; Development of the Bible; State and Government; and Material Creation, or the "Builders Window," which was dedicated in a special ceremony in February 1931 honoring the artisans and laborers who constructed the building.⁴ The depictions in the windows extend beyond traditional Christian iconography, with subjects including American Indian drummers and Ludwig van Beethoven in the Music window; representations of Taoism, Buddhism and Islam in the International window; and philosopher Immanuel Kant in the Scholars window.

The aisles are covered by a vaulted ceiling of Guastavino tile, underneath the triforium galleries. In the triforium, there are four pointed arches per bay, divided by Corinthian colonettes. The triforium gallery, which provides additional seating space, also contains supplementary lighting equipment.

Above the triforium, in the clerestory, each bay has a stained-glass window composed of side-by-side lancets below a small rose window. Running along the bottom of the clerestory in each bay is a stone railing pierced by cusped lancets and trefoils separated by colonettes. The clerestory windows are reproductions of windows at Chartres, produced by the studio of Jacques Simon, glass-keeper of Rheims Cathedral in France (east wall) and by Charles Lorin of Chartres (west). However, their leading is much heavier than their original models, due to The Riverside Church's climatic exposure. The windows' images, which have as their subjects saints and various occupations, are larger in scale than those of the aisle windows, due to the fact that they are viewed from a greater distance, and they are composed of lighter shades of glass than the aisle windows, to aid illumination of the interior.⁵

In the nave ceiling, each bay rises to a quadripartite vault, separated by transverse ribs, although the vaulting is not structural in nature in the steel-framed building. The vaults are finished in Guastavino acoustical tile. The tile above the two frontmost bays (in both the nave ceiling and the aisle ceilings), as well as over the chancel, has a brown tint, differing from the otherwise gray tiles (Photograph 16). This is the result of the yellowing of a

⁴ *Church Monthly*, March 1931, 104.

⁵ *Church Monthly*, December 1930, 53-54.

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hardening sealant applied in 1953 to increase the reverberation of sound from the organ pipes in the chancel. The tile as originally installed had been sound-absorbent to reduce reverberation, so that the speech from the pulpit and lectern would remain intelligible, but it also deadened the sound of the organ.⁶

Eight large wrought-iron lanterns hang from the transverse arches of the nave vault. (These lanterns originally had an additional pendant element, since removed.) There are also light fixtures in the bosses of the vaults, which were added by 1940.⁷ There are 38 rows of oak pews, whose ends are carved in Gothic tracery motifs. (Five of the original rows of pews at the front of the nave were later removed.) These, together with pews in two levels of galleries above the south end of the nave, accommodate more than 2,400 people.

Chancel

The semicircular chancel is raised from the nave by steps and divided from it by a rail of solid limestone on either side of the steps (Photograph 17). The face of the rail is ornamented with 20 quatrefoil medallions. At the left (western) end of the rail, projecting into the nave from the pier of its northwest corner, is a large and ornate carved-limestone pulpit, which sits below a tall carved wooden canopy. Figures in the niches around the pulpit's central supporting member and its rail are drawn from the Old Testament's prophets; 10 of them appear under canopies carved to resemble architectural elements from 10 European Gothic cathedrals.

At the right end of the chancel rail is the carved-limestone lectern, decorated with three figures drawn from parables of Jesus, with the wooden reading desk supported by a gilded bronze eagle. At the center of the chancel's floor is a labyrinth, composed of three different kinds of marble, and designed after a similar, larger one found in the Cathedral of Chartres. To either side, facing each other, are four rows of oak choir stalls, whose carvings illustrate passages in the Psalms. The chancel organ console sits behind the left row of stalls.

The wall encircling the rear of the chancel has seven bays, divided vertically into three main sections, corresponding with the three sections of the nave bays, but slightly raised. The sections of each bay, from bottom to top, are a pointed arch, within which is set a panel of the chancel screen; a pair of cusped arches with colonettes, filled with metalwork screen; and a clerestory. In the clerestory, the five middle bays contain stained-glass windows by Wilbur H. Burnham of Boston. Each is dedicated to a particular religious theme, and composed of a pair of cusped lancet windows topped by a trefoil window, with a rose window with six lobes above. (The extreme right and left bays contain blind tracery in the pattern of the windows.)

The seven panels of the chancel screen are elaborately carved in Caen limestone, which stands out from the rest of the interior with its lighter color. Each of the seven panels is dedicated to a theme in Jesus's life; these are illustrated with a total of 70 statues of religious, scientific and artistic figures from antiquity to the 20th century chosen as exemplars of these qualities. As with the main exterior portal and the aisle windows, the themes and iconography of the screen reflect the inclusive vision of the church's founders.

⁶ "Church Finds Its Voice," *Architectural Record*, November 1995, 37; Gonzalez, 21.

⁷ Lamp pendants seen in photo with article on the added boss downlighting, *Lighting Engineering* 1940, 125.

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The seven sections of the screen, from the left (western) end, are: Physicians, Teachers, Prophets, Humanitarians, Missionaries, Reformers (Photograph 18) and Lovers of Beauty. (The center panel frames the communion table; the two flanking panels incorporate doorways, and the next two panels to each side rise above carved-stone stall seats.) The statues in the screen, ranging in height from about two feet to four feet, include varied figures from ancient to modern history, such Robert Koch, discoverer of the tuberculosis and cholera bacilli; Victorian critic John Ruskin; the archetypical "family doctor"; and Leonardo da Vinci.

In front of the central bay stands the communion table, with a gilt cross suspended above it in a large opening underneath the central screen panel. The communion table is of Caen stone covered with a yellow marble veneer added in 1959, at the same time the current suspended cross replaced the original gradine with cross and angels.⁸ Behind the communion table is the baptismal pool, reached through doorways in the panels of the chancel screen flanking the center.

Through the opening over the communion table, the central stained glass window of the ambulatory, whose imagery illustrates the theme of mercy, is visible. The window is composed of two lancets and a six-lobed rose window above; flanking it are two grisaille windows in the same form. They were created by Harry Wright Goodhue of Boston, Mass. (There are currently two overhead wooden platforms in the ambulatory, braced with wooden frames set into the recesses of the grisaille windows. According to church personnel, the platforms were raised in recent years to support speakers for an electric organ, used in periods when the church's organs were not in use for maintenance reasons.)

The piers between the bays behind the chancel converge in a boss, forming a radiating vault. Doorways at the north ends of the aisles, to the left and right of the chancel, lead from the body of the nave out to the two portals on West 122nd Street, and to stairs leading to the organ pipes, located behind ironwork above the chancel screen.

South Wall of Nave and Galleries

At the south end of the nave there are two gallery balconies providing additional seating (Photograph 19). The first, lower gallery is finished in carved wood, and sits above a wall with a trio of large pointed arches rising from the nave floor. High on this wall, between the arches and in the corners, are four carved figures, representing classes of Old Testament figures. The gallery contains oak pews, and has a beamed wooden ceiling, with nine wrought-iron lamps, smaller versions of those in the nave, hanging from it.

Above and behind the wall separating the lower gallery from the nave, the upper gallery occupies a space fully open to the nave and to the height of its ceiling. The gallery also has rows of oak pews on a slope, accessed through a vestibule at rear encased in carved wood with leaded glass windows.

⁸ RCA, Box 312, folder 2.

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The space above the upper gallery is composed of two bays. In each side wall, in the bay nearest the rear, is a large rose window, composed of ten petals and a central roundel, accompanied by two small, deeply recessed grisaille lancet windows below. The west rose window depicts the Ten Commandments, and the east window depicts parables of Jesus. These windows were produced by the D'Ascenzo Studios of Philadelphia, Pa.

In the forward bay on each side is blind tracery echoing the clerestory windows, with a rose above two lancet recesses, each containing four niches. These forms are filled with metalwork screens. On the east wall, this bay also contains pipes of the gallery organ, whose console is located at the east end of the front row of the gallery's pews.

In the southern wall of the nave, above the rear of the upper gallery, are three lancet arches, each containing a pair of two-level lancet niches with tracery, surmounted by a quatrefoil opening. The lower niches are filled with metalwork screens, and the six upper niches contain stone figures representing great preachers, beneath carved stone canopies. Suspended in front of the central arch is a sculpture of "Christ in Majesty," in gilded plaster, which is the cast for an aluminum sculpture created by U.S.-born British sculptor Sir Jacob Epstein (1880-1959) for Llandaff Cathedral in Cardiff, Wales (1957).⁹ The plaster figure was given to the Riverside Church and dedicated in 1967. Projecting forward from the wall below are the "Trompeta Majestatis" organ pipes, installed in 1978.¹⁰

Four iron lanterns identical to the eight in the nave hang from the vaults over the upper gallery.

Chapel Interior

Across the narthex from the nave is a smaller chapel with a capacity of about 200 people, known since 1959 as Christ Chapel.¹¹ From the southwest corner of the narthex, a passage leads to the vestibule of the chapel, finished in a warm cream-colored Briar Hill sandstone, with a pointed barrel vault of Guastavino tile, a lantern hanging from the central groin vault. On the west side of the vestibule are the exterior doors onto Riverside Drive, and opposite them, the double iron doors leading to the chapel itself. Both sets of doors flanked by iron sconces. At the south end of the vestibule is a doorway to the MLK Wing.

The oblong length of the Romanesque chapel runs the width of the church building, from the entrance in the west to the communion table, baptismal pool and reredos in the rear. Also finished in Briar Hill stone, the chapel has four bays, with a round-arched stained-glass window in each bay of on the south wall, set within a recessed round arch, and solid masonry in the north wall (Photograph 20). The stained-glass windows in the chapel are by D'Ascenzo; they are backlit artificially, because the MLK Wing now lies to the immediate south of the chapel.

⁹ "The Service of Dedication: Christ in Majesty," program, RAC; Cronshaw, 27.

¹⁰ Riverside Organs Timeline, <<http://www.theriversidechurchny.org/events/?organ-timeline>>, accessed July 16, 2012.

¹¹ *Carillon* 1 no. 23 (19 Nov 1959), 5.

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Between each bay, engaged columns with Romanesque Corinthian capitals give rise to transverse pointed ribs. Eight orb-shaped iron lamps hang from the ribs. The chapel does not have fixed pews, but is ordinarily filled with rows of chairs.

At the east end, four steps lead up to a platform with wrought-iron pulpit at left and lectern at right. The metalwork in the chapel, including the door and lamps, is by Oscar B. Bach (1885-1957).¹² Behind the altar, in the east wall, is a round arch on Corinthian columns, which opens onto a baptismal pool, and, on the wall behind that, a carved reredos. Above, the east wall opens to an arcade of colonettes beneath a rose window, with large roundel and eight slightly smaller circular petals.

Above the entrance on the western wall is a carved wood balcony housing the chapel's organ console and pipes, with iron candelabra at each end.

To the left of the altar platform, there is an alcove behind a row of narrow round arches on colonettes. To the left, separated by a drum pier, is a passageway to the narthex.

Secondary Spaces Beneath the Nave

There are two principal double-height spaces occupying the space beneath the nave: an Assembly Hall (Photograph 21) and, north of that, a gymnasium with a wood-floor basketball court (Photograph 22). The Assembly Hall, entered on a floor two levels below the nave, has walls and floor in stone, with wide stone arches between the piers, a painted wooden ceiling, large hanging iron lanterns, six pointed-arch stained glass windows in the east wall (plus one smaller rectangular window at the south end), and a stage to the north. Cabinets in the Assembly Hall, ordinarily closed and locked, contain two paintings by Heinrich Hoffmann ("Christ's Image," 1894, and "Christ and the Rich Young Man," 1889), and a copy of his 1881 "Christ in the Temple" executed under his supervision. To the east of the Assembly Hall's stage is a kitchen with some historic wood cabinets.

Running long the west side of the Assembly Hall and gym on the Assembly Floor, and on the Cloister Floor above it, are corridors with functional rooms off of them. South of the elevators on the Assembly Floor, the former bowling alley running the width of the building is now storage space.

Tower Interior

The tower rises 22 floors, crowned by three levels of belfry containing the 74 bells of the carillon, and, at the top, the closed observation deck. Four elevators, with non-historic interiors embossed with ecclesiastical motifs and illuminated by quatrefoil lamps, serve the first 20 floors. (Only two elevators travel higher than the 10th floor.) The elevators are flanked by two stairwells up to the ninth floor, the eastern one continuing to the floors

¹² "Commissions," Friends of Oscar Bach website <<http://www.oscarbach.org/index.php/commissions>>, accessed July 9, 2012.

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above. There are leaded glass windows in the eastern stairwell on some levels where it is positioned at the outer edge of the floor.

The tower floors are typically finished in plaster, with vaulted ceilings in some elevator lobbies; resilient floors; steel doors and window frames; and iron ceiling lanterns. Floors with major meeting spaces, such as the ninth and 10th, have distinctive floors finished in stone, wood and terrazzo in areas, and wooden entry doors (Photographs 23-26). The uses of the tower rooms have changed over the history of the church, resulting in varying alterations in finishes. Many office spaces, some of them leased to outside organizations, have carpeted floors and fluorescent ceiling lighting.

The third and fourth floors open to the nave's lower and upper galleries, respectively, with offices and meeting rooms on the opposite side of the elevators. Floors five through eight are within the height of the nave, and have, on the opposite side of the elevators, varying combinations of office, meeting and storage spaces. Floors nine and 10 on the nave side hold meeting rooms with stages, and storage space underneath the nave roof. The ninth floor has a two-level kitchen, with historic wood cabinets, and a vaulted library with carved-wood and glass bookcases. The 11th floor is subdivided into offices.

The 12th through 16th floors have roughly similar floor plans, with a large room north of the elevator lobby, toilets in the southwest corner, and smaller closet or pantry spaces in the other corners. Original wooden moldings and built-in furnishings, e.g. wooden lockers and kitchen furnishings, exist in varying degrees, with finishes altered in some cases for specific current uses (e.g., a dance studio on the 13th floor, and office spaces leased to outside organizations).

The 17th floor contains offices and meeting rooms, and the next three floors have meeting rooms. The 21st floor contains the carillonneur's studio and the carillon's clock mechanism, and the 22nd floor, mechanical systems.

There are exterior balconies on the eighth floor's southern corners and on the west, south and east sides of the 10th floor.

Carillon

In the belfry above, the 74-bell Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Carillon occupies three levels reached by stairs, with 60 openings to the exterior covered with copper wire mesh and equipped with copper rolling curtains that are closed in winter to protect the bells. The 20-ton Bourdon hour bell is the largest and heaviest tuned carillon bell in the world, and the overall carillon is the largest ever assembled, with bells weighing more than 100 tons. Fifty-three of the bells comprised the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Carillon installed at the Park Avenue Baptist Church in 1925, produced by the Gillett & Johnston foundry in Britain. Nineteen bells were added when it was moved to The Riverside Church when it was built, and two more added in 1955, when the carillon's 58 treble bells were replaced with new ones from the Dutch foundry Van Bergen. Those bells were in turn replaced by new ones produced by Whitechapel Bell Foundry of Britain in a restoration competed in

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2004.¹³ A machine room in the belfry contains a power house and the mechanical controls of the swinging bells. The top level of the belfry contains the clavier cabin. The closed observation deck is above the belfry.

The Cloister Interior

The cloister passageway from Claremont Avenue to the church is finished in limestone, with marble floor and with a ceiling of Guastavino tiled groin vaults (Photograph 27). From the double-height entrance pavilion, iron doors with glass lights lead into the passageway, with its five bays. There are three historic hanging iron lanterns in alternating vaults, with three non-historic metal lanterns in the intervening vaults.

There are windows of leaded glass in the pointed arches in the south wall, as described in the exterior description, and in the north wall (artificially illuminated), which abuts McGiffert Hall. In the closest bay to the church, an iron and glass door on the north side leads to the wood-paneled gift shop in the 1957 Control Building addition. Across the passage from the gift shop, the arched bay now holds doors leading to the MLK Wing.

A trio of statues in the wall over the passage from the cloister into the tower depict the architects Pelton and Collens, and builder Robert J. Eidlitz.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Building Exterior

The 1959 South Wing, now the Martin Luther King, Jr., Wing, is attached to the south facade of the tower and to the cloister, with passageways between it and the 1930 church complex. It is a steel-frame structure with Indiana limestone exterior cladding, on a concrete and stone foundation, with a membrane roof finished in terrazzo and covered with rubber tiles, as the roof serves as a playground area. The wing extends south to 120th Street, and from Riverside Drive east to the Stone Gym. The MLK Wing's full height—seven stories plus the roof terrace encircled by loggias—forms an "L" shape, with a main axis running south from the church and then extending east to the Stone Gym. The building rises to a height equivalent to two stories in the quadrangle between the arms of the "L". The main north-south axis is connected to the south facade of the tower by a lower connecting section. To the east of this connector, the building extends at a one-story height to the beginning of the church's cloister, with a facade that nearly replicates that of the cloister. In the quadrangle formed by the old and new cloister facades is the "garth" courtyard, bordered to the south by a walkway along the north end of Stone Gym that leads to a door on the east side of the MLK Wing. The garth is enclosed by an iron fence along Claremont Avenue.

The main street entrance to the MLK Wing is a portal on Riverside Drive, forming the lower portion of the section connecting to the tower, and recessed from both the church's western facade, to the left, and the main body of the MLK building, to the right (Photograph 28). The portal echoes those of the chapel and the church itself adjacent to the north. At the top of steps rising from the street, the portal consists of two sets of wooden

¹³ Curry, 6-7.

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double doors, with decorative metalwork, set beneath three archivolts resting on jambs with Corinthian capitals. In the center of the tympanum is a niche with a sculpture of St. Paul—executed by Lee Lawrie (1877-1963), as were the two other figures on the west facade of the MLK Wing—flanked by two pairs of pointed-arch windows with stained glass. The main portal is flanked by two smaller, single wooden doors.

Further recessed from the portal rise three upper floors of the connecting section of the building. It has three bays of windows, each bay set in a recessed pointed arch encompassing all three floors. (The windows throughout the building are aluminum framed, multi-light awning windows.) Along the top of the wall runs a corbel table. The standing-seam metal gable roof is visible above.

To the right, the taller and wider main body of the building (the north-south arm of the “L”) projects forward, with one bay of windows facing north. The west facade is composed of a main central section, six bays wide, flanked by two slightly projecting sections, each with two narrower bays (Photograph 29). On the entire width of the facade, the first floor protrudes from the facade of the next six stories; above, further-recessed exterior walls enclose the eighth-floor (rooftop) terrace and playground. In the first floor, each of the six bays of the central part of the facade contains a pointed arch, within which is set a single lancet window. Beneath a string course below, near sidewalk level, are basement windows behind iron grilles. Between the arches are shallow buttresses. At the right and left ends of the first floor are identical single lancets set into walls without framing arches.

In the central section, above the ground floor, the six bays of windows are each placed within recessed pointed arches through the sixth floor. On the second floor, there is a narrow window at the center of each bay, with buttresses between the sides of each pointed arch at this level. On the next four levels, the windows are divided into three sections with stone mullions; on the sixth floor, they fill the top of the arch. On the seventh floor, the windows are wider, with four parts divided by mullions.

In the left and right sections of the facade, the projecting lower portion rises higher than in the center, into the second-story level. In the left section, a pair of narrow, recessed, pointed-arch bays hold the windows of the third through fifth floors, while at the sixth floor level, a small round window is surmounted by a pediment. Two small windows appear in the seventh floor, to either side of the pediment. Between the fifth-floor windows is a niche with a statue by Lawrie representing Albert Schweitzer. In the right-hand section of the facade, there is no window at the second-story level. From the third to the sixth floors, a pair of pointed arch bays similar to the left section's contain the windows, with a niched Lawrie statue at the sixth floor, here of Jane Addams. Two pairs of windows, each with a stone mullion, appear on the seventh floor.

Atop each of the side sections, stone pediments in the eighth floor enclosure are partially visible, each with a circular window. The standing-seam metal sloped roof of the building's brick rooftop terrace enclosure runs between them.

The south facade of the MLK Wing overlooks West 122nd Street (Photograph 30). Roughly the left half of the facade is occupied by three bays set in recessed pointed arches up to the sixth floor, as in the main section of the

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west facade, also with similar windows on the seventh floor. These bays have no windows in the lower level, which also has buttresses between the arches, and there are wooden double doors at either end of this section of the facade at street level. To the left of these bays is one bay of narrow windows. To the right of this section is another bay of narrow windows, and to the right of that, the open landings of a stairwell, recessed in a pointed arch. A projection above, with three pointed-arch openings, encloses the head of the stairwell and adjacent elevator. To its east, a pediment of the rooftop structure is visible.

Three narrower bays, also set within arched recesses, occupy the right-hand section of the facade, about half as wide as the left section. These windows have stone transoms as well as mullions. At the ground level are the vehicle entry and exit to the underground parking garage, each framed by a pointed arch. A deeply recessed street-level portal with a wooden door is at the right end of the facade.

On the east facade of the lower arm of the 'L,' there are four bays, with the windows (with stone mullions and transoms) of the second through sixth floors set into pointed-arch recesses (Photograph 31). There are tripartite windows above the arch on the seventh floor. Below the second-story level is a string course, beneath which there are windows only in the left- and rightmost bays, three levels down to where the roof of the Stone Gym meets the facade.

Three identical arched bays of windows appear on the north facade of the lower arm of the L, with a recessed, unadorned fourth bay at the right, in the corner. This facade, and the east facade of the north-south arm, overlook a playground atop the two stories that occupy the quadrangle formed by them (Photograph 32). The rooftop playground is surrounded by a high chain-link fence. The structure beneath, partly obscured by the Stone Gym, has buttress details below a string course. There is a wooden double door on its east facade, just north of the Stone Gym, with a metal light fixture above it, and a tripartite window with stone mullions at the ground-floor level on its north facade, adjacent to the cloister.

The east facade of the north-south axis of the building has five bays of tripartite windows with stone mullions, set in recessed pointed arches up to the sixth floor, with quadripartite windows on the seventh floor, identical to the bays of the west facade. To the left is a bay composed of vents instead of windows, except on the fifth floor. At the right is a projection with one bay of narrow windows set within a recessed pointed arch, flanked by buttress motifs, up to the sixth floor, and two lancet windows underneath pointed arches on the seventh floor.

In the projection, the eighth floor is slightly recessed with chamfered corners and a small window, and behind it is visible a further vertical projection housing the machine room over the elevator shaft. To the left, the outer brick wall of the roof terrace arcade is visible, below its sloped roof.

To the north is the east facade of the section of the MLK Wing connecting to the church, with three bays of windows set within pointed arches, below the gabled roof, similar to the west facade. Below is one projecting windowless story, above the further projecting ground-story facade looking over the garth. This facade replicates the original cloister facade, except with blind circular medallions in the place of the circular windows.

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In front of this facade in the garth, facing east, is a bronze sculpture, "Madonna and Child" (1927) by Sir Jacob Epstein, donated to the Riverside Church and dedicated in 1960.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Building Interior

Above two levels of underground parking, the cloister level of the MLK Wing is entered from the cloister of the 1930 complex. A wide lobby has leaded glass windows, matching those of the cloister passageway, looking onto the garth to the east, and a community food pantry on the west side. Just to the south of the garth windows is a small, stone-finished and vaulted meditation chapel with stained glass windows by Orin E. Skinner of the Boston Studio Charles J. Connick Associates. The lobby extends south in front of the wing's two main elevators. Much of the cloister level is occupied by a 250-seat theater. Along hallways passing around the theater are numerous rooms used for social services and building operations.

The first floor is entered through the main Riverside Avenue doors on the west, leading to the two-story South Hall Lobby. The lobby is set within an arcade of pointed arches on piers resembling those of the narthex, below gray plaster walls (with three pair of pointed-arch stained glass windows high on the east wall) and a painted coffered ceiling, and with a terrazzo floor. To the south is the elevator lobby, with three doors opening into the South Hall, a large auditorium with walls paneled in wood in their lower sections and finished in limestone above. High on the east wall of the South Hall are four recessed, abstract stained-glass windows by Wilbur H. Burnham, creator of the church's apse clerestory windows. Running along the west of the South Hall is the Corridor of American Churches, with nine etched glass lancet windows by Duncan Niles Terry (1909-1989) in the west wall depicting phases of Protestant church practice and architecture in the U.S.

A defunct tunnel, once reached from this level, connected the south end of the MLK Wing to the Interchurch Center (1960) across 122nd Street. There are two mezzanine levels with offices and meeting rooms in the southeast area of the MLK Wing (the lower arm of the "L") within the height of the South Hall.

The third, fourth, sixth and seventh floors contain several classrooms along an L-shaped hallway that begins at the elevator lobby, and ends at another elevator and external stairwell. These floors are typically finished with terrazzo floor in the hallways and resilient flooring in the classrooms, and hung panel ceilings. The fifth floor has offices along a similar hallway, except with carpeting, and also extending into a passageway to the tower. Some offices and meeting rooms have wood paneling.

In the lobbies of the fourth and seventh floors, on the south wall of the elevator lobbies hang mosaics by Gregor T. Goethals (1926-2008). The fourth-floor mosaic depicts Old Testament scenes (Photograph 33), and the seventh-floor one treats the Creation.

In the southwest corner of the third floor is the Chapel of the Cross (Photograph 34). The area around the altar rises two stories, and a mosaic above the altar and stained-glass windows depicting various occupations, designed by Skinner.

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A small chapel in the south side of the sixth floor has stained glass windows by Joseph G. Reynolds (of the studio that produced the church's aisle windows), with themes pertaining to young children.

The eighth floor of the MLK Wing is the roof. An enclosed "solarium" room by the main elevator lobby opens onto a terrace with arched loggias on three sides, with brick walls. The interior walls' red brick is interspersed with brightly colored pictorial ceramic tiles; the outer walls are of yellow brick. The floor is covered with rubber tiles. To the southeast, by the elevator and stairwell, is an engineering room.

Stone Gymnasium

Located directly to the east of the MLK wing at the corner of West 120th Street and Claremont Avenue, the Stone Gym is a one-and-a-half-story structure built in 1912 for the use of the Union Theological Seminary in the English Gothic style that characterizes that institution's neighboring buildings. It is finished in an irregularly coursed ashlar of schist, with limestone surrounds on all windows and both of its doors. The east (Claremont Avenue) facade has, from the southeast corner of the building, five bays with wide arched windows with limestone surrounds, transoms and mullions, divided by buttresses with limestone finials (Photograph 35). Protective metal grating covers all the windows. A limestone string course running above each window is punctuated by medallions with floral or face motifs. To the north of these bays is a protruding section with the main entrance, a metal double door recessed within a pointed arch, and a row of four small windows set in limestone above. Above the windows is a limestone string course, with gargoyles at the corners, and a crenelated parapet trimmed in limestone.

To the right of this entrance pavilion, the remaining portion of the facade contains three double windows, and a single door at the right end. A limestone string course runs above. The metal gable roof, with its ridge running north-south, is visible above the facade.

The south (120th Street) facade has a central section with a single large window flanked by buttresses and with a horizontal parapet (Photograph 36). This section is flanked by solid walls that conform to the roof line. The north facade forms a similar silhouette in its left half, but with a blank wall and no ornamentation or windows. To the right, the facade recedes at angles, with its parapet continuing horizontally rather than sloping in line with the roof.

The Stone Gym interior walls are finished in painted brick. The entry lobby has stairs leading down to the sunken floor of the synthetic-floored basketball court, occupying the southern portion of the building and open all the way to the roof (Photograph 37); as well as up to a balcony overlooking the court. Lounge, locker and office spaces, finished primarily in resilient tile, occupy the northern half of the building on the two levels.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location
- C** a birthplace or grave
- D** a cemetery
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Social History

Period of Significance:

1930 - 1962

Significant Dates:

1930, 1957, 1959, & 1962

Significant Person:

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

1930 Church & Tower- Allen & Collens and Henry

C. Pelton, architects, Marc Eidlitz & Sons Inc, builder/ 1959 Martin Luther King Jr. Wing- Collens,

Willis & Beckonert, architects, Vermilya-Brown Inc., builders/ 1912 Gym- Louis E. Jallade, architect

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by historic American Building Survey

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other repository: Church archives

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Statement of Significance:

The Riverside Church is significant under National Register Criteria A and C. Completed in 1930, it is architecturally significant as an example of early 20th-century neo-Gothic architecture in which a modern steel structure is combined with a studied program of ornament based on European Gothic models. Designed by the firm of Allen & Collens and New York architect Henry C. Pelton, both designers of numerous important buildings in Gothic and other historical styles, it incorporates the work of nationally preeminent artists, including the Piccirilli Brothers (stone sculpture), Reynolds, Francis and Rohnstock, Harry Wright Goodhue (stained glass) and Oscar B. Bach (wrought iron). The Riverside Church is also historically significant for its association with the modernist Protestant movement of the early 20th century. Its first pastor, nationally renowned modernist preacher Harry Emerson Fosdick, and principal financial backer, John D. Rockefeller Jr., founded the church to embody their ideals of inclusiveness and service to all humanity. The church, built to host extensive social, educational and recreational facilities, remained closely associated with the social development of upper Manhattan. Pledging itself to extensive "benevolence" beyond its own membership, it offered work relief programs in the Great Depression and expanded and adapted its services to the increasingly economically and ethnically diverse population of nearby areas. The Riverside Church's architectural character and mission of service to New York City were extended in the attached 1959 South Wing, now known as the Martin Luther King Jr. Wing, after the civil rights leader to whom the Riverside Church extended an open invitation to preach beginning in 1961. Its community activity was expanded with the 1957 acquisition of the Stone Gym, renovated and reopened in 1962 as an athletic facility open to the broad use of local youth, unrestricted to particular membership organizations.

The following statement incorporates material written by Matthew Postal for the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission report designating the Riverside Church a New York City Landmark, May 2000, and is used with permission.

Historical Background of the Riverside Church

Along with many other Baptist organizations in New York City, the Riverside Church traces its beginnings to the First Baptist Church, established on Gold Street in lower Manhattan around 1762. Following the American Revolution, feuds within the Baptist community resulted in the establishment of numerous small congregations throughout the growing city. Among these groups were 16 members of the Mulberry Street Baptist Church. Over the following decades, this congregation occupied a succession of locations, becoming the Norfolk Street Baptist Church in 1841—the event the current church takes as its origin—and moving in 1865 to a new building on West 46th Street, near Fifth Avenue. The Fifth Avenue Baptist Church flourished and in 1899, under pastor William Herbert Perry Faunce, the building was enlarged to accommodate its growing membership.¹⁴

During the first decades of the twentieth century, the once-residential blocks surrounding Fifth Avenue gave way to commerce and congestion. In 1917 the congregation announced plans to move to the Upper East Side.

¹⁴ *The Riverside Church in the City of New York: A Handbook of the Institution and Its Building*, 23; Pendo, 8-9, 22, 29.

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The new church, constructed between 1920 and 1922, was called the Park Avenue Baptist Church.¹⁵ Philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (1867-1960), who purchased the East 64th Street site, paid half of the \$1.5 million construction cost. Designed by the architects Henry C. Pelton of New York and Allen & Collens of Boston, the late English Gothic style church had a wide nave that could accommodate nearly 700 worshippers, and an octagonal bell tower, designed to contain a 53-bell carillon donated in memory of Rockefeller's mother, Laura (Celestina) Spelman Rockefeller (1839-1915).

John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

William Rockefeller (1841-1922) was the first of many members of the Rockefeller family to be associated with the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church. An industrialist and financier, he used his business acumen to help the congregation reduce its debt during the 1870s.¹⁶ In 1884, his older brother, John D. Rockefeller, Sr. (1839-1937), founder of the Standard Oil Company of New York, moved his wife and five children from Cleveland, Ohio, to New York City.

Many church functions took place in the Rockefeller home at 4 West 54th Street. Both brothers served on the church's board of trustees, and Laura Spelman Rockefeller taught in the Sunday school.¹⁷ As a student at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. was influenced by Elisha Andrews, Brown's president and a liberal Baptist minister, united his family's religious devotion to an interest in addressing social problems. In 1897, he joined his father's "family office" in New York, dedicated to managing the family fortune and philanthropic giving, where he created a series of institutions intended to eliminate social ills through medical research, education and other pursuits. By the time he was 40, he had resigned from most family-owned businesses to spend more time on his philanthropic causes, which also included land conservation, restoration of historic buildings and supporting major art museums.¹⁸

At the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, he led the Men's Bible Class from 1900 to 1908.¹⁹ Rockefeller was perhaps the most prominent of a generation of corporate capitalists who envisioned that the application of rational organizational principles could overcome the disorder of denominational conflict in Christianity. In the weekly Men's Class meetings, and in a 1917 address to the Baptist Social Union that he long considered the definitive statement of his religious views, Rockefeller presented a practical and pragmatic approach to Christian worship. He discounted questions of correct creed and ritual (including the Baptist insistence on baptism by immersion), and emphasized the application of Christian theology to current civic concerns and needs. Under his guidance, Men's Class attendance quadrupled, attracting both members of the congregation and journalists who satirized his religious views.²⁰

¹⁵ Pendo, 37-38.

¹⁶ Pendo, 22.

¹⁷ Nevins, 455.

¹⁸ Loebel, 19-23.

¹⁹ Loebel, 25.

²⁰ Miller, 153-154.

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Rockefeller had seen in the ongoing construction of the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine, in the upper Manhattan neighborhood of Morningside Heights, an opportunity to support a “great Protestant cathedral”²¹ that would be home to an ecumenical program of service to humanity. Rockefeller in 1925 offered a gift of \$500,000 to the cathedral, linked to his stated hope that it would open its board to non-Episcopalians. However, Bishop William T. Manning indicated that he believed it was premature to take that step toward ecumenism, leading an irked Rockefeller to pursue another opportunity to realize his ideals.²²

Only three years after the completion of the Park Avenue Baptist Church, Rockefeller spearheaded plans to move the church again, to a more splendid building on Morningside Heights, and bring to its pulpit nationally renowned (and controversial) preacher: the leading “modernist” of the day, Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1969), who in 1925 had resigned from a New York Presbyterian pulpit amid criticism from conservatives.

Harry Emerson Fosdick and the Modernist-Fundamentalist Clash

The early 20th century saw an intensifying nationwide battle among the U.S.’s Protestants between “fundamentalists” and “modernists.” Fundamentalism, notably promoted by pastor A.C. Dixon of the Moody Church in Chicago, emerged in the 1910s as a movement propounding five doctrinal tenets that were “fundamental” to authentic Christianity, including the inerrancy of scripture and Christ’s virgin birth and bodily resurrection. Protestant modernism, influenced by 19th-century Congregationalist minister Horace Bushnell, emphasized the personal interpretation of religious teaching in light of contemporary scientific knowledge and its application to the ills of modern industrial society. The clash between fundamentalism and modernism was particularly pronounced among Baptists and Presbyterians.²³

The Park Avenue Baptist Church’s liberal minister, Cornelius Woelfkin, who had drawn sharp criticism for permitting “non-immersed” Christians to attend services, announced plans for his retirement in 1925. In an effort to maintain the direction Woelfkin had set for the church, Rockefeller approached Fosdick. Born in Buffalo, New York, in 1878, Fosdick received his religious training at Hamilton Theological Seminary and Union Theological Seminary, graduating in 1904.²⁴ Rockefeller’s interest in Fosdick’s teachings can be traced to 1912, when he was considered as a replacement for Minister Charles F. Aked, who had served the Fifth Avenue congregation since 1907. Fosdick was not hired, and during the next decade he developed a national reputation, publishing a series of popular religious books, and preaching throughout the United States and abroad.²⁵ After serving in France during World War I as a military chaplain, in 1918 he became pulpit minister at the First Presbyterian Church on Fifth Avenue, perhaps the most prominent pulpit in the city.²⁶

²¹ Cook, 143.

²² Dolkart, 71.

²³ Maffly-Kipp et al, 177; Hudnut-Beumler, in Paris, ed., 7-20.

²⁴ Miller, 3, 43, 54.

²⁵ Miller, 159. Between 1908 and 1930 Fosdick published at least six books, including: *Meaning of Prayer* (1915), *Faith* (1917), *Service* (1920), *Spiritual Values and Eternal Life* (1927), *A Pilgrimage to Palestine* (1927), and *The Second Mile* (1928). Many went through several printings.

²⁶ Hudnut-Beumler, in Paris, ed., 18; Miller, 93-94.

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Throughout his pastorate he found himself embroiled in controversy. Conservative members of the congregation strongly objected to his modernist theology, particularly the views expressed in his 1922 sermon "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?," in which he took the position that belief in the "virgin birth" was unessential and that the expectation of second coming of Jesus was outmoded. Attacked by both local and national members of the Presbyterian church as a heretic, Fosdick resigned in 1925.²⁷

Immediately following Fosdick's resignation, Rockefeller, who had financed the nationwide distribution of "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?", invited him to become the minister of the Park Avenue Baptist Church. Fosdick felt uneasy with Rockefeller's enormous wealth, and at first refused his offer. (At one meeting, Rockefeller is said to have countered Fosdick's reservations by asking, "Do you think more people will criticize you on account of my wealth, than will criticize me on account of your theology?") However, the minister also sensed a unique opportunity, and outlined his conditions for accepting the invitation, requiring that the congregation abandon the Park Avenue building for a new and larger structure in the vicinity of Columbia University; that future membership be open to "all disciples of Christ," that the selection of ministers be based on character rather than religious affiliation, and that the new church be given a name without reference to a specific denomination. Later, Fosdick added one more stipulation, limiting his own salary to "no greater than five thousand dollars."²⁸

"To my immense surprise," Fosdick later recalled, "the Park Avenue congregation met the conditions," and on Memorial Day 1925 he led his first service. With 1,400 worshippers crowded into the Park Avenue building, Fosdick did not hesitate to express his religious philosophy, declaring: "We invite you not to our table or the table of any denomination, but to the Lord's table." His sermon was later characterized as "a plea for a church inclusive enough that Lincoln might feel free to join."²⁹

Fosdick's move to the Park Avenue church prompted a conflict with conservatives in the Northern Baptist Convention, to which it belonged, and internal debate within the church over whether to compromise on the question of practicing baptism other than by immersion. After opting not to send delegates to a 1926 convention meeting in order to avoid an inflammatory rift, the church eventually began offering baptism by sprinkling.³⁰

The congregation grew steadily after Fosdick joined it, doubling the congregation's membership—including many new members who were not Baptists—by 1930, the year it completed construction of the new church.

Planning the Riverside Church in Morningside Heights

Several locations in Morningside Heights were considered for the new church, including two sites on Morningside Drive. During 1925 and early 1926, however, Rockefeller quietly negotiated the acquisition of several adjoining properties at the northwest corner of Riverside Drive and 122nd Street. Five residential

²⁷ Miller, 112-149.

²⁸ Miller, 161-163.

²⁹ Miller, 163, 214.

³⁰ Miller, 165-172.

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structures were demolished to provide a large enough site for the planned church. Residential construction in the area had been encouraged by a sequence of civic improvements, including the building of Riverside Park and the adjacent Riverside Drive in the 1880s and the beginning of subway service along Broadway to 116th and 125th Streets in 1904. By the beginning of the twentieth century, with the recent arrival of Columbia University and plans for the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the neighborhood was fast becoming what was often referred to as an American "Acropolis." The phrase was perhaps first used by a newspaper in 1887 in reference to the area's high plateau; it was repeated by numerous journalists for decades to refer to it as a New York, and American, intellectual center, home also to Barnard College, Teachers College, the Jewish Theological Seminary, and the Union Theological Seminary.³¹

Visibility was also important to the church's founders, at a time of widespread concern among city religious leaders that the church steeples in Manhattan were disappearing from view in the thickening ranks of skyscraper commercial buildings.³² By choosing an elevated site beside two public parks—Riverside Park and Claremont (now Sakura) Park—and the Hudson River, the soaring tower would become a prominent landmark easily seen from Manhattan's west side and New Jersey. Low-rise neighbors to the east, such as the seminary, further assured the new institution certain visibility from Broadway and beyond.

In an effort to avoid publicity, Rockefeller personally approached prominent architectural firms for design proposals. In 1925, the firm McKim, Mead and White presented sketches for a Romanesque Revival-style church facade, flanked by four corner apartment towers and a large apartment tower and spire above. However, the building committee, troubled by the seeming subordination of the church to a commercial structure, decided on a building dedicated only to church purposes, but still with a large tower for functional spaces and for the carillon, to be brought from Park Avenue. Rockefeller agreed to donate an endowment that would replace the income the apartments would have provided.³³

The designers of the Park Avenue Baptist Church, the Allen & Collens of Boston and Henry C. Pelton (1867-1935), submitted a proposal for a neo-Gothic edifice that won them the commission to design the Riverside Church. Francis R. Allen (1843-1931), born and educated in the Boston area, practiced architecture for more than two decades before establishing a long and successful partnership with Charles Collens (1873-1956) in 1904. On Morningside Heights, the firm built many important works: the French Renaissance style Woman's Hospital (begun 1902, demolished), the English Gothic style Union Theological Seminary (begun 1906), and the neo-Gothic style Russell Hall (1922-1924) for Teachers College. To supervise these New York projects the Boston firm often collaborated with local architects, including Louis E. Jallade (1876-1957), with whom they worked on the Seminary, and Henry C. Pelton. A graduate of Columbia University, Pelton produced work in a wide range of historical styles, including several neo-Renaissance residences on Manhattan's Upper East Side, the neo-Gothic style Irving Arms Apartments at 222 Riverside Drive (1908), and an automobile garage for the Rockefeller family at 127-129 West 55th Street (demolished).³⁴

³¹ Dolkart, 1, 74.

³² Eugene C. Carder, "Steeple and a Changing Skyline," *Church Monthly*, June 1931, 199-200.

³³ Cook, 144-145.

³⁴ *List of commissions executed by the office of Henry C. Pelton, Architects, 1893-1931.*

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Following deliberation that included a poll of the Park Avenue Baptist Church's membership, it was decided to name the new building the Riverside Church, in keeping with the congregation's tradition of naming its home after its location.³⁵

Architectural Design and Iconography

The building committee, led by Rockefeller (who corresponded on a practically daily basis with his colleagues on decisions down to the minutest furnishings), was charged with selecting a design meeting the church's requirements, beginning with an auditorium that would allow as many as 2,400 worshipers to clearly see and hear the preacher. Although Rockefeller did not at the outset express an inclination to any architectural style, Gothic churches, including European cathedrals and St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral in New York, had held a lifelong appeal to him.³⁶

The choice of a Gothic church was also consistent with Fosdick's conception of the worshipping life of a congregation. Fosdick asked for a "warm church to preach in," and in an address soon after the Riverside Church was completed, suggested that Protestantism, since rejecting the iconography of Catholicism in the Reformation, had neglected the spiritual value of "beauty" as expressed in the Middle Ages, and that liberalism had embraced the scientific at the expense of the artistic. He contended that much Protestant architecture had "put the minister at the center of worship," while a Gothic-inspired chancel like Riverside's, with the pulpit to the side, allowed the worshipper to focus on God. At another point, Fosdick said, "We have had a long time to outgrow Gothic, but when it comes to a kind of architecture that will make people pray, we have not outgrown Gothic. This is the plain fact of the matter."³⁷

Collens and Pelton, having accepted an offer by Rockefeller to sponsor a tour of European churches, agreed. Collens declared, "He who designs a great church in anything but Gothic has lost a divine spark in the structure itself which only great art can supply." Having seen prototypes for a wide, low Gothic vault in Spain and Southern France, the architects gave Riverside a wide nave, with narrow aisles functioning as passageways rather than seating areas, preserving sight lines from almost every pew. In order to provide the needed seating, they made nontraditional adaptations to the Gothic model, particularly the installation of two large balcony galleries at the rear of the nave.³⁸ And, in contrast to its medieval Gothic models, as well as to the nearby Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the Riverside Church was to be built with a steel frame structure beneath its limestone cladding.

In an effort to make the fullest use of the site, the architects aligned the church on a north-south axis, with the chancel at the north end, opposite 122nd Street and Claremont Park. Since the church did not yet own the lots to

³⁵ The name change was adopted formally in December 1929. *Church Monthly*, January 1930, 44.

³⁶ Loebel, 26.

³⁷ Miller, 207, 211; Fosdick, "Beauty and the Faith."

³⁸ Collens 1926, 11.

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the south, an unconventional entry was necessary. Collens wrote that in Bordeaux “a precedent was found for the main entrance to the church at the side rather than on axis with the nave.”³⁹

Conceiving the church’s exterior, they saw in Chartres Cathedral a model for an “imposing” Gothic style without tracery in the fenestration, using instead “superimposed and offset arcades” and “engaged colonettes” as ornament. Because the tower of the church would contain offices and other practical spaces, it was desirable to have windows unobstructed by tracery. This also allowed for “a certain individuality” distinguishing the Riverside Church from “the traceried types of the later French and English Gothic” that dominated “modern church design in New York and throughout the country.”⁴⁰

To design the 392-foot high tower, the architects borrowed elements from each of Chartres' two west towers. For instance, as the tower rises, it gradually diminishes in size, evolving from a square base to an octagon pierced by slender windows. The sculptured portals also share stylistic parallels, especially around the main entrance, which combines motifs from Chartres’ west front, and the later, more elaborate, portals at the ends of the north and south transepts. Like these more elaborate 13th-century portals, the main entrance is crowned by a bold projecting pediment with an inset relief at the apex.

For the smaller chapel space at the south end of the building, across the narthex from the nave, the architects chose a pointed-arch Romanesque style modeled on part of the 11th-century church of Saint Nazaire in Carcassone, France. Collens wrote that the use of an earlier style was inspired by “the charming effect produced by the proximity of the old and new Cathedrals at Salamanca” in Spain. Accordingly, the architects used a warm-hued sandstone with a rougher finish, “suggestive therefore of greater age.”⁴¹

A team of artists, craftsmen, modelers, and carvers, many of them among the most nationally eminent in their fields, was assembled to decorate the church. The sculptor Robert Garrison (1895-1945) supervised the exterior sculptural program. Garrison would go on to design many of the stone reliefs of Rockefeller Center (1930-39). The majority of reliefs, gargoyles, and figures were executed by studios in New York City, including Horatio (1872-1954) and Bruno Piccirilli (1903-1976) of the Piccirilli Brothers studio, which had produced noted monuments in New York City and elsewhere, including Daniel Chester French’s Lincoln Memorial statue in Washington, D.C. (1920); John Donnelley & Co. (d. 1947), Maxfield H. Keck (c. 1883-1943), Charles H. Humphriss (1867-1934) and Alexander Reul (c. 1874-1947); as well as George Brown & Co. of Newark, N.J. Their work, which is notable in terms of content and quality, closely follows medieval precedent, integrating religious imagery into various architectural elements. Most of the sculpture faces Riverside Drive, especially surrounding the main entrance, which has two doors and five figurative archivolt.⁴²

³⁹ Collens 1926, 10.

⁴⁰ Collens 1926, 9-11.

⁴¹ Collens 1926, 11; *Handbook*, 41.

⁴² Carder, 45, 48; Loebel, 28-29; *Handbook*, 127.

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A primary focus of the nave interior, due to its size, intricacy and contrasting color, is the chancel screen containing 70 statues, designed by Burnham Hoyt (1887-1960). Hoyt oversaw the interior design, and, like the architects, traveled to Europe to study historical Gothic models.⁴³

Also of particular note is the stained glass. During the 1910s, the illusionist opalescent style glass produced by such American designers as John LaFarge and Louis Comfort Tiffany began to lose favor. Under the influence of Ralph Adams Cram and others, there was a revival of interest in medieval, mosaic-style glass.⁴⁴ In keeping with the church's Gothic origins, two French makers were commissioned to create the east and west clerestory windows, reproducing designs seen at Chartres: Jacques Simon, the glass-keeper at Rheims Cathedral, and Charles Lorin, of Chartres. Below, the aisle windows were manufactured by the Boston studio of Reynolds, Francis and Rohnstock. More than 138 scenes are portrayed in these 10 windows, which are set into iron frames modeled after those used at Chartres. The three windows in the ambulatory, two of which are grisaille, are the work of Harry Wright Goodhue (1905-1931) of Boston. Other windows were produced by Wilbur H. Burnham (1887-1974) of Boston, and the D'Ascenzo Studios, of Philadelphia.⁴⁵

Oscar B. Bach, a German-born metalwork craftsman who became prominent in the first third of the 20th century with commissions for New York buildings including the Woolworth and Chrysler the Williamsburgh Savings Bank, Rockefeller Center and, notably, a 1931 stainless-steel mural in the lobby of the Empire State Building, created the metalwork throughout the Riverside Church's chapel, including its ornate doors.⁴⁶

The iconography of the stained glass, particularly the aisle windows, and much of the interior and exterior stonework, also draws on subject matter outside traditional Christian imagery, illustrating the humanistic and internationally inclusive program of the church founders. For example, the third arch of the Riverside Drive portal represents philosophers, from Pythagoras to Immanuel Kant and Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the second arch, with such scientists as Hippocrates, Charles Darwin, and Albert Einstein; including Einstein, a living man and a Jew, was controversial. The aisle windows include images symbolizing Taoism, Buddhism and Islam in the International Character of Religion window; depictions of a radio and a Victrola as modern incarnations of music; and the Emancipation Proclamation in the State and Government window. The chancel screen's figures of historical exemplars of attributes of Jesus include scientist Louis Pasteur (1822-1895); Booker T. Washington (1859-1915), "pathfinder of the Negro race"; and Johann Sebastian Bach (1695-1750).

Even the church's deployment of Christian iconography expresses its intended open relationship to its surrounding city, particularly the frieze over the portal depicting a skyline of Jerusalem, symbolizing "care for a modern metropolis."⁴⁷

⁴³ Carder, 37.

⁴⁴ Tannler, 138-39.

⁴⁵ "Architecture and Symbolism of the Riverside Church"; Reynolds 1929.

⁴⁶ *Handbook*, 127; Friends of Oscar Bach website, <<http://www.oscarbach.org/index.php/commissions>>, accessed July 17, 2012.

⁴⁷ Drummond, 301.

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Construction

The cornerstone was laid on Sunday, November 20, 1927, in a ceremony at which Rockefeller "took no public part."⁴⁸ In April 1928, the six-year old Park Avenue building (and three adjoining rowhouses purchased in 1924) was sold to the Central Presbyterian Church for \$1.5 million, and in July 1929, the final service was held and in October the congregation moved temporarily to the recently vacated Temple Beth-El at Fifth Avenue and 76th Street.

Marc Eidlitz & Son, Inc. served as the church's contractor. Founded by Otto Marc Eidlitz in 1854, this firm was responsible for many notable buildings in New York City. In addition to building commercial skyscrapers throughout lower Manhattan, it was also responsible for erecting a number of prominent institutions financed by the Rockefeller family, including the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research (now University, York & Sawyer, 1903-1910), The Cloisters (Allen, Collens & Willis, 1934-39), and the Park Avenue Baptist Church. During construction of the Riverside Church, Robert J. Eidlitz (1864-1935) was the firm's director.

The use of modern steel-frame construction in a church that was otherwise a studied use of medieval forms had the advantage of allowing the church to be built more quickly (especially in comparison with the long-unfinished St. John the Divine). In addition, the tower is essentially a skyscraper with its 20 floors of occupied space—a novelty for a church at the time, the great weight and swinging motion of the carillon at its top created further requirements for reinforcement. To accommodate the gallery seating required for the church's capacity, the north wall of the tower is carried over the nave on a single 60-ton truss resting on columns on each side of the nave.⁴⁹

In December 1928, the half-completed church was damaged by fire. An estimated 100,000 spectators watched as firefighters from the throughout the New York and New Jersey area battled flames that turned the nave into "a colossal furnace" and were "visible for miles around."⁵⁰ The damage to the interiors was considerable, but compensated by insurers, and the completion of the church was delayed more than six months. (The fire was cited by the New York Board of Fire Underwriters as demonstrating the need to shift from wooden scaffolding to steel in construction projects.)⁵¹

By October 1929, the first rooms of the church complex were occupied, including the basement Assembly Hall, linked by telephone to Temple Beth-El during Sunday services.⁵² A year later, the opening Sunday service, led by Fosdick and attended by 3,200 persons, was held, on October 5, 1930. He "radiogrammed his joy" to Rockefeller, who had left the country several days earlier, hoping to de-emphasize his central role in its founding.⁵³ The following February, a series of formal dedication ceremonies commenced, beginning February

⁴⁸ "Cornerstone Laid for Fosdick Church," *New York Times* 1927.

⁴⁹ Carder, 90; Cook, 149.

⁵⁰ "Fire at the Riverside Church," *Church Monthly*, January 1929, 57-59.

⁵¹ "Steel Scaffolds Displacing Wood," *New York Times*, 24 Aug 1930, W14.

⁵² Miller, 205.

⁵³ Miller, 209.

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8 with the sermon "Despise Ye the Church of God?" and ending with a "Builders recognition service" on February 20, 1931. During this service, the "Builder's Window," depicting masons and carpenters, was dedicated, located in the northernmost window of the west aisle.⁵⁴

The *New York Sun* called the Riverside Church "one of the most outstanding additions to the ecclesiastical architecture of the city in recent years."⁵⁵ However, in the pages of *The American Architect* in June and July 1931, Walter A. Taylor, a professor of architecture at Columbia University, and Charles Crane, a member of Pelton's office, debated the design's merit and, in particular, the decision to use steel framing. Taylor took the modernist position, asserting that the neo-Gothic ornament was a superfluous and "costly camouflage" of modern construction techniques. Crane published a vigorous defense of his office's design, claiming that if such materials had been available medieval builders would have used them. Wary of modern aesthetics, he also contended that "Gothic architecture is fundamentally Christian; it is a style developed by and for the followers of Christ."⁵⁶

Protestant historian Andrew Landale Drummond, writing in 1934, recognized the Riverside Church as the "nearest approximation" to the ideal, expressed by liberal liturgist Von Ogden Vogt in 1925, for an "American cathedral," an inclusive, "dramatic symbol of the citizens' belief in spiritual values" analogous to medieval cathedrals, but reflecting the complexity of a contemporary metropolis.

The Riverside Church's Subsequent History

The new complex ushered in an era of unprecedented growth for the congregation. Despite the new uptown location and criticism of Fosdick's theology, more than 800 members of the Park Avenue church joined the new church, and by May 1946 the size of the congregation had grown to 3,500 members. Enrollment in the church school rapidly increased and "soon every room in the functional 20- storied [*sic*] tower was in use seven days a week."⁵⁷

During the 1930s, the church became a hub of religious and community activity. The church employed a full and part-time staff of more than two hundred persons, serving an estimated 10,000 persons each week, through worship services, employment counseling and job training, as well as athletic, social and arts programs. Many organizations founded before 1930 continued, including the Women's Society and Men's (Bible) Class. In addition to its own programs, the Riverside Church offered its extensive communal spaces as meeting places for outside religious and civic groups.⁵⁸ During the Second World War, the church was particularly active. Although Fosdick spoke out against the United States' involvement in the war, for three-and-a-half years, the

⁵⁴ *Church Monthly*, March 1931, 104.

⁵⁵ Cited in New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designation report, 7.

⁵⁶ Taylor, 32; Crane, 26.

⁵⁷ "Fifty Years: A Time to Celebrate," Riverside Church, 1980.

⁵⁸ e.g. "Outside Organizations Using Church Facilities," *Church Monthly*, February 1931, 82. Consideration of such usage requests made up the routine business recorded in church House Committee's minutes (RCA).

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Naval Reserve Midshipman School, located at Columbia University, used the church's facilities, with 2,000 attending services each Sunday evening.⁵⁹

At its inception, the church committed itself "to spend on other work than that which goes on under our own roof, and on behalf of other people than our own membership and congregation, a sum equal to the amount our own work costs us."⁶⁰ In 1935, it stopped directing its benevolent funds to Baptist groups for distribution, establishing a Benevolence Committee to make its own allocation decisions, much of which was focused on the nearby community.⁶¹

Fosdick, like Rockefeller, recognized the importance of radio as a modern means to promote spiritual values and shape public opinion. Fosdick had begun preaching over the radio in 1924, while still at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. After 1927, his weekly sermons were broadcast over NBC's "National Vespers," and in 1946, when he retired, his weekly audience was estimated at up to three million people. The Riverside Church's South Wing completed in 1959 was designed with a radio studio, and work was done at that time to facilitate radio and television broadcasts from the nave and chapel. From 1961 to 1976 the church owned and operated a radio station, WRVR-FM (106.7FM) carrying a wide array of programming, including news, poetry, classical and sacred music.⁶²

Fosdick announced his retirement in September 1942, as his 65th birthday approached, but was repeatedly prevailed upon to remain in his preaching duties until May 1946. The farewell ceremony was held on May 22, 1946, and a week later he preached his final sermon.⁶³ He was succeeded by Robert James McCracken, who served from 1946 to 1967. During this period, the Riverside Church, in an extension of its interdenominational character, affiliated itself with the Congregational Christian Churches (today the United Churches of Christ), retaining its Baptist affiliation.⁶⁴

Riverside had been noted for relative racial inclusion from the time it opened, and in the 1950s, McCracken embraced the civil rights movement, preaching that "racism is a sin" and demanding "racial integration in the Christian Church."⁶⁵ In the church's tradition of hospitality to guest preachers, it extended to Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. an open invitation to preach. King delivered a total of six sermons on racial and economic justice, at the Riverside Church between 1961 and 1967 (when in a Riverside sermon he first publicly expressed opposition to the Vietnam War, linking it to domestic questions of justice). The congregation elected its first black deacon in 1950 and its first black minister in 1960.⁶⁶

⁵⁹ Miller, 536.

⁶⁰ *Church Monthly* 5 no. 6 (April 1931), 129.

⁶¹ Weisenfeld 190.

⁶² Miller, 379-388; Weisenfeld, 209-216.

⁶³ Miller, 548-549.

⁶⁴ Tisdale, 82

⁶⁵ "Fosdick's New Church Has Several Negro Choir Members." *New Journal and Guide* 1930; Tisdale, 81; "Race Bias Eases in Churches Here," *New York Times* 1956.

⁶⁶ Miller, 205.

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However, the 1950s confronted the Riverside Church with more complex questions of racial and economic justice in its relations with its community, as the population of Morningside Heights saw an influx of black and Puerto Rican residents. The church belonged to a consortium of the neighborhood's elite institutions, Morningside Heights Inc., that sought to improve local public schools and supported Morningside Gardens, a slum-clearance project to build middle-income cooperative apartments. Adjacent to Morningside Gardens was built the General Grant Houses, a federal low-income housing project completed in 1956.⁶⁷

The church at this time was building its new South Wing, and in 1956 produced a "Survey Report" outlining the new social landscape to be served by the church and its expanded facilities.

The 1959 South (Martin Luther King, Jr.) Wing

Rockefeller in the mid-1930s acquired the lots to the south of the 1930 church, extending to West 120th Street. In 1955, he offered to finance the construction of a new "parish house" that would meet the church's expanding needs, in honor of its 25th anniversary.⁶⁸ Collens, Willis & Beckonert, the successor firm to Allen & Collins, designed the seven-story (plus roof terrace) South Wing in a "modern Gothic" style in which selected motifs were borrowed from the church and streamlined, including buttresses, pointed-arch window bays and a small number of niched sculptures. The builder, Vermilya-Brown Co., was the successor firm to Marc Eidlitz & Son. Construction began in 1955 and the South Wing was dedicated on December 6, 1959.

(During construction of the MLK Wing, a two-story "Control Building" was also added to the north of the cloister where it met the church, to house building managers' offices, as well as a library since converted into a book and gift shop, and a new revolving door was installed in the Claremont Ave. cloister entrance.)⁶⁹

Church statements at the time of construction contend that a parish house to the south, consistent in style with the church, had been part of the architects' original vision of the Riverside Church. However, in Collens's own presentation of the design in 1926 he indicated that what was then foreseen on that site was "the future Gothic buildings of the Union Theological Seminary."⁷⁰ (The seminary at that time still owned the land south of the tower.) Nevertheless, the architects' renderings do suggest that they saw the church and tower as ideally balanced by another Gothic building of congruent mass to the south.

In addition to echoing specific ornamental elements of the original church, the design of the MLK Wing resembled that of the church in its inclusion of works by some of the most nationally prominent artists. Wilbur H. Burnham, the creator of the church's apse clerestory windows, was commissioned to create some of the stained glass for the new building, as was an artist in the studio of Charles J. Connick, one of the important firms in the early-20th-century American revival of medieval glass techniques. The exterior niche statues of

⁶⁷ Weisenfeld, 198-201; Dolkart, 330-332.

⁶⁸ Dolkart, 83; Cook, 174.

⁶⁹ *Church Monthly*, March 1957; Riverside Church newsletter, June 1, 1957; South Wing construction photos, RCA Box 522, Folder 6; Box 523, Folder 1.

⁷⁰ MLK Wing Dedication press packet; Collens 1926, 9.

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humanitarian figures were created by prominent architectural sculptor Lee Lawrie, who had been a frequent collaborator of Ralph Adams Cram and Bertram Goodhue (and who also created the *Atlas* statue and *Wisdom* relief at Rockefeller Center).

The 1956 *Riverside Church Survey Report* emphasized that, while the new wing would entail a new phase of the church's relationship to the community undergoing demographic change, it "should *not* be regarded as a settlement house"; the church identity of its programs should be preserved.⁷¹ This was emphasized architecturally in the prominent placement of religious symbols in immediately visible places on each floor, and the incorporation of multiple chapels into its plans, including a small meditation chapel off the cloister-level lobby; the double-height Chapel of the Cross on the third floor, and a small chapel for young children on the sixth floor.

The completion of the South Wing did in fact facilitate a dramatic expansion in the church's engagement with its new neighbors. Its Sunday School, held in the addition, was opened to nonmember residents of the Grant Houses in 1961, increasing its enrollment to 1,200, from 231.⁷²

The Riverside Church also sought to meet the needs of the changing community by establishing a Hispanic ministry in 1959, with Spanish-language religious services, Sunday school and social groups. (However, amid tensions over funding and the relationship of the Hispanic ministry's members to the congregation as a whole, the church in 1971 decided not to continue a specifically Hispanic program apart from its broader "Urban Ministry," which had been established in 1968.)⁷³

Stone Gymnasium

Sitting to the east of the MLK Wing, on the northwest corner of West 120th Street and Claremont Avenue, the Stone Gym was built in 1912 by Union Theological Seminary. The gym had been financed by a gift from Mrs. Willis James, who had also acquired the lease of the underlying land for that purpose.⁷⁴ The gym was designed by Louis E. Jallade (1876-1957), who had collaborated with Allen & Collens on the seminary campus, in an English Gothic style.

The building served as a gym for the seminary until the 1930s, when it was used as a shelter for homeless men during the Great Depression. During World War II, Columbia used it for training Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps midshipmen. Union Seminary sought unsuccessfully to purchase the property in 1955. However, Rockefeller bought it in 1957, and gave it to the church. During construction of the South Wing, the building was used by the contractors.⁷⁵

⁷¹ *Riverside Church Survey Report*, 12.

⁷² Weisenfeld, 200.

⁷³ Weisenfeld, 201-204.

⁷⁴ *Carillon* 2 no. 19 (24 Nov. 1960), 1-2; "\$50,000 Gift for Gymnasium," *New York Times* 1912.

⁷⁵ *Church Monthly*, September 1957, November 1957; *Carillon* 1960; Deed of Gift, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to the Riverside Church, 24 June 1957, RCA.

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Riverside Church
Name of Property
New York County, New York
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With the help of additional philanthropic funds, the church renovated the gym interior, and reopened it in 1962 as a facility open to all the youth of the neighborhood. The gym was operated in conjunction with the Morningside Heights, Inc., consortium, and intended “to channel restless energy into socially acceptable outlets” in “an area where juveniles has caused trouble in the past.”⁷⁶

Postscript

McCracken was succeeded by Ernest T. Campbell, 1968 to 1976; William Sloane Coffin, Jr., 1977 to 1987; James A. Forbes, Jr., 1989 to 2008; Brad R. Braxton, 2008 to 2009; and Stephen H. Phelps (interim, 2011 to present). All have followed Fosdick's example in leading a church that has always taken pride in being “interdenominational, interracial, and international.” The church’s engagement in national and global social and political questions continued. In 1970, James Forman of the Black Economic Development Conference interrupted a service to deliver a “Black Manifesto” demanding reparations from white churches for past economic injustice. While rejecting Forman’s tactic, Campbell expressed sympathy for the underlying argument, and the debate led to the church’s establishment of a “Fund For Social Justice.” Coffin was well known before his Riverside pastorate as an activist against the Vietnam War and in other causes, and involved Riverside in a number of new campaigns on national and international issues, including nuclear disarmament, U.S. policies in Central America, and South African apartheid—lending the church a nationwide reputation as a bastion of liberalism paralleling Fosdick’s notoriety.⁷⁷

Today, the Riverside Church has approximately 2,400 members, attracting congregants from more than 40 different national, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

⁷⁶ *Carillon* 8 Dec. 1960, 2; 6 July 1961, 1; 24 April 1962, 1; “The Stone Gym Youth Center,” pamphlet, RCA Stone Gym Historical Box.

⁷⁷ Tisdale, 88-89, 99-104; Paris, 258-260.

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Riverside Church

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New York County, New York

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Riverside Church

Name of Property

New York County, New York
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Section 9 Page 5

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Name of Property

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Name of Property

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Riverside Church

New York County, New York

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.71 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>7</u> <u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>1</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>8</u> <u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>1</u>	3	<u>1</u> <u>8</u>		
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>1</u> <u>8</u>			4	<u>1</u> <u>8</u>		

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jonathan Taylor, preservation consultant (Daniel McEneny, NYSHPO)

organization _____ date August 30th, 2012

street & number 490 Riverside Drive telephone 718-930-5134

city or town New York state NY zip code 10027

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name The Riverside Church, contact Margery Whiteman, director of stewardship and development

street & number 490 Riverside Drive telephone 212-870-6782

city or town New York state NY zip code 10027

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20503

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**National Register of Historic Places
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Section 10 Page 1

Riverside Church
Name of Property
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Verbal Boundary Description

Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1991, lot 32, consisting of the land on which the 1928-1930 church, tower, chapel, "cloister" passage extending to Claremont Avenue, 1955-59 Martin Luther King Jr. Wing, and 1912 Stone Gym are situated.

Boundary Justification

Boundary includes the historic church complex as well the later MLK Wing addition, which continues the original church's architectural character and fulfills the architects' original vision of a balancing counterpart to the nave; and which represents the historic extension of the church's community activities. The Stone Gym, although constructed in 1912 for the Union Theological Seminary (which has the potential for individual nomination as a significant site of ecclesiastic study), for the purposes of this nomination the building gains its significance in the mid-century, when Riverside acquired it in order to extend its social services to the community.

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Section 11 Page 1

Riverside Church
Name of Property
New York County, New York
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Additional Information

Photographs

Name of Property: The Riverside Church

City or Vicinity: New York City

County: New York State: New York

Photographer: Jonathan Taylor and Mayank Patel

Date Photographed: June 20-July 11, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 0001 Stone Gym (center, foreground), east façades of MLK Wing (left) and church (right), south elevation of tower (center, rear), camera facing northwest
- 0002 West Portal detail, camera facing northeast
- 0003 East façade of tower, camera facing west
- 0004 North façade of apse, camera facing southwest
- 0005 South façade of cloister passage, portion of east façade of MLK Wing (left), camera facing northwest
- 0006 East façade of Claremont Avenue cloister passage entrance (center), lower section of east façade of tower (right, rear), portion of east façade connecting section of MLK Wing (left, rear), camera facing west
- 0007 Narthex, camera facing east
- 0008 Nave interior, camera facing north
- 0009 Nave interior: aisle window ("International Character of Religion"), camera facing east
- 0010 Nave interior: chancel, with pulpit (left) and lectern (right), camera facing north
- 0011 Nave interior: chancel screen carving detail ("Reformers"), camera facing northeast
- 0012 Nave interior: rear and galleries, camera facing west
- 0013 Chapel interior, camera facing east
- 0014 Assembly Hall interior, camera facing north
- 0015 Meeting room, Tower 9th floor, camera facing northwest
- 0016 Elevator lobby, Tower 10th floor, camera facing southwest
- 0017 Cloister interior, camera facing east
- 0018 MLK Wing west façade detail (main entrance), camera facing east
- 0019 MLK Wing west and south facades, camera facing northeast
- 0020 MLK Wing east and north facades, portion of Stone Gym north façade, camera facing southwest
- 0021 Elevator lobby mosaic, MLK Wing 4th floor, camera facing southwest
- 0022 Chapel of the Cross, MLK Wing 3rd floor, camera facing southeast
- 0023 Stone Gym south façade, camera facing north
- 0024 Stone Gym basketball court, camera facing southeast

The Riverside Church

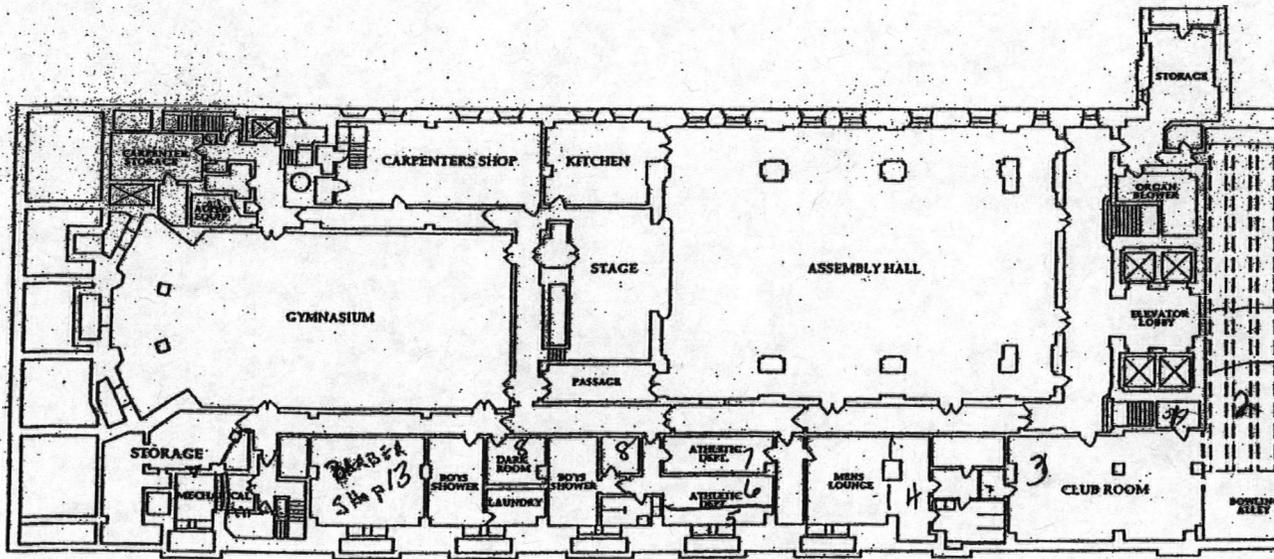
Riverside Drive at 122nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10027 (212) 222-5900

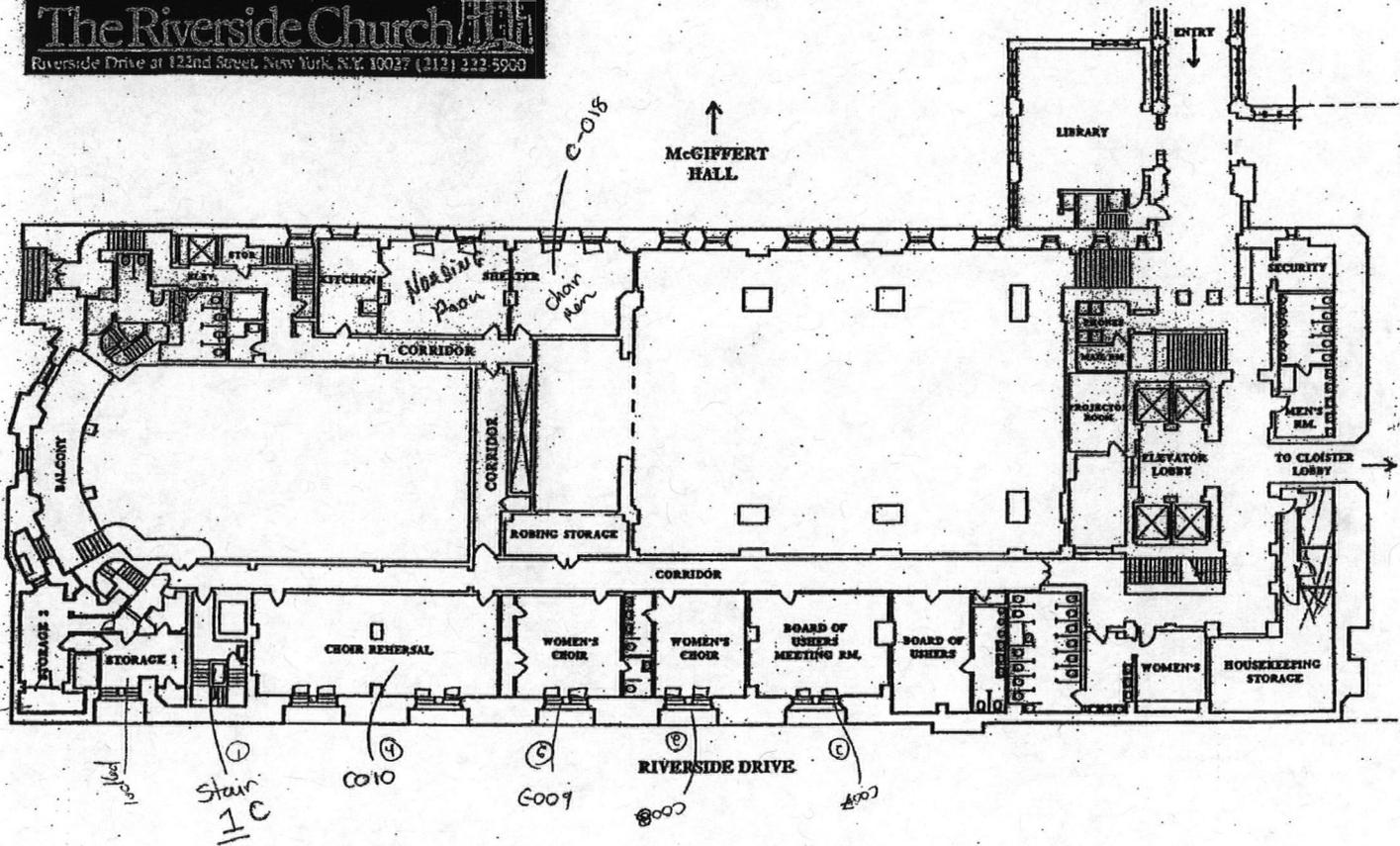
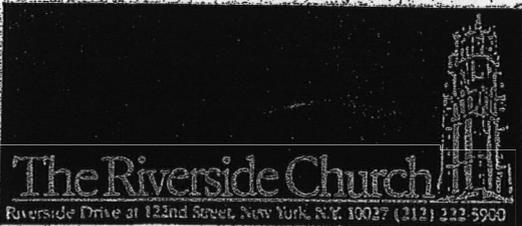


**TOWER BUILDING
ASSEMBLY HALL LEVEL**

Tower Assembly Level

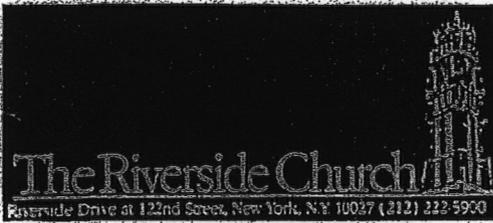
Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
1	Flower Ministry	54	Vera's Flowers
2	Thrift Shop	2115	Visitor Center/Thrift
3	Flower Ministry	943	Vera's Shop
4	B/G Lockers	891	B/G Staff
5	B/G Office	159	Joann's Office
6	Security	299	Locker Room
7	B/G	299	Locker Room
8	Gym Office	80	Mark Jerome
9	Coaches Office	126	Sports Office
10	Showers	220	Staff
11	B/G	100	Laundry Room
12	Athletic Dept.	282	Equipment
13	Barber Shop	442	Social Services
14	Balcony Entrance	81	Stairway
15	A-7	50	Staff Storage
16	B/G	30	Storage Closet
17	Engineering	223	Mechanical Equip.
18	Music Dept.	182	Pipe Organ
19	B/G	1190	Large Equipment Storage
20	Athletic Dept.	3354	Gym
21	Tech Services	83	Audio Equipment
22	Tech Services	14	Audio Storage
23	Staff	60	Restroom
24	Engineering	9	Storage
25	Building	214	Storage
26	Engineering	12	Storage
27	Engineering	67	Entrance Engineer Room
28	Engineering	883	Carpenters Shop
29	Kitchen	423	Assembly Hall
30	Stage	680	Assembly Hall
31	Assembly Hall	5379	Room/Events
32	Garage Entrance	110	Staff
33	Upper Parking	183	Entrance Engineer Room
34	Thrift Shop	24	Storage
35	Music Dept.	176	Blower/Organ



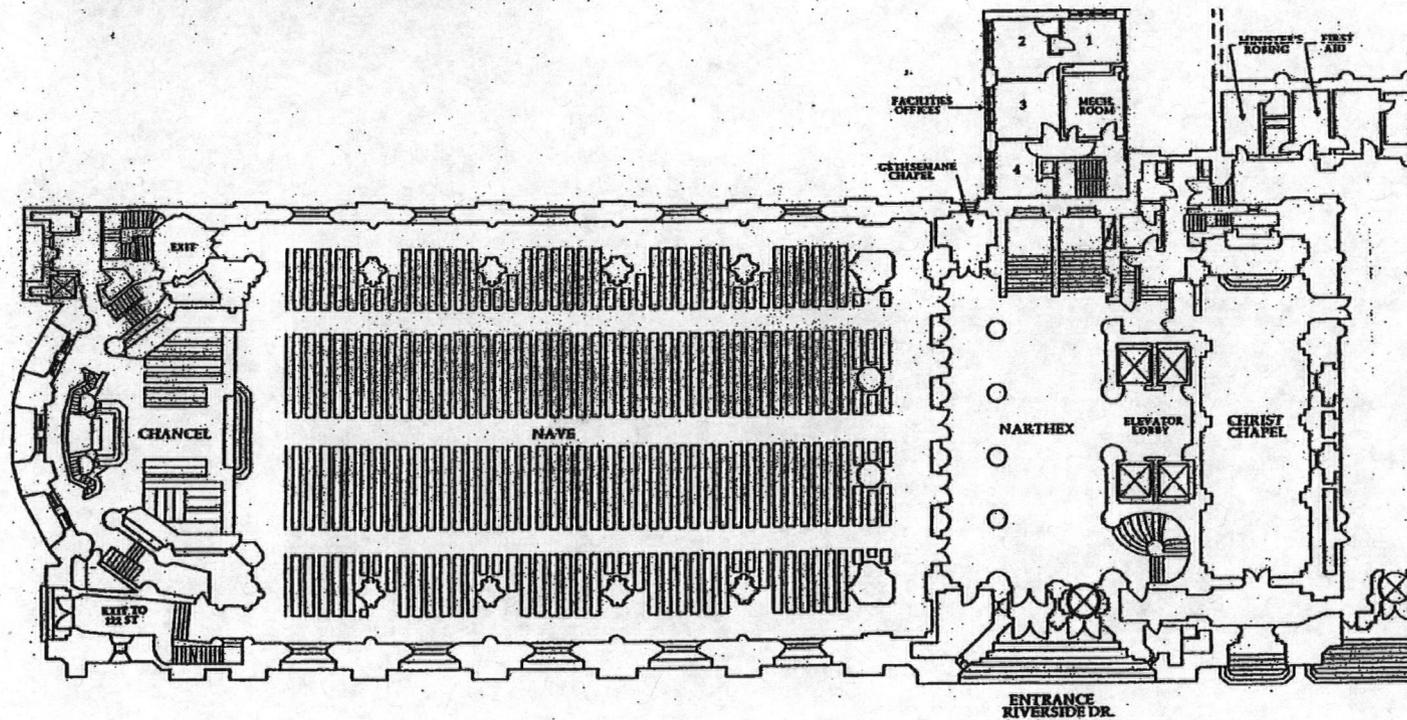


Tower Cloister Level

Room Group	Square Footage	Contents
38 Visitor Center	946	Stair
37 Security	121	Front Desk
38 Mens Room	208	Cloister Level
39 Library	528	Books/Files
40 B/G	328	Storage/Tables
41 Womens Room	535	Cloister Level
42 B/G	16	Service Sink
43 Board of Ushers	558	Locker Room
44 Women's Choir	364	Lounge
45 Women's Choir	420	Meeting Room
46 Women's Choir	970	Rehearsal Room
47 Board of Ushers	540	Meeting Room
48 Electric Closet	7	Equipment
49 Athletic Dept	8	Storage
50 Athletic Dept	170	Directors Office
51 Shower Project	244	Homeless
52 Mens Choir	8	Storage
53 Childcare old.	933	Rev. Pat. Nursery
54 Kitchen	234	Nursery
55 Service Sink	12	B/G
56 Staff	41	Restroom
57 Worship	12	Storage/Robes
58 Staff	54	Restroom
59 Electric Closet	293	Power/Storage
60 Pastoral	45	Storage
Elevator Equipm	18	Equipment
Mark Jerome	12	Storage

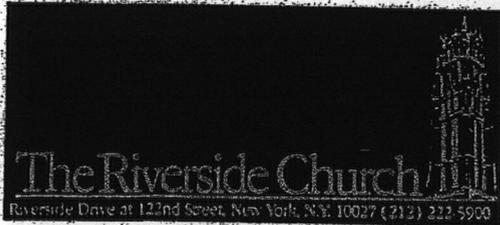


**TOWER BUILDING
FIRST FLOOR - NAVE**



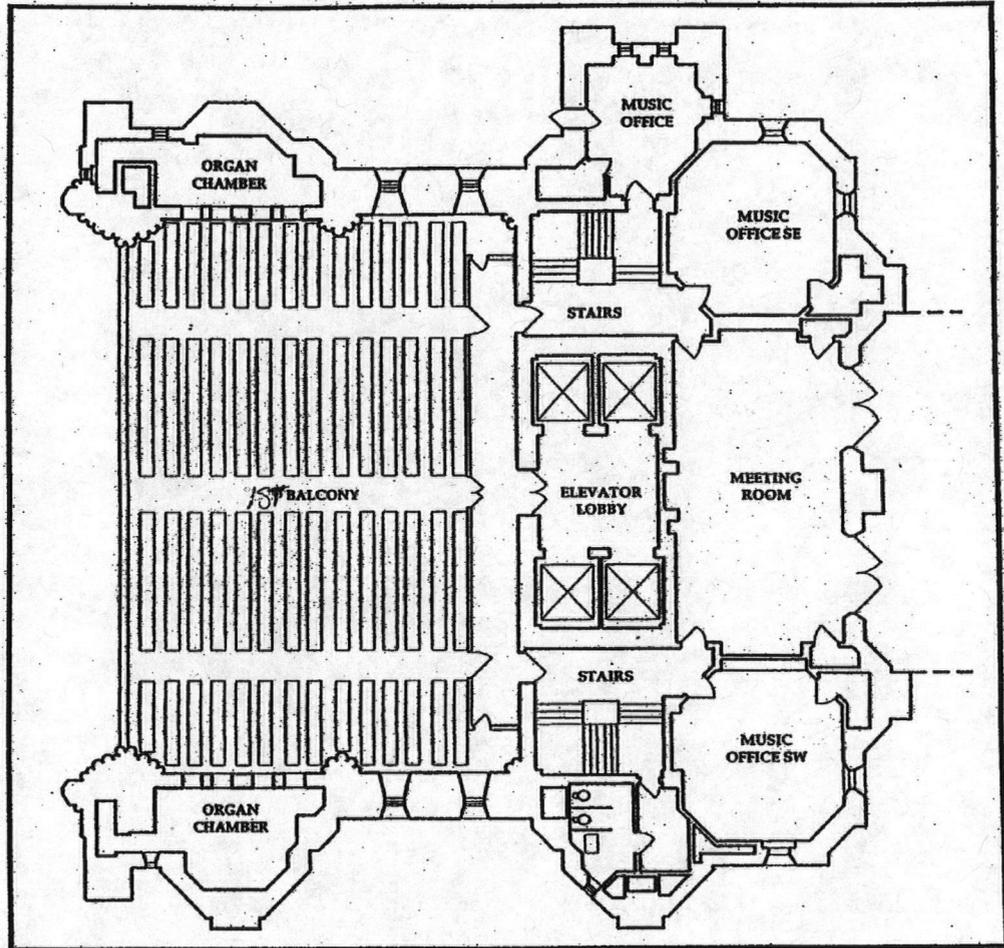
Tower First Floor

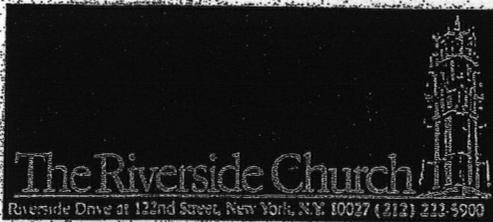
Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
63	Narthex	2210	Lobby
64	Nave	12560	Church
65	Chancel	2134	
66	Gethsemane	102	
67	Christ Chapel	1695	
68	First Aid Room	112	Building
69	Ministry Room	112	Worship
70	Ushers Office	126	Ushers
71	Brides Room	76	Lounge
72	Vestibule	296	



SECOND FLOOR
~~LOWE HOWE~~ Floor

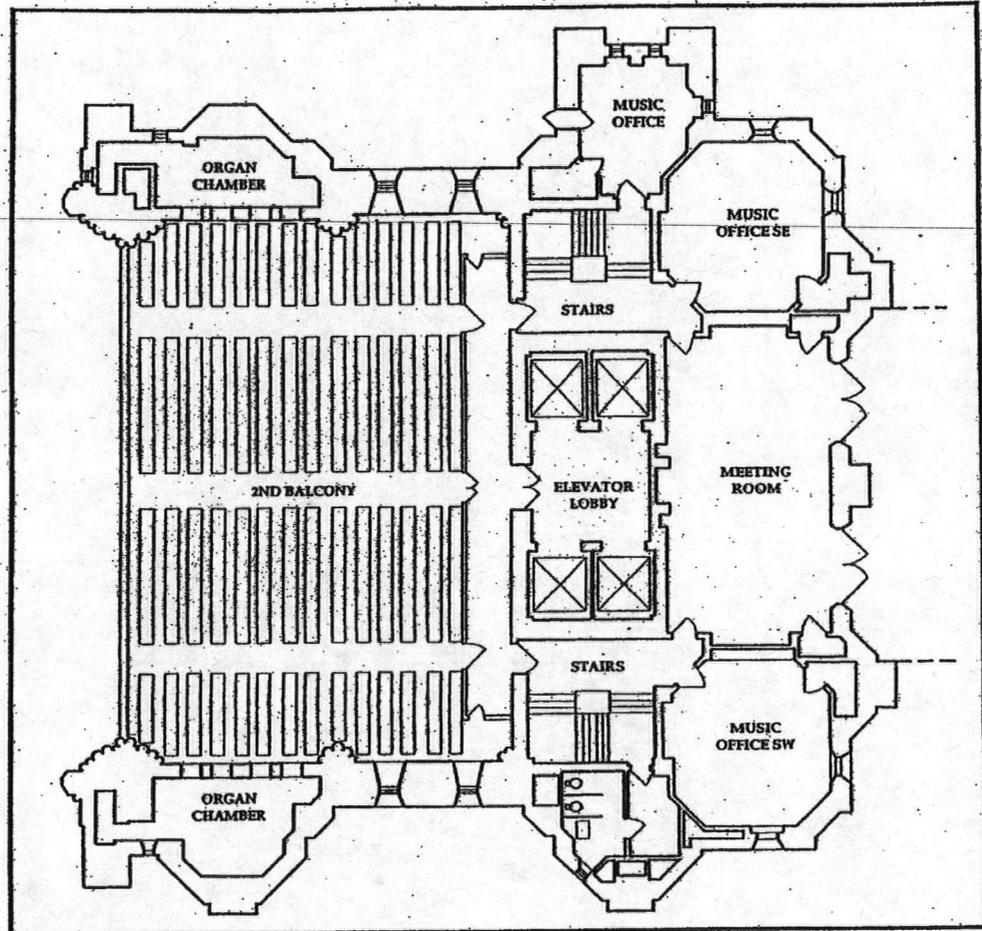
Room Group	Square Footage	Contents
91 Music Dept.	35	Storage
92 Music Dept.	191	Chris Office
93 Music Dept.	46	Storage
94 Entrance MLK	126	Corridor
95 Assist Music	366	Office

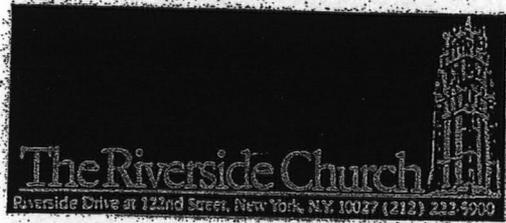




Tower Fourth Floor

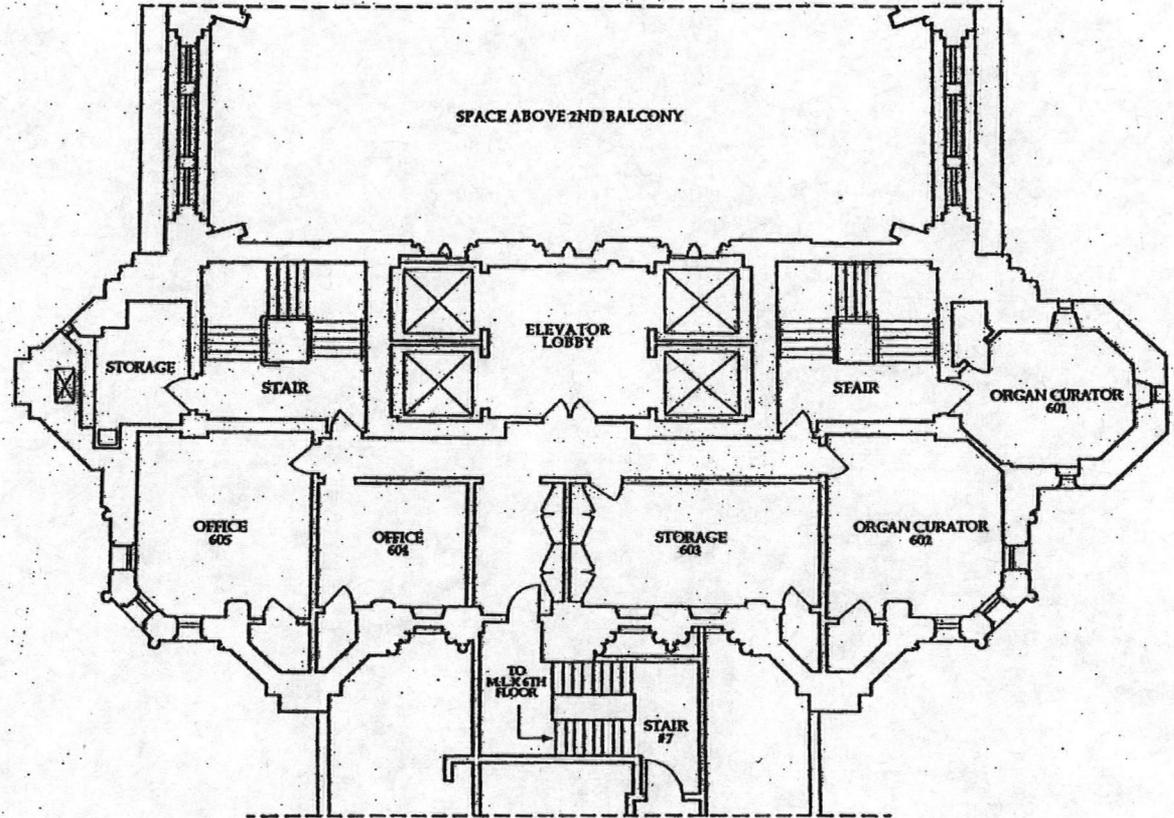
Room Group	Square Footage	Contents
91 Music Dept.	35	Storage
92 Music Dept.	191	Chris Office
93 Music Dept.	46	Storage
94 Entrance MLK	126	Corridor
95 Assist Music	366	Office

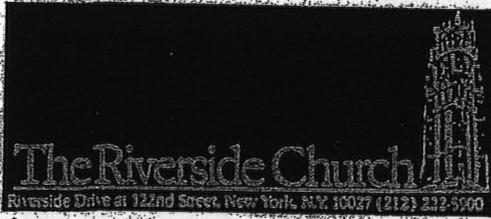




Tower Sixth Floor

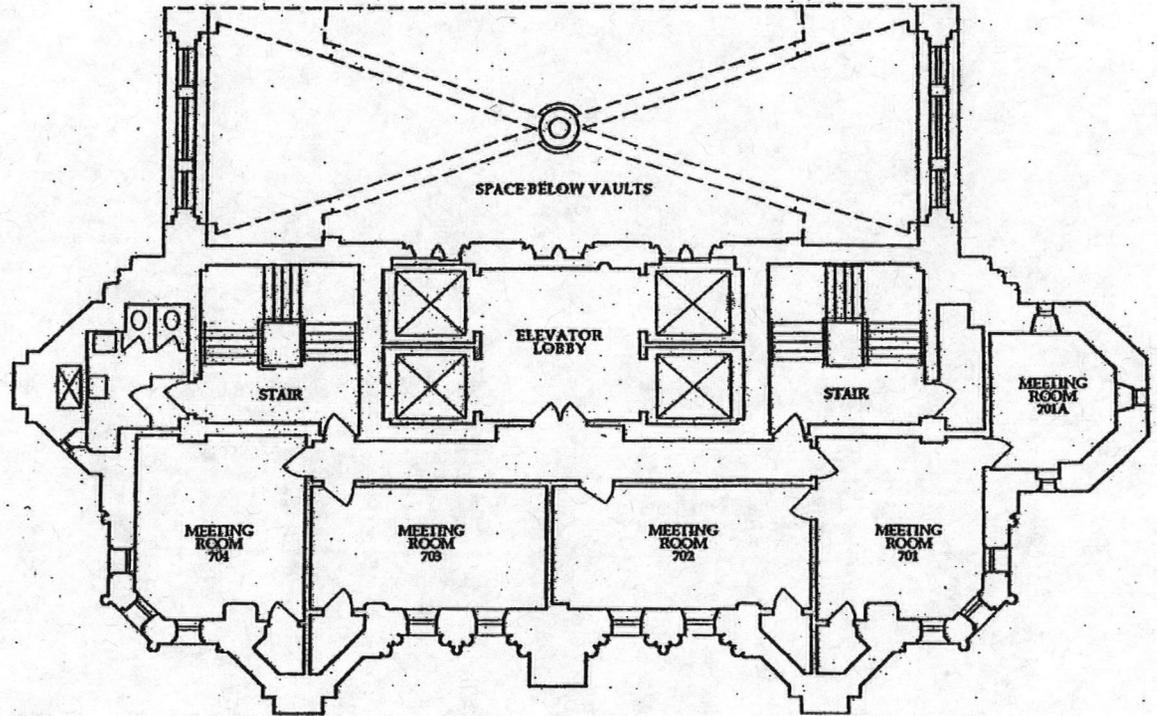
Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
103	Organ Curator	203	Office
104	Pipe Organ	264	Shop
105	Music Dept.	261	Chris Johnson
106	Office	171	Production meeting
107	Worship	261	Angela Gregory
108		131	Office

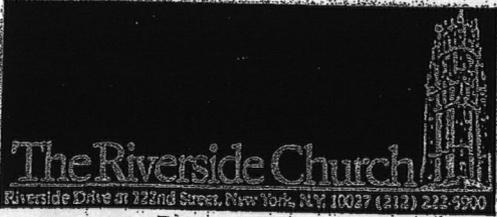




Tower Seventh Floor

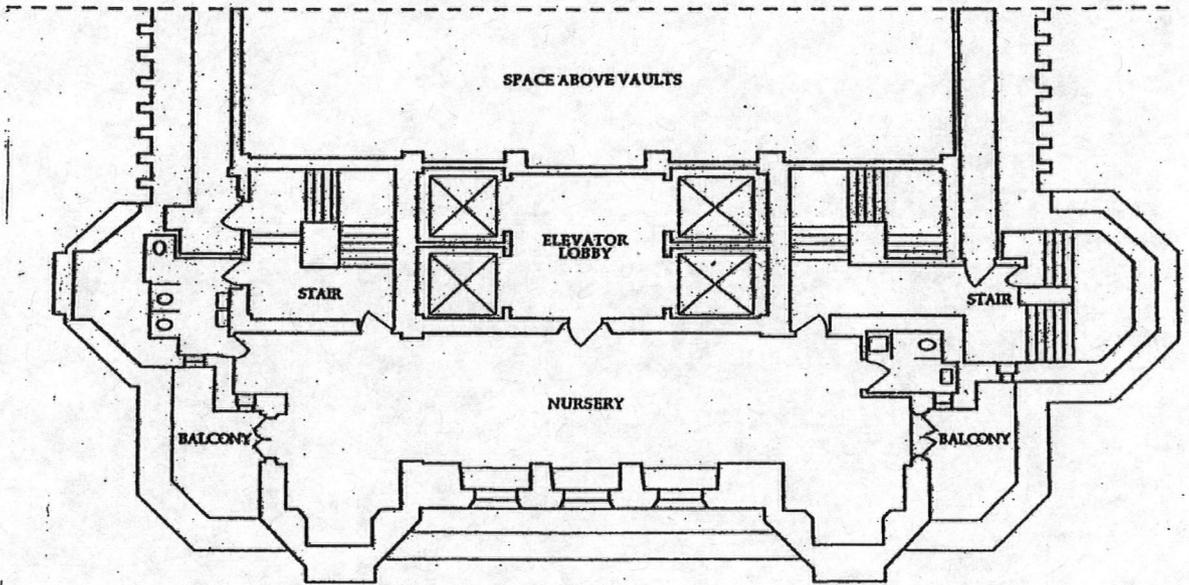
Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
	Columbia	1343	





Tower Eighth Floor

Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
	Columbia	1076	



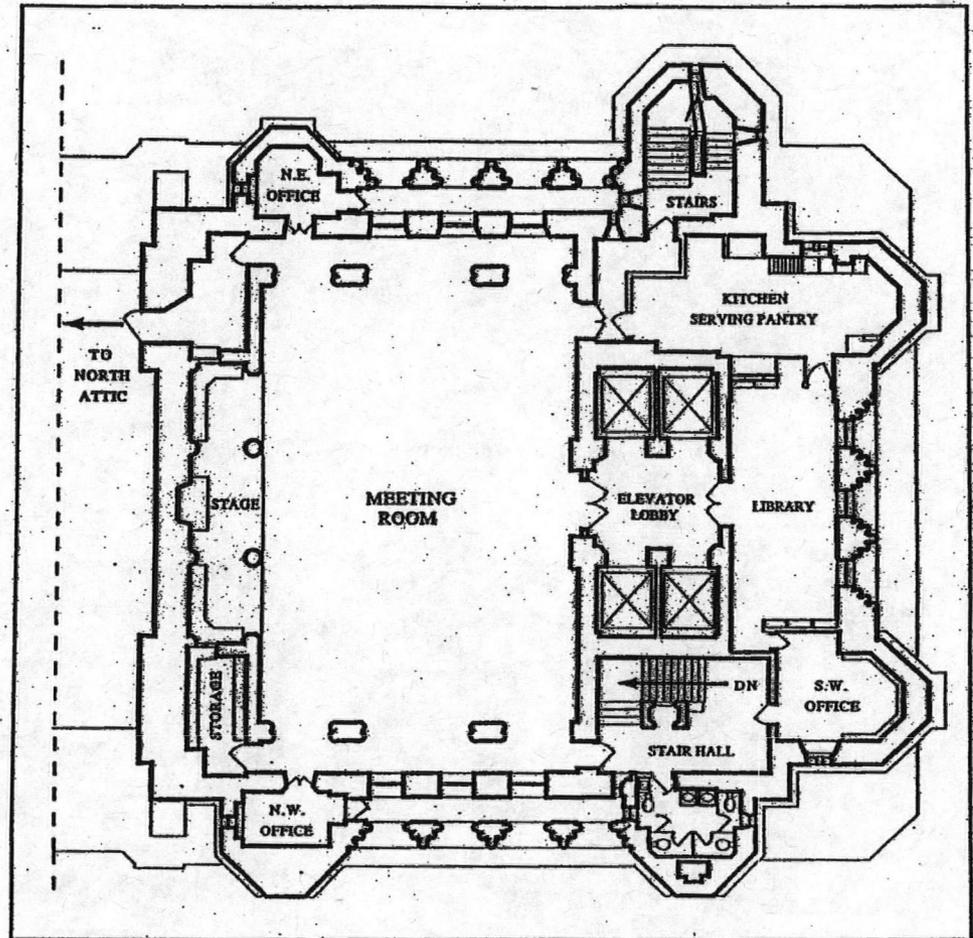
The Riverside Church

Riverside Drive at 122nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10027 (212) 323-5900



Tower Ninth Floor

Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
109	Library	424	
110	Music	177	Office
111	9T	2497	Meetings/Functions
112	Archive	94	Office
113	Rev Forbet	111	Storage
114	Stage	310	9T
115	Ruth	90	N/E Office
116	Kitchen	371	9T

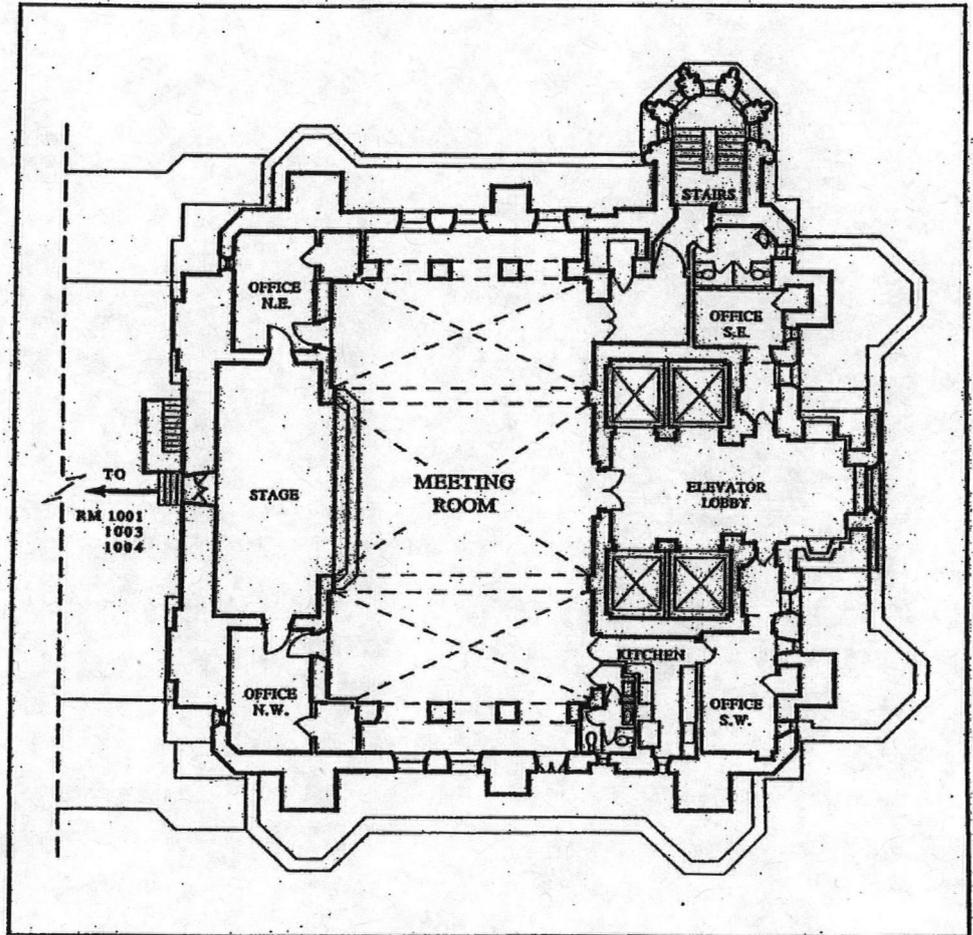


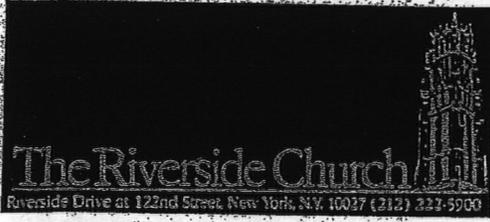
The Riverside Church

Riverside Drive at 122nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10027 (212) 222-5900

Tower Tenth Floor

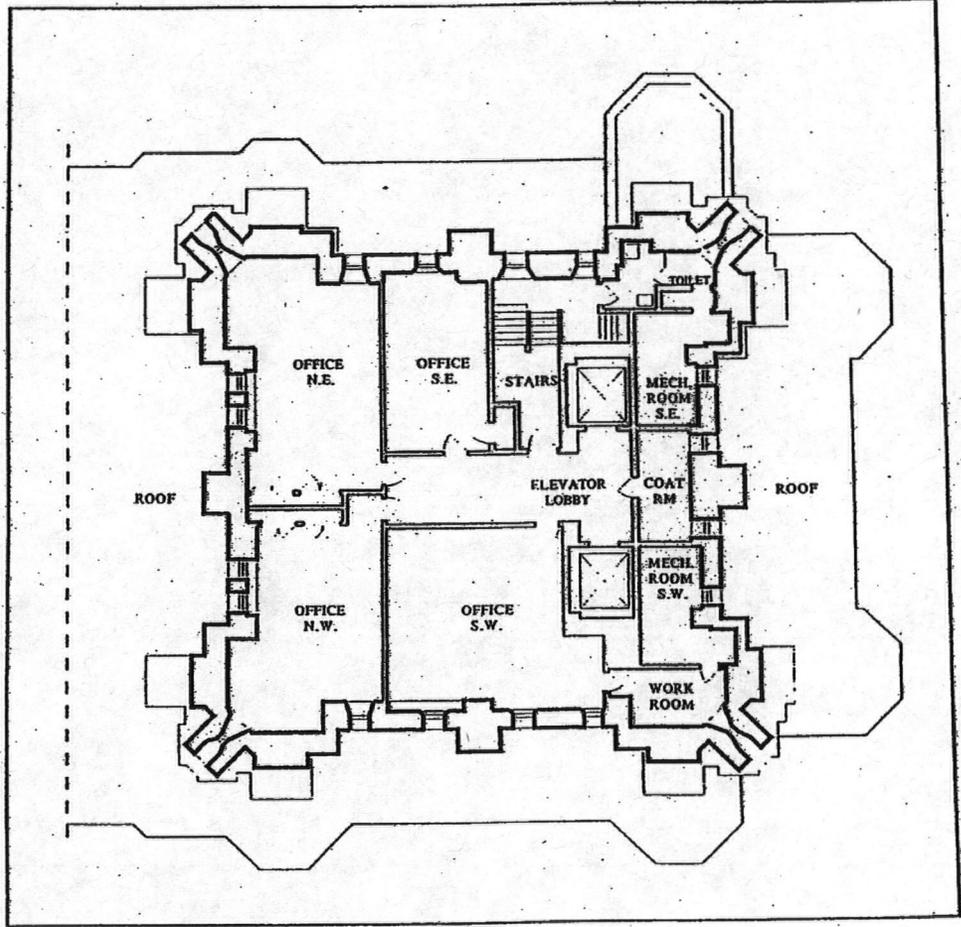
Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
117	Senior Minister	221	S/M Office
118	Kitchen	144	Storage
119	10T Meeting Room	1840	Open Room
120	History Project	202	Repair pictures
121	Stage	478	10T
122	Archives Work Room	202	Workshop
123	B/G	22	Storage
124	Archive Office Rev Forbes	186	Storage

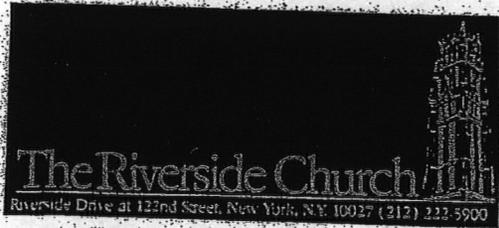




Tower Eleventh Floor

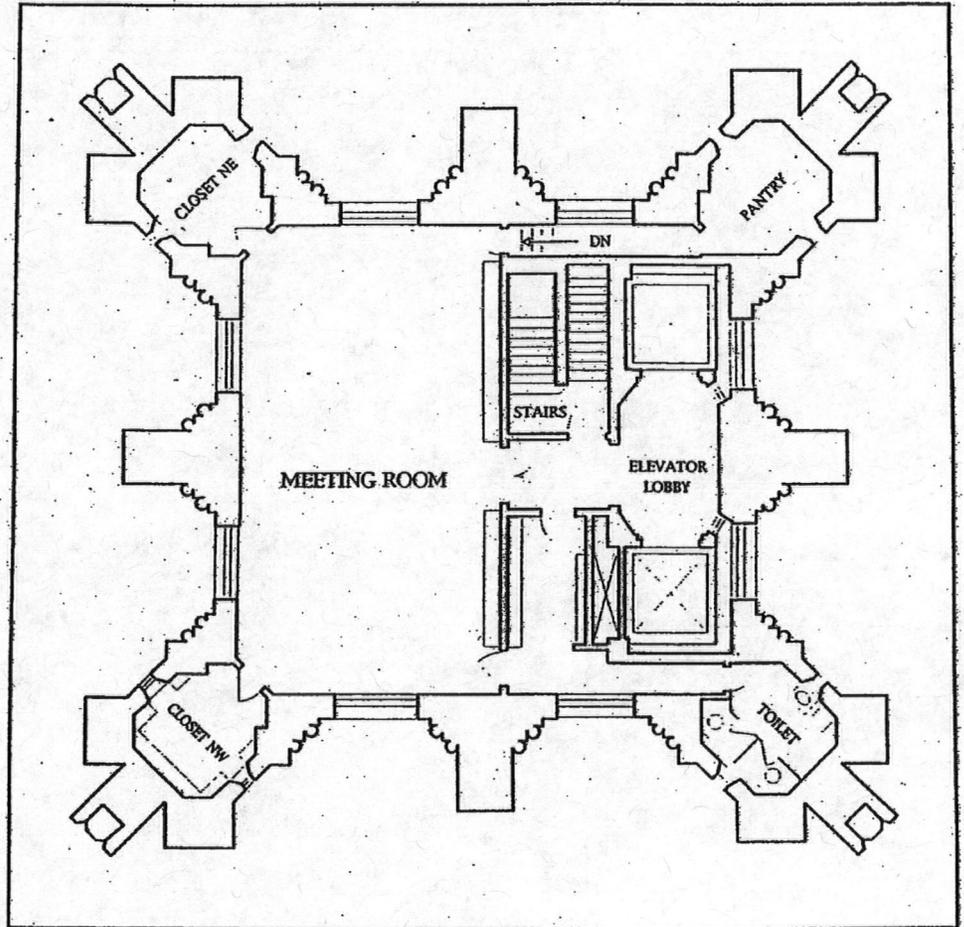
Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
125	Elevator Room	269	Machinery
126	Orpheus	478	Office
127	Orpheus	398	Office
128	Kitchen	167	
129	Orpheus	384	
130	Orpheus	319	
131	Lobby	312	Elevator Lobby

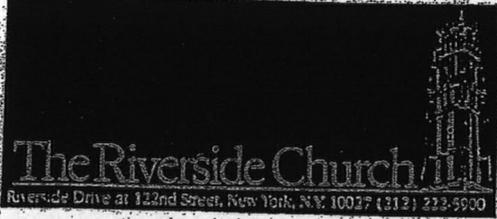




Tower Twelfth Floor

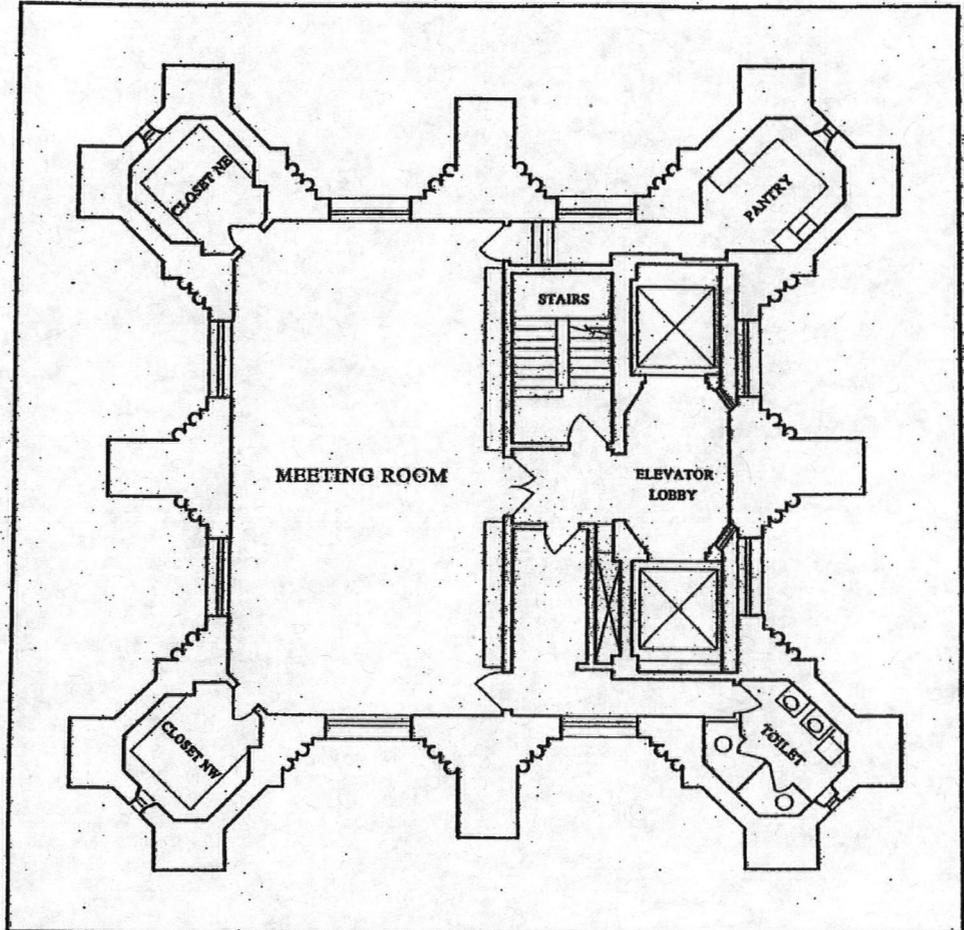
Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
	Columbia	1222	





Tower Thirteenth Floor

Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
	Barnard	1222	



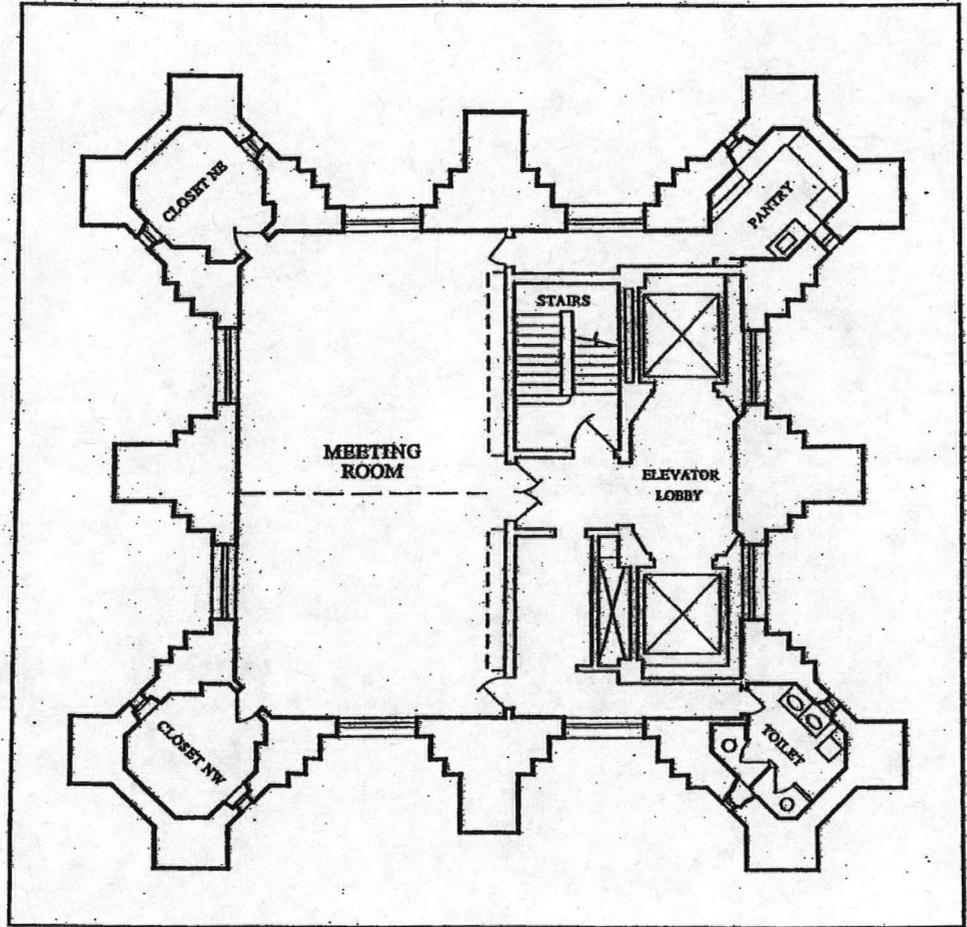
The Riverside Church

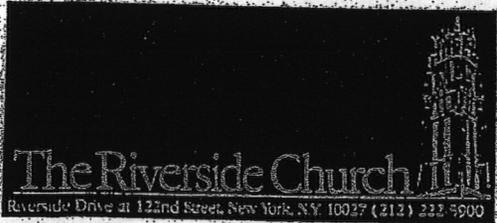
Riverside Drive at 122nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10027 (212) 222-5900



Tower Fourteenth Floor

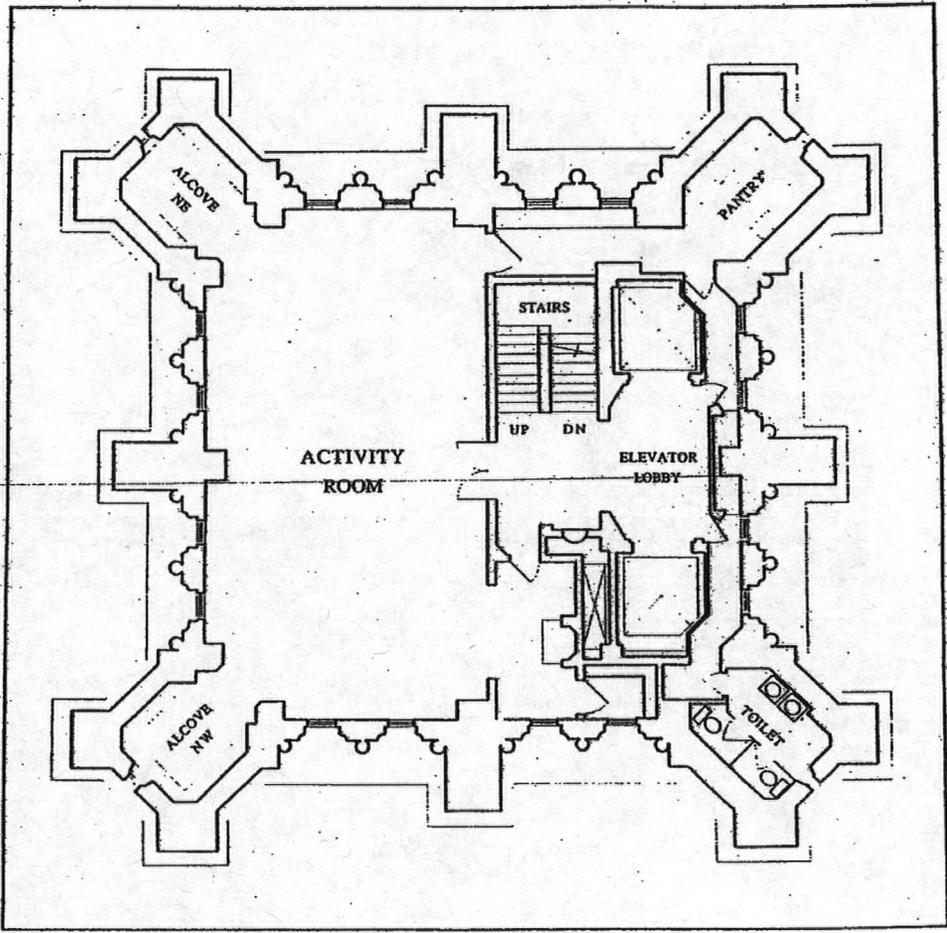
Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
	Columbia	1222	





Tower Fifteenth Floor

Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
	Columbia	1222	



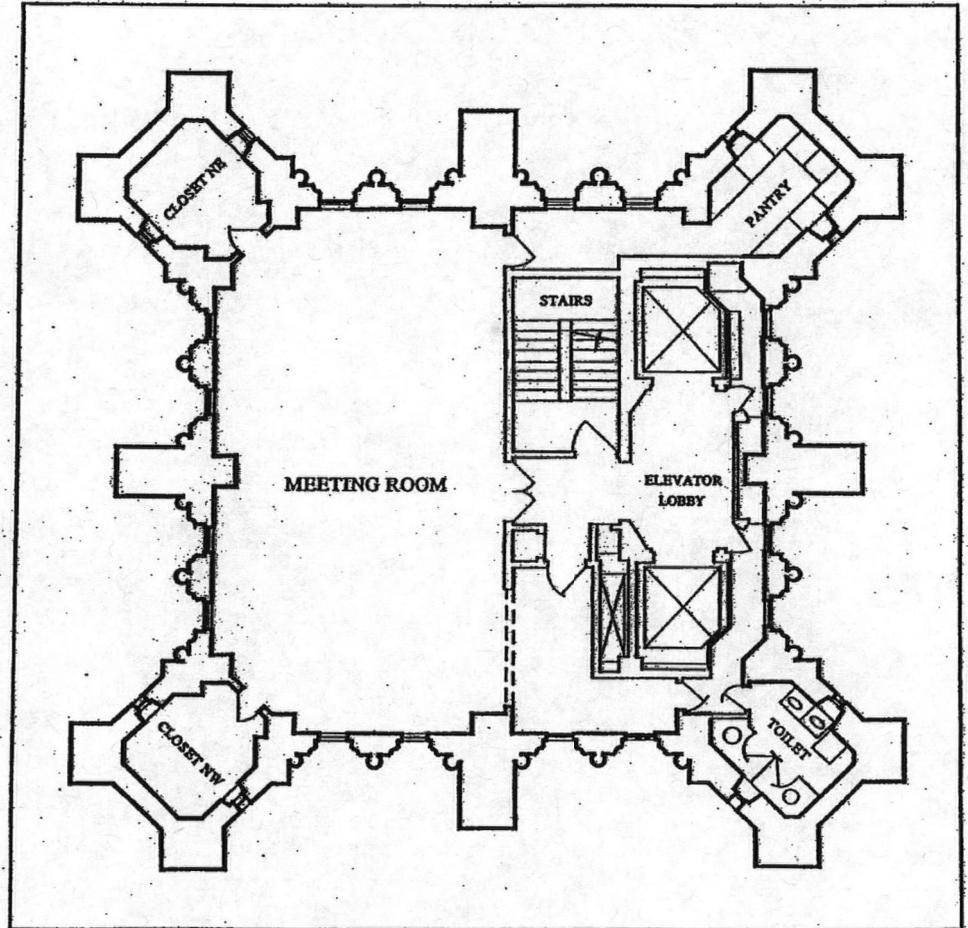
The Riverside Church

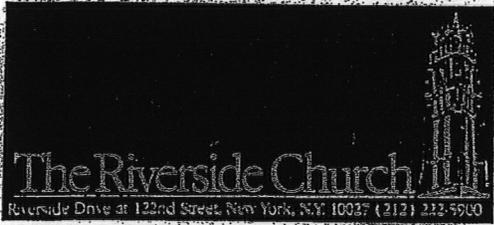
Riverside Drive at 122nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10027 (212) 332-9900



Tower Sixteenth Floor

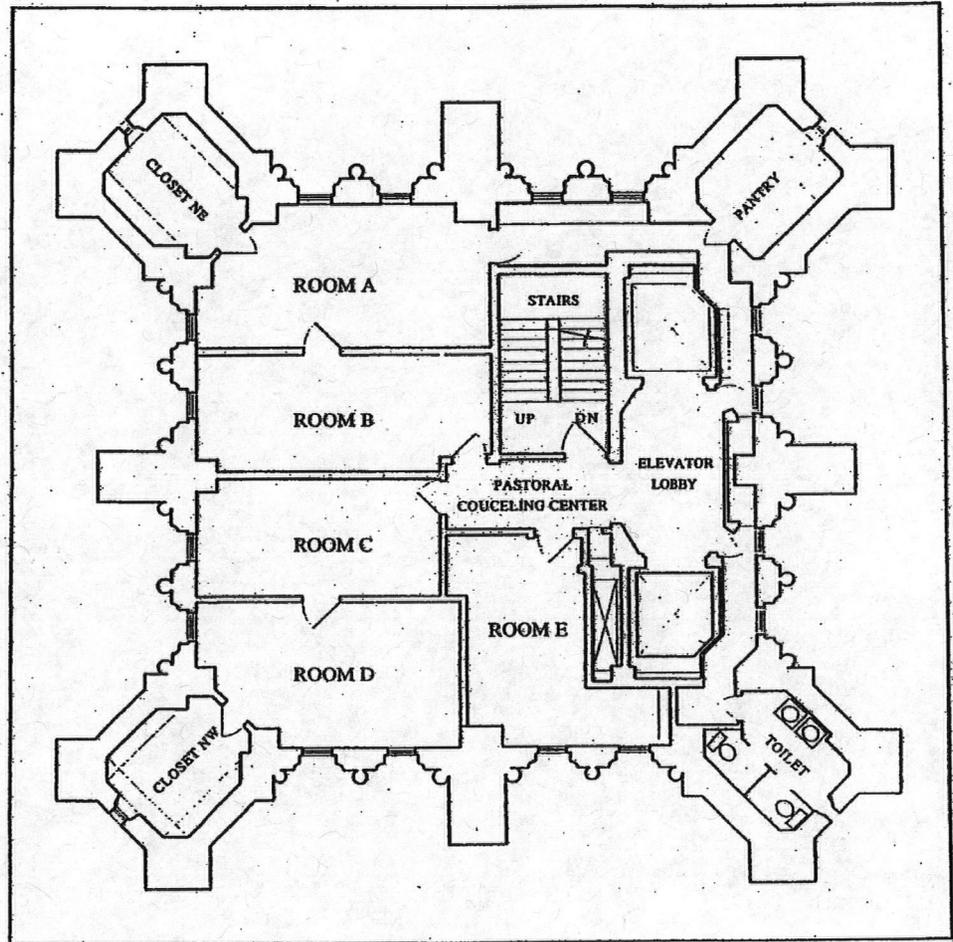
Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
	Columbia	1222	

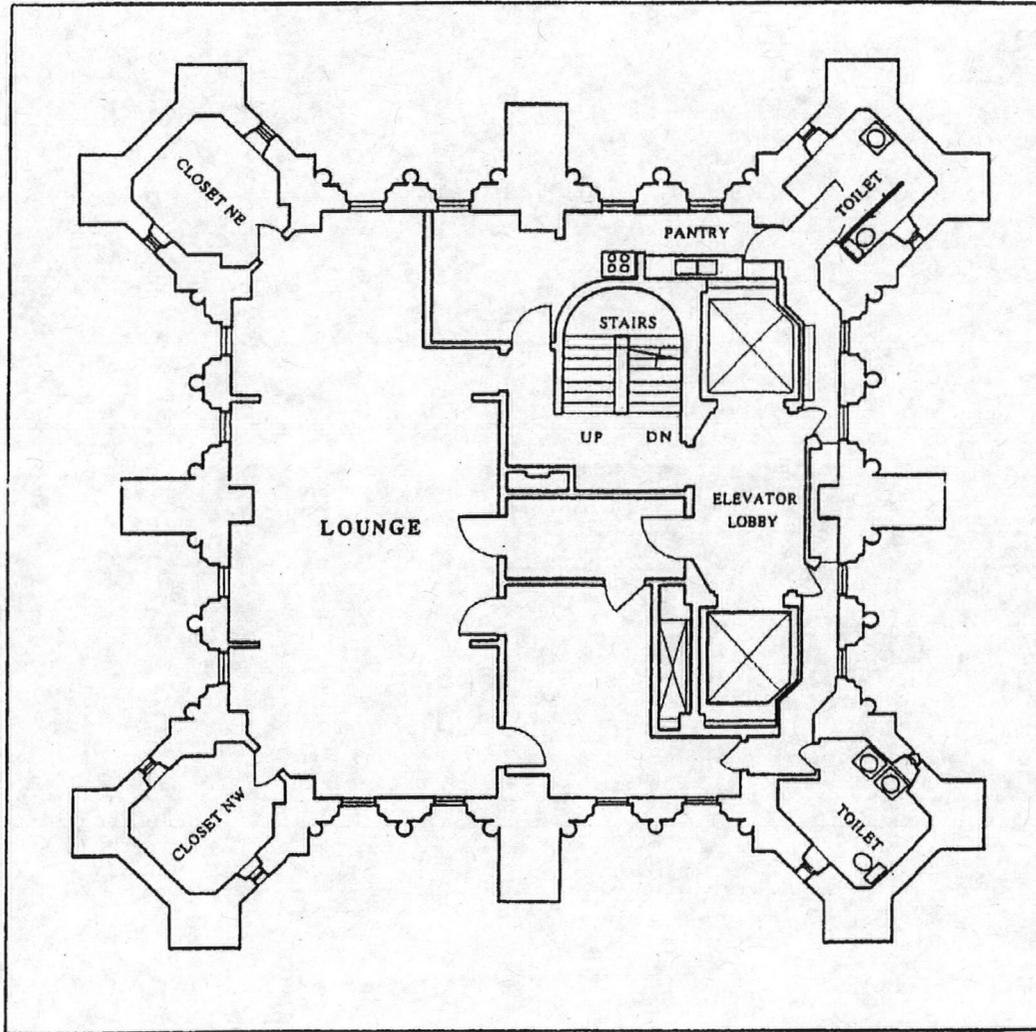




Tower Seventeenth Floor

Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
	Counseling Center	1222	

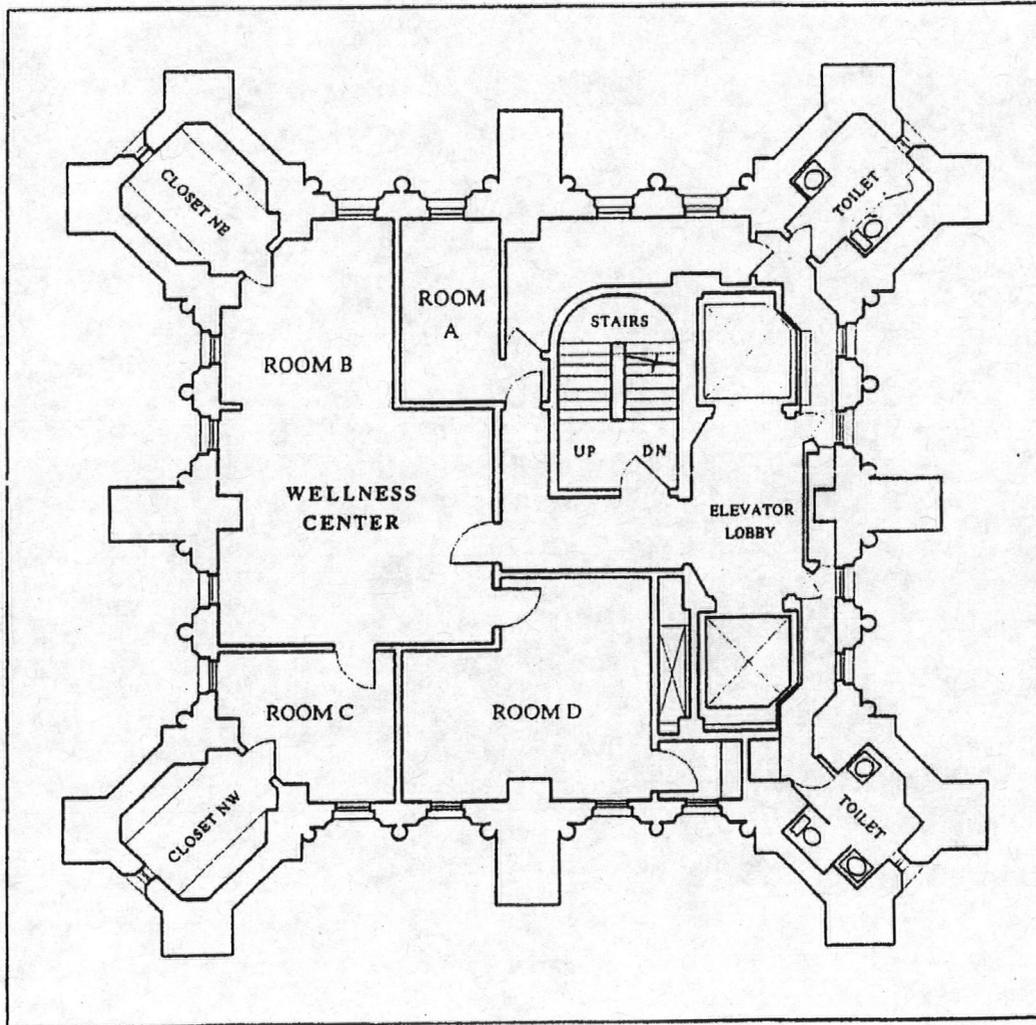




**TOWER BUILDING
18TH FLOOR**

Lounge	22' X 41'
Toilet	8' X 10'
Pantry	8' X 10'
Closet SW	8' X 10'
Closet NW	8' X 10'

 Floor Area: 2,345 S.F.
 Occupiable: 1,222 S.F.



**TOWER BUILDING
19TH FLOOR**

Room A	7' X 14'
Room B	*20' x 20'
Room C	11' x 13'
Room D	17' x 18'
Pantry	8' X 10'
Closet NE	8' X 10'
Closet NW	8' X 10'

Floor Area: 2,345 S.F.

Occupiable: 1,222 S.F.

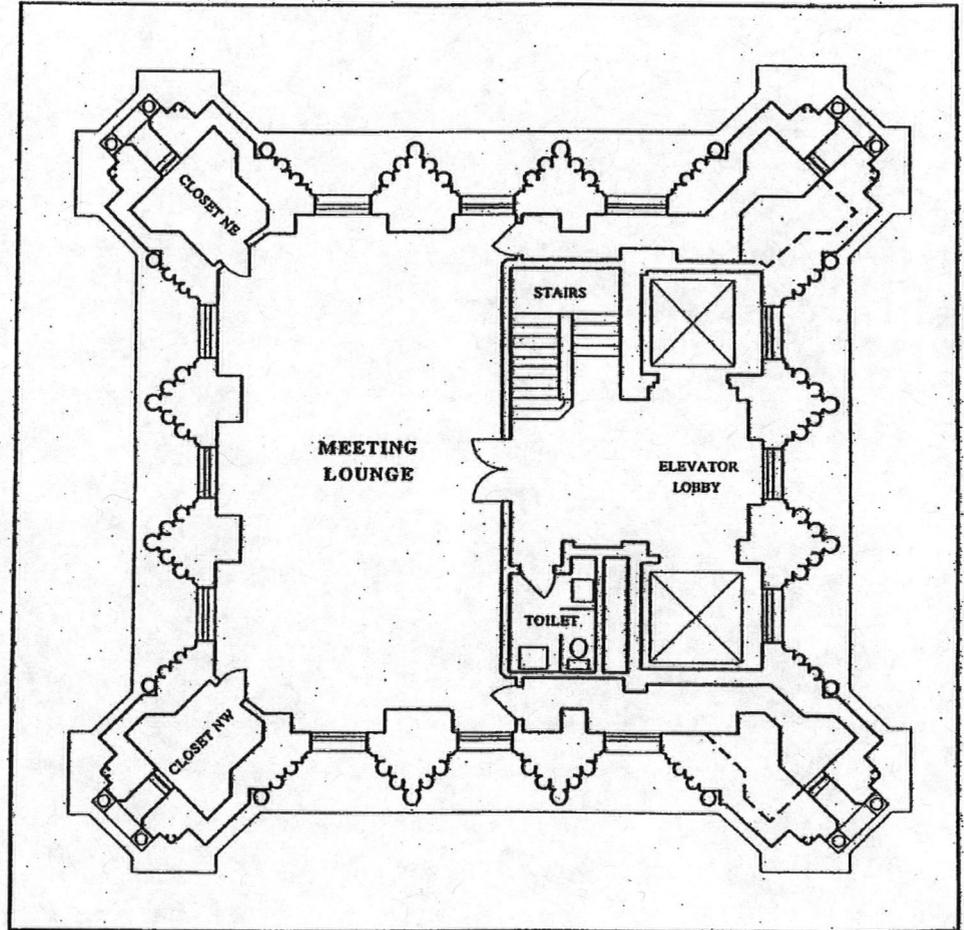
The Riverside Church

Riverside Drive at 132nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10027 (212) 233-5500



Tower Twentieth Floor

Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
132	Lobby	549	Building
133	Meeting Room	875	Clean Vacant
134	Carrillon Parts	87	Spare parts S/E
135	Closet	62	Vacant N/E
136	Closet	62	Vacant
137	Closet	87	Vacant



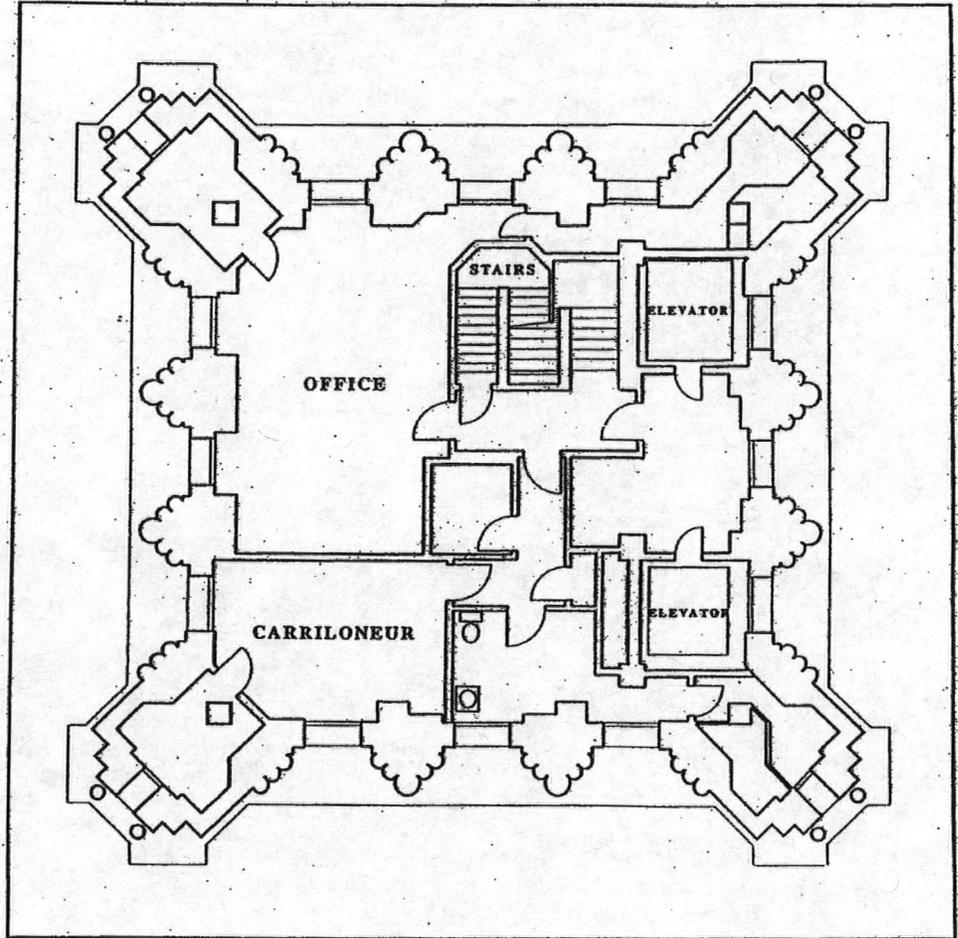
The Riverside Church

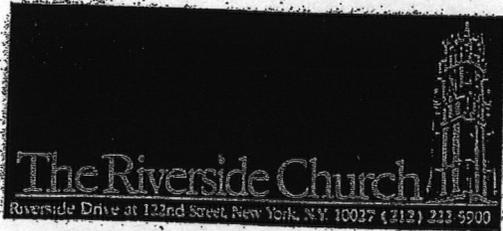
Riverside Drive at 122nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10027 (212) 222-5900



Tower Twenty-First Floor

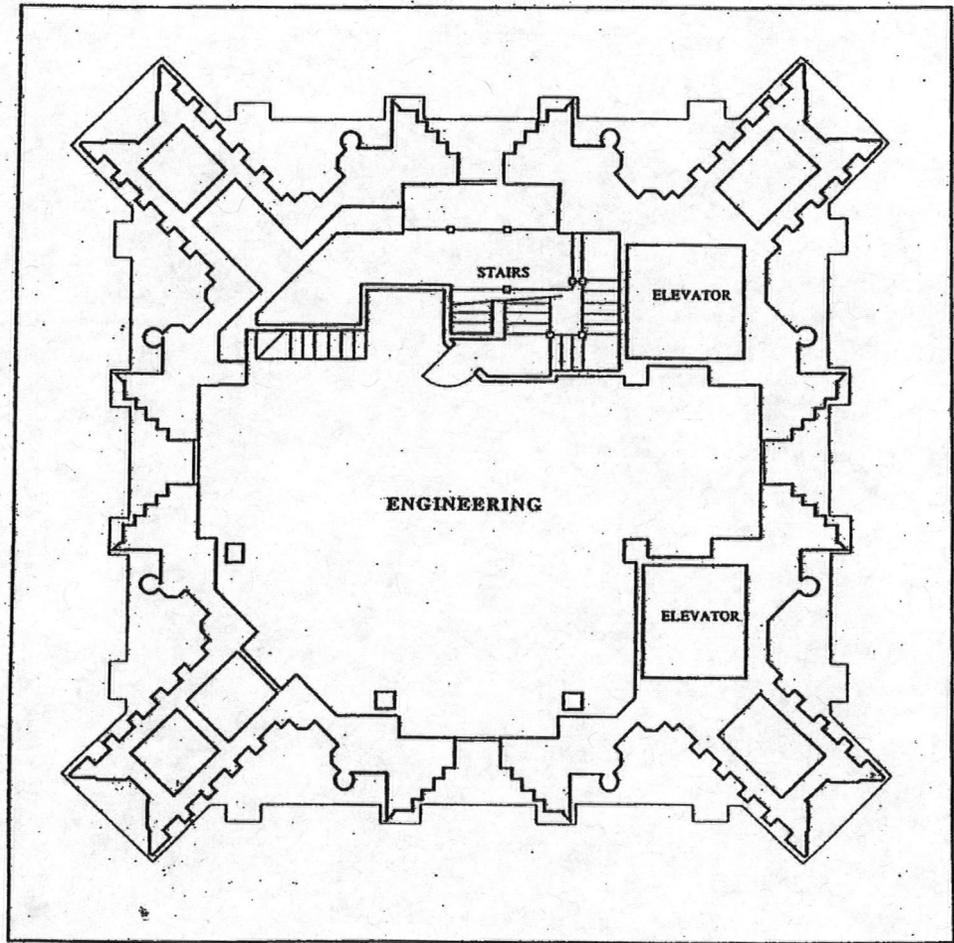
Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
138	B/G		8 Service Sink
139	Toilet		119 Building
140	Garillon		237 Office
141	Clock Equipment		47 Storage
142	Fordham		436 Transmitter

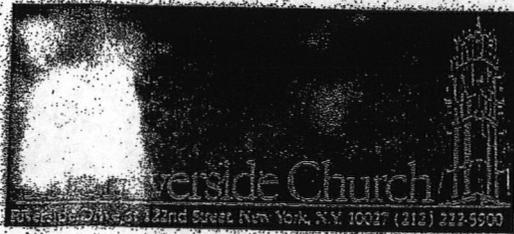




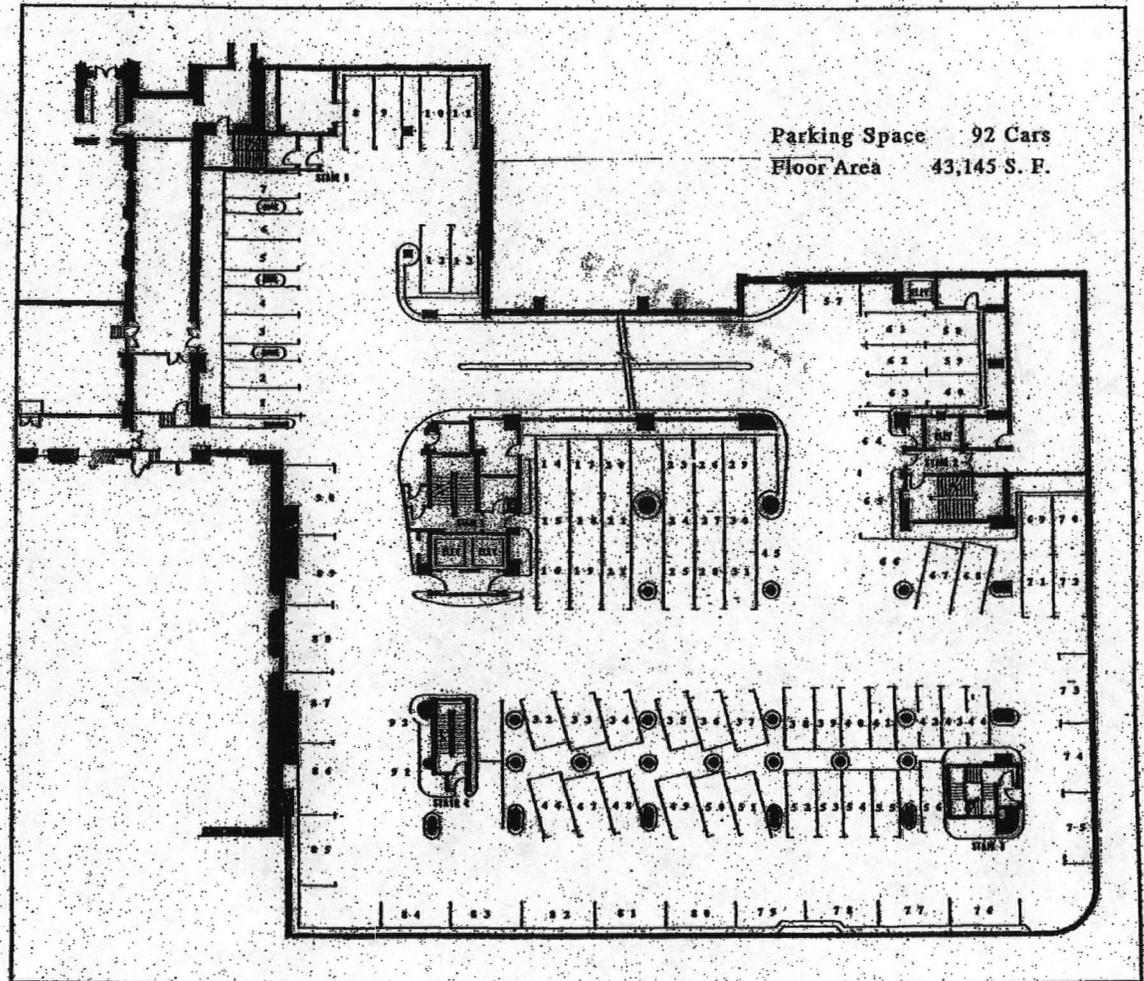
Tower Twenty-Second Floor

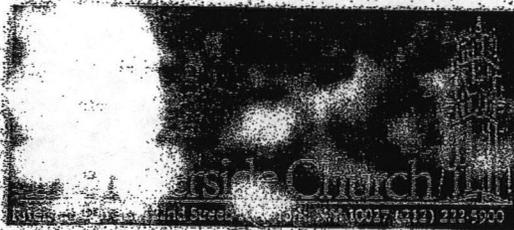
Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
143	Engineers	766	Building



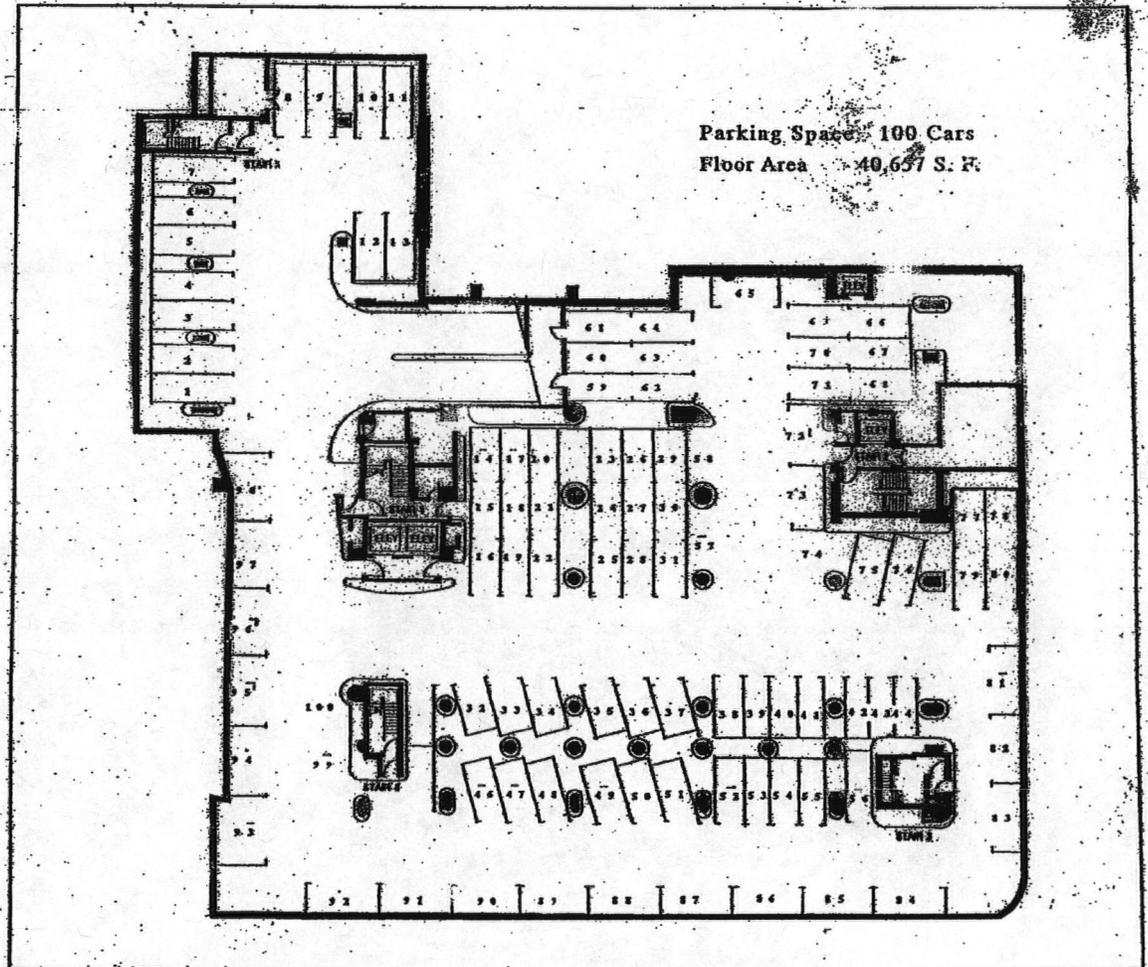


**UPPER PARKING
M.L.K. WING**





**LOWER PARKING
M.L.K. WING**

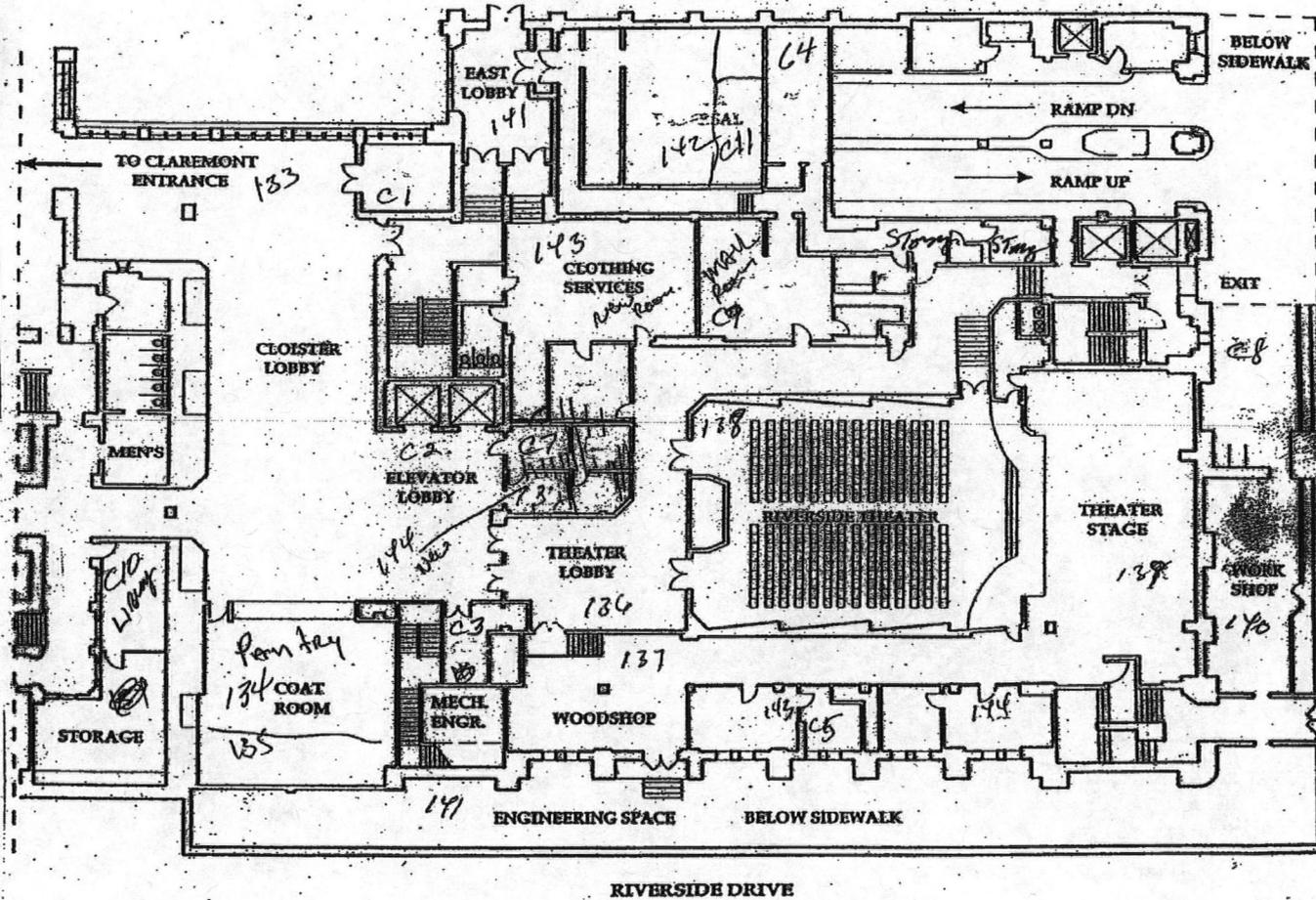


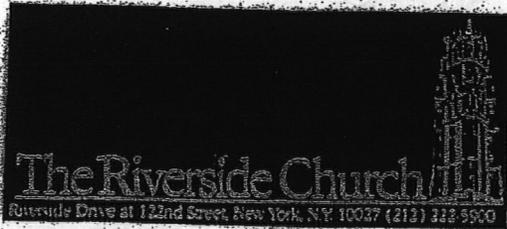
Parking Spaces: 100 Cars
Floor Area: 49,657 S. F.

**M.L.K. WING
 CLOISTER**

MLK Cloister Level

Room Group	Square Footage - Contents
132 Engineer	2511 Mechanical
133 Cloister Lobby	3312 Lobby
134 Storage	1085 Food
135 Homeless	726 Social Services
136 Theatre Lobby	726 Lobby
137 Theatre Shop	2684 Theatre
138 Theater Stage	1980 Theatre
139 Stage	856 Theatre
140 Work Shop	350 Storage
141 East Lobby	1292 Lobby
142 Multi-purpose	380 Meeting Room
143 Child Care	1542 Rev. Pat
144 Social Services	64 New Clothes
C1 Meditation Chapel	221
C2 Elevator Lobby	736
C3 Box Office	99 Theatre
C4 Audio Department	300 Theatre
C5 Dressing Room	460 Theatre
C6 Storage	576 Theatre
C7 Wellness Center	528
C8 Radio Center	467
C9 Mailroom	675
C10 Library	1060
C11 Tech Services	300





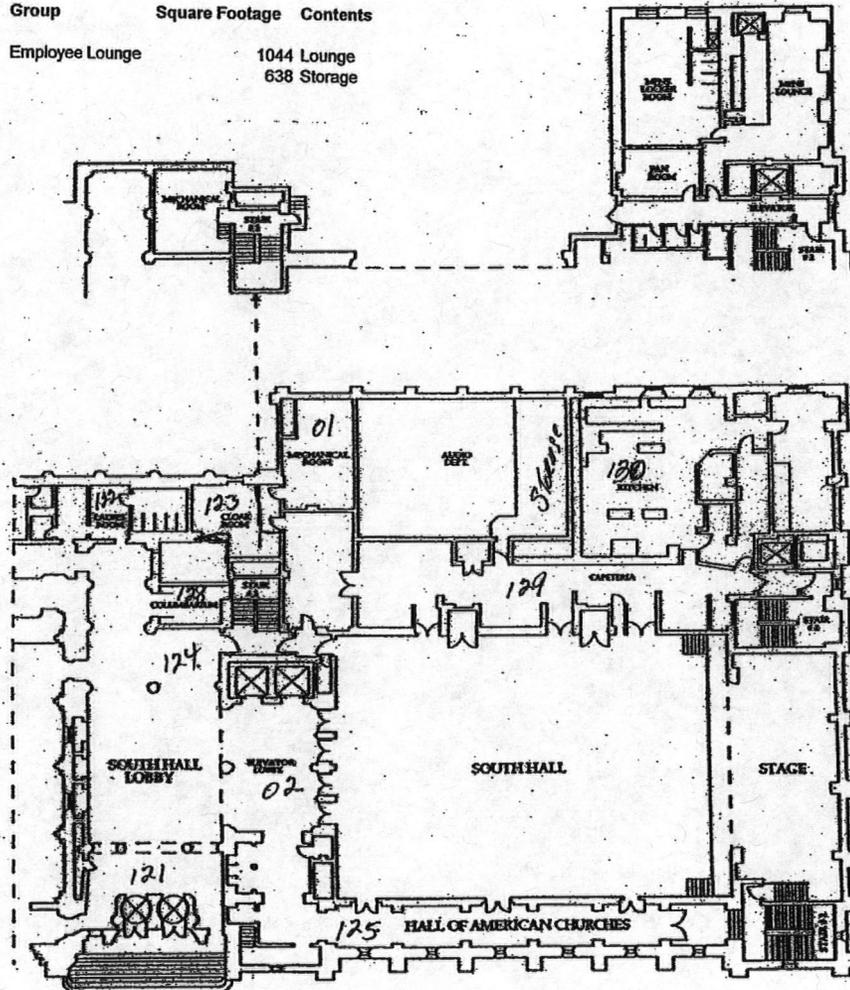
**M. L. K. WING
FIRST FLOOR**

MLK First Floor

Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
120	Engineer	180	Storage
121	Lobby S/W	2368	Lobby
122	Ladies Rm S/W	380	South Hall
123	Coat Room	382	L/R
124	South Hall Lobby	2368	Lobby
125	Hall of Churches	950	S/W
126	South Hall Lobby	6144	Meeting Room
127	Stage South Hall	1586	Stage
128	Columbarium	180	Office
129	Cafeteria	200	Entrance
130	Kitchen	2000	Caterer
131	Tech Services	1406	Storage
01	Mechanical	476	
02	Elevator Lobby	864	

MLK 1M

Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
Employee Lounge		1044	Lounge
		638	Storage



FIRST FLOOR
MEZZANINE

FIRST FLOOR
SOUTH HALL



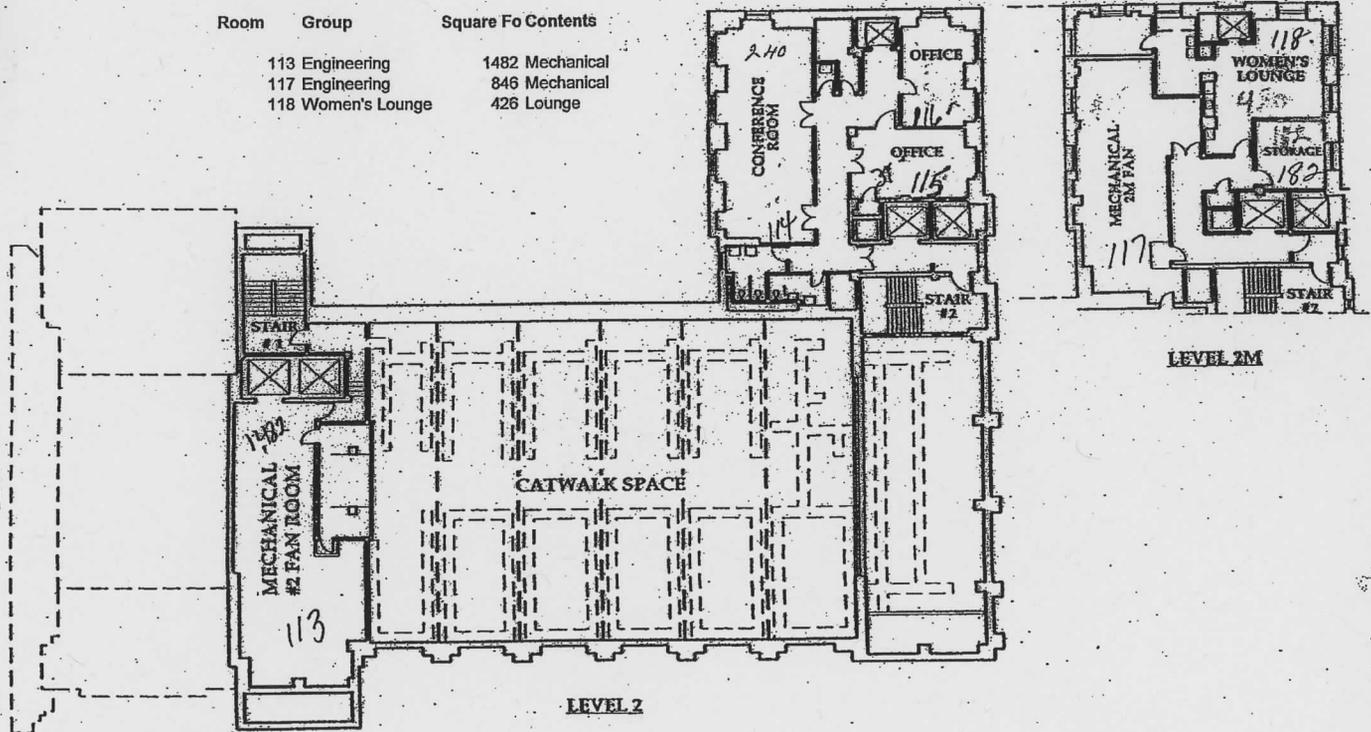
MLK 2M Floor

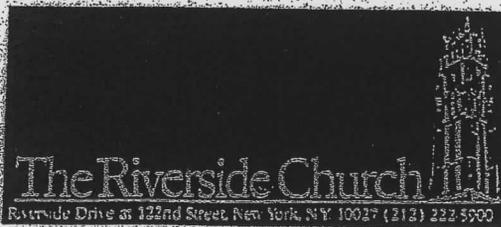
Room	Group	Square Fo Contents
113	Engineering	1482 Mechanical
117	Engineering	846 Mechanical
118	Women's Lounge	426 Lounge

MLK Second Floor

Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
114	Conference Room (240)	731	Meetings
115	Theatre Office	260	Office
116	Jewel	270	Office
119	B/G	182	Storage

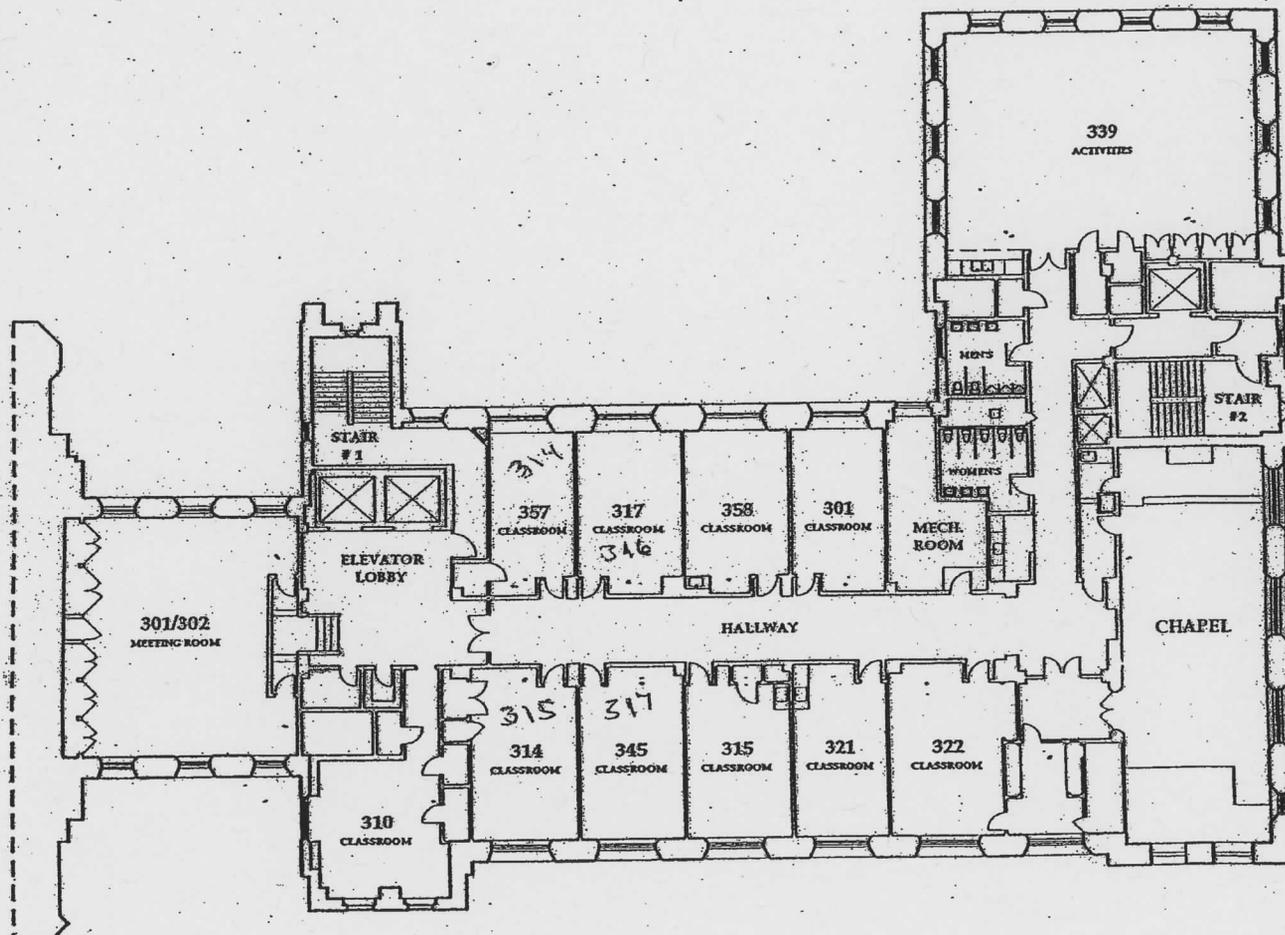
FLOOR AREA: 6,343 S.F.
OCCUPIABLE: 4,229 S.F.

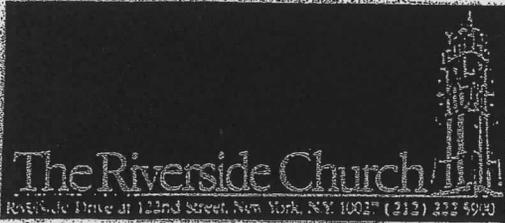




MLK Third Floor

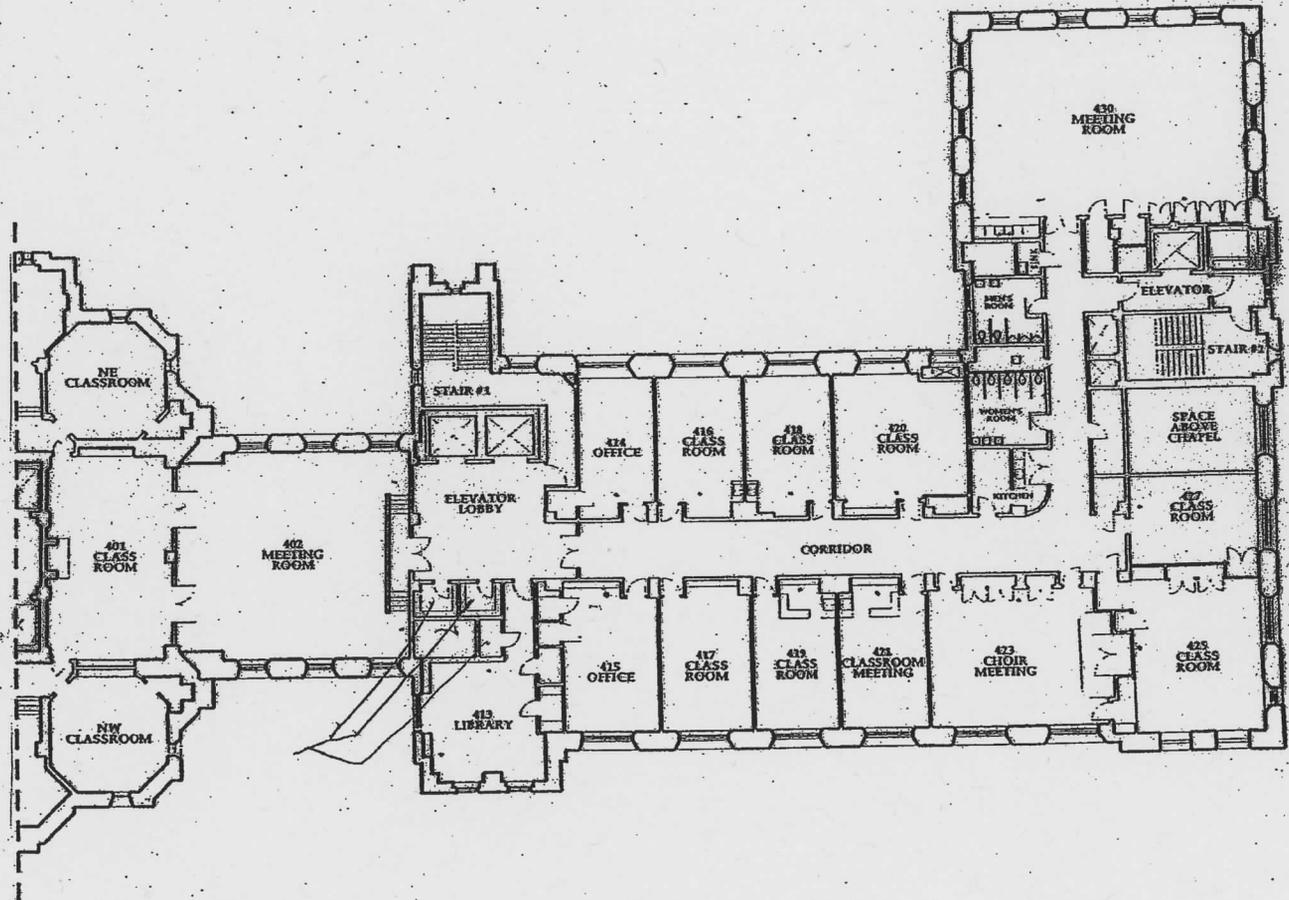
Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
100	Conference Room	1221	Tables/Chairs
101	Language 310	312	Tables/Chairs
102	Language 314	384	Tables/Chairs
103	Language 316	384	Tables/Chairs
104	Language 318	296	Classrooms
105	Language 320	304	Lounge
106	Language 330	1584	Classrooms
107	Language 339	1364	Classrooms
108	Language 323	408	Classrooms
109	Language 321	384	Classrooms
110	Language 319	384	Classrooms
111	Language 317	384	Classrooms
112	Language 315	384	Classrooms

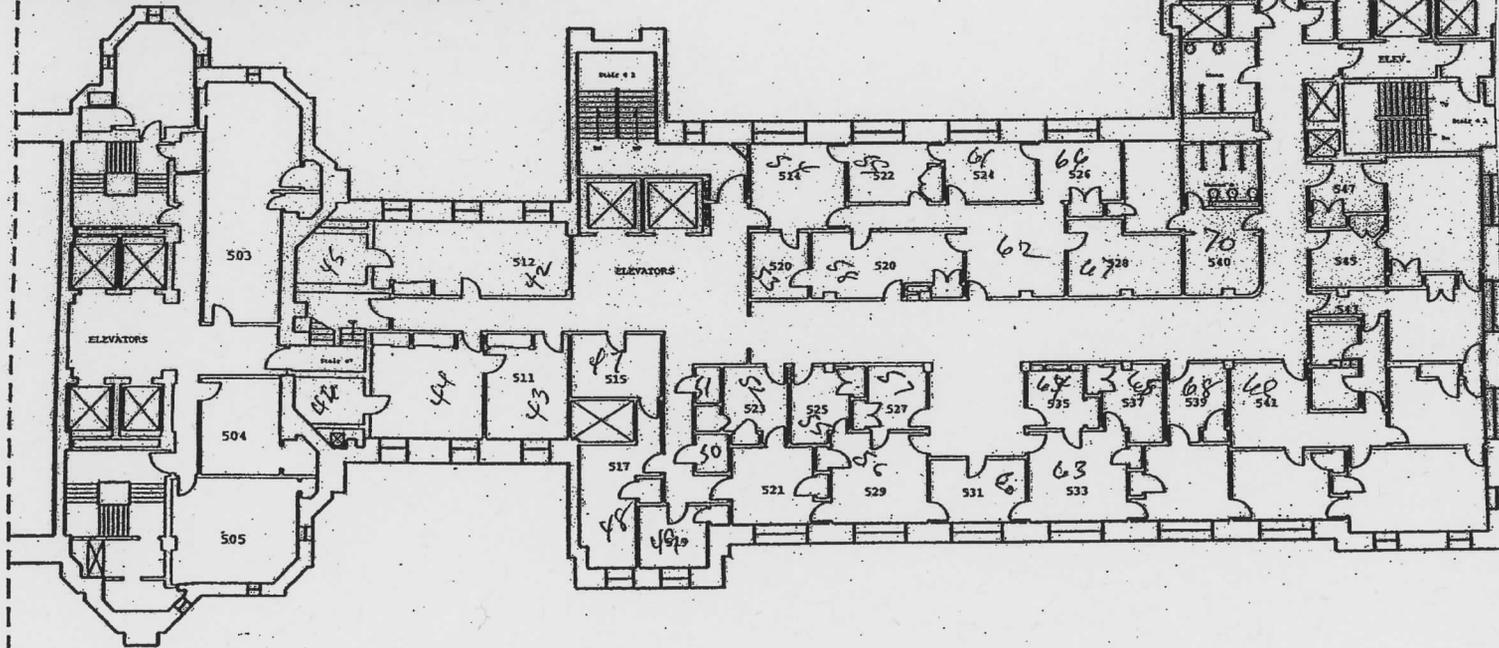
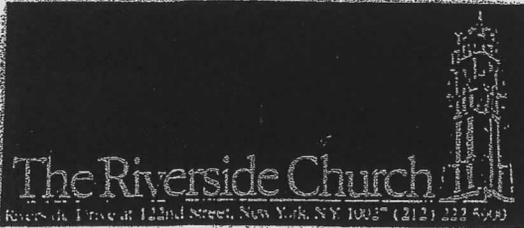




MLK Fourth Floor

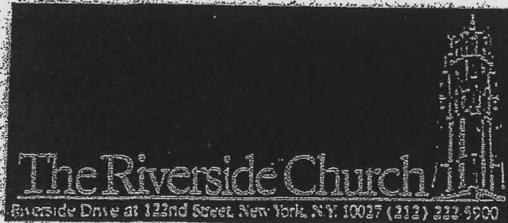
Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
86	Day School 411	312	Meeting Room
87	Day School 413	384	Classroom
88	Day School 414	360	Classroom
89	Rev. Pat 415	360	Rev. Pat
90	Day School 416	360	Classroom
91	Rev. Hill 417	360	Office
92	Rev. Thomas 418	576	Classroom
93	Day School 419	36	Storage
94	Rev Hill 420	696	Lounge Computer
95	Language 421	621	Classroom
96	Meeting Room 423	368	Piano/desks
97	Lounge Room 425	380	Kitchen
98	Office 427	1536	
99	Day School	56	Storage





MLK Fifth Floor

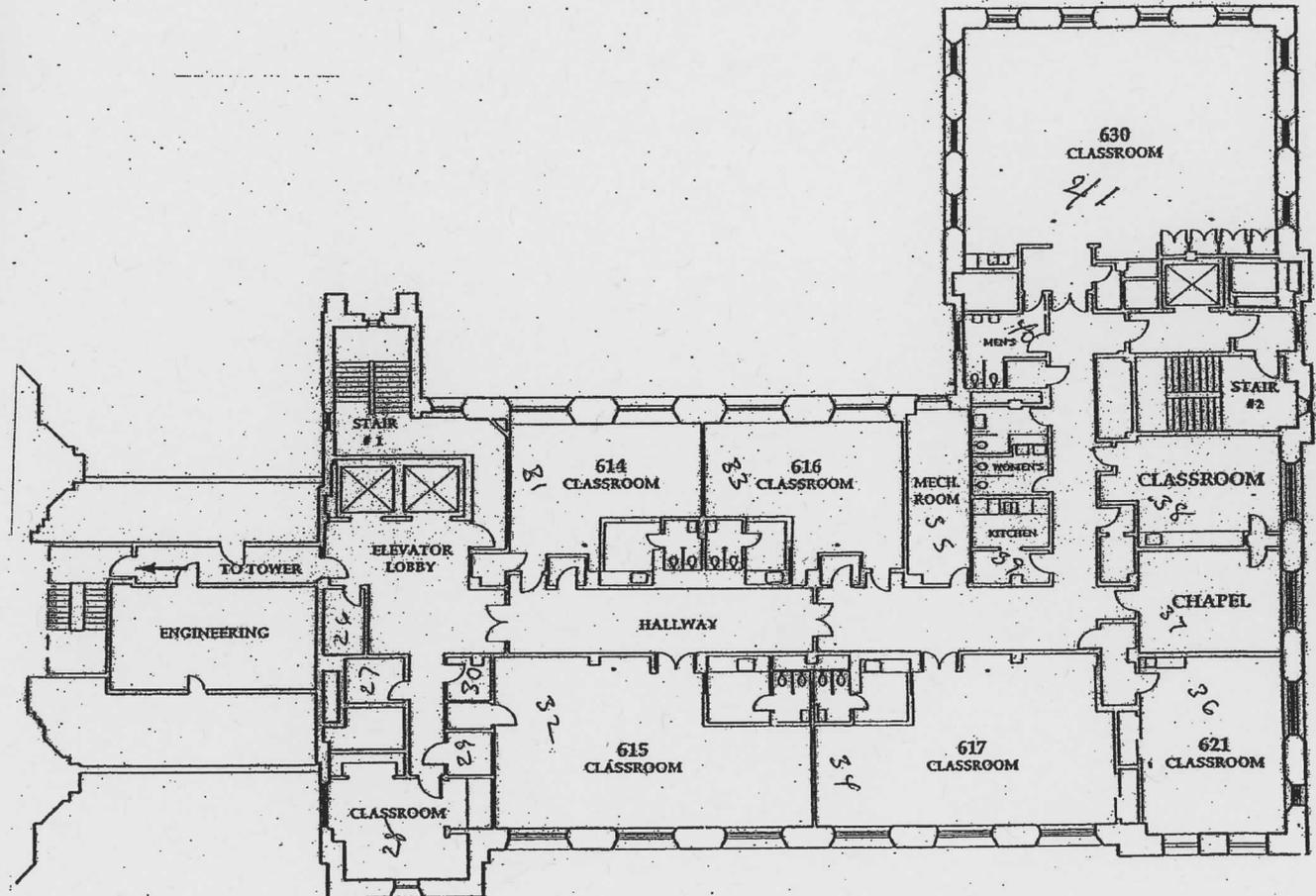
Room Group	Square Foota Contents
40 Lobby	907 Lobby Elevatr
41 Communication Media	240 Office
42 H/R	135 Office
43 Rentals	311 Office
44 HR Assist	229 Office
45 Rentals	144 Office
46 Rentals	230 Office
47 Rentals	128 Office
48 Stewardship	99 Storage
49 Rev. Coleman 514	218 Office SJ
50 Jarrit Sander 520	170 Office SJ
51 Carol Nixon 522	159 Office SJ
52 Assist.	87 Office
53 Debra Northern 524	157 Social Servica
54 Reception	317 Office
55 Emily Scott 526	151 Worship
56 Storage 528	211 Social Service
57 Ladies RM 540	153 Restroom
58 Conference	184 Senior Minist
59 Offices	257 Worship
60 Director of Administration	126 Office
61 Asst. of Administration	126 Office
62 Finance	445 Office
63 Finance	176 Office
64 John Romano	257 Office
65 Senior Minister	310 Reception
66 Director of Administration 547	48 Storage
67 Conference Rm	196 DOA
68 Conference Rm	198 Senior Minist
69 Rev. Braxton	54 Storage
70 Waiting Rm 541	308 Sr. Minister
71 Senior Minister	52 Storage
72 Exec. Assist	124 Office
73 Administration	182 Office
74 Admin. Asst.	130 Office
75 Empty	247 Office
76 PGM 537	106 Office
77 PGM Asst. 533	243 Office
78 Exec. Assist 535	163 Office
79 PAWR 527	114 Parish Life
80 Parish Life 531	240 Office
81 Asst. Stewardship 527	120 Office
82 Stewardship 539	124 Office
83 Copy Room	162 Room
84 Stewardship	1400 Conference
85 Stewardship	360 Storage

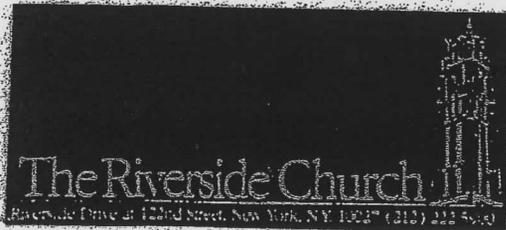


M. L. K. WING

MLK Sixth Floor

Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
26	Lobby	547	Lobby
27	Engineer	61	Telephone Room
28	IT	65	Server
29	IT	326	Office
30	Engineer	42	Electric Closet
31	Day School	36	Interview Room
32	Day School 614	654	Mass Room
33	Day School 615	1179	Classroom
34	Day School 616	637	Classroom
35	Day School 617	1140	Classroom
36	Day School 621	642	Classroom
37	Day School	364	Chapel
38	Director Office	413	Admissions
39	Day School 630	1772	Classroom

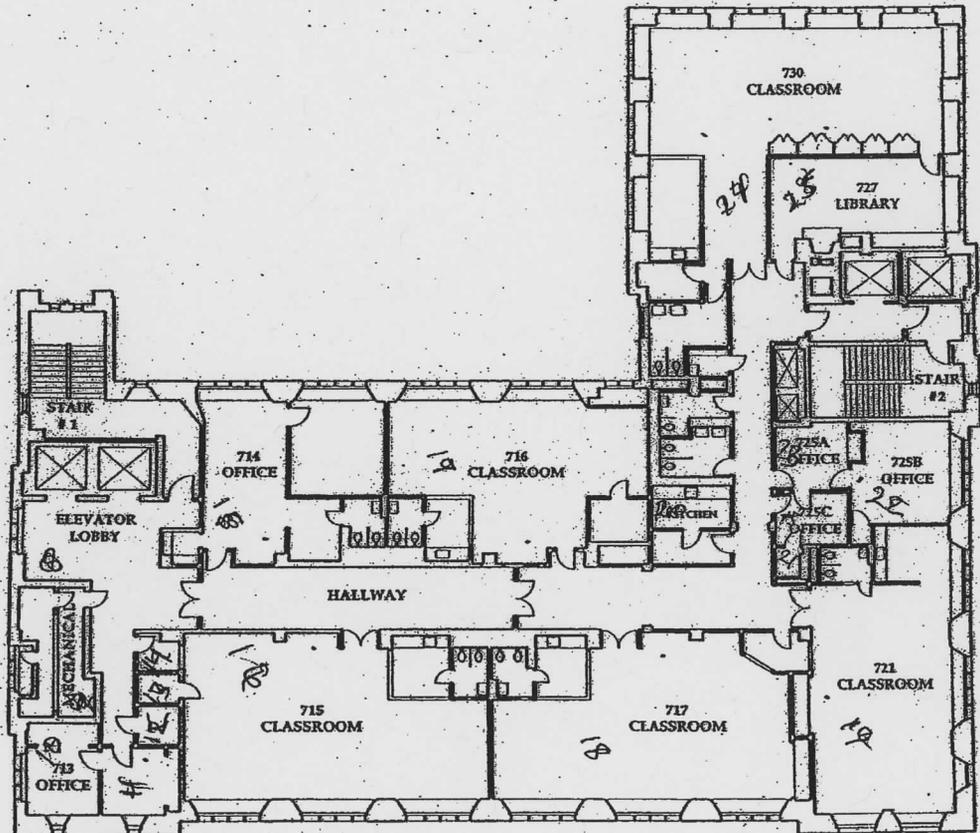


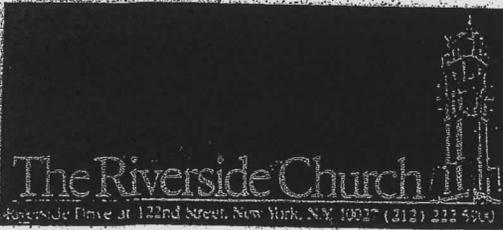


**M. L. K. WING
SEVENTH FLOOR**

MLK Seventh Floor

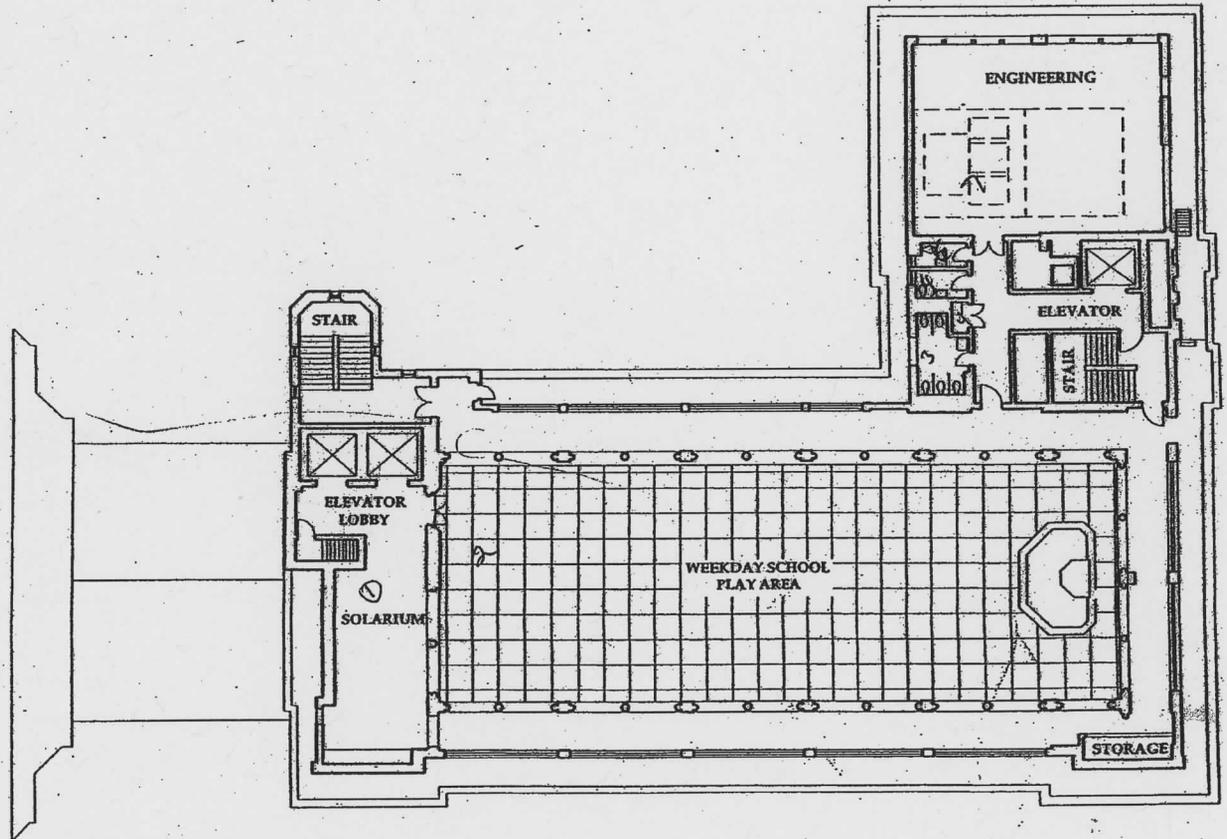
Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
8	Day School	553	Storage
9	Day School	60	Engineer
10	Day School 712	174	Classroom
11	Day School 713	100	Classroom
12	Day School	15	Elective
13	Day School	25	Storage
14	Day School	35	Observation
15	Day School 714	647	Office
16	Day School 715	1190	Office
17	Day School 716	1004	Classroom
18	Day School 717	1131	Classroom
19	Day School 721	948	Classroom
20	Day School	143	Kitchen
21	Day School	131	Office
22	Day School	131	Asst. Director
23	Day School	260	Directors Office
24	Day School	378	Library
25	Day School 730	1286	Classroom



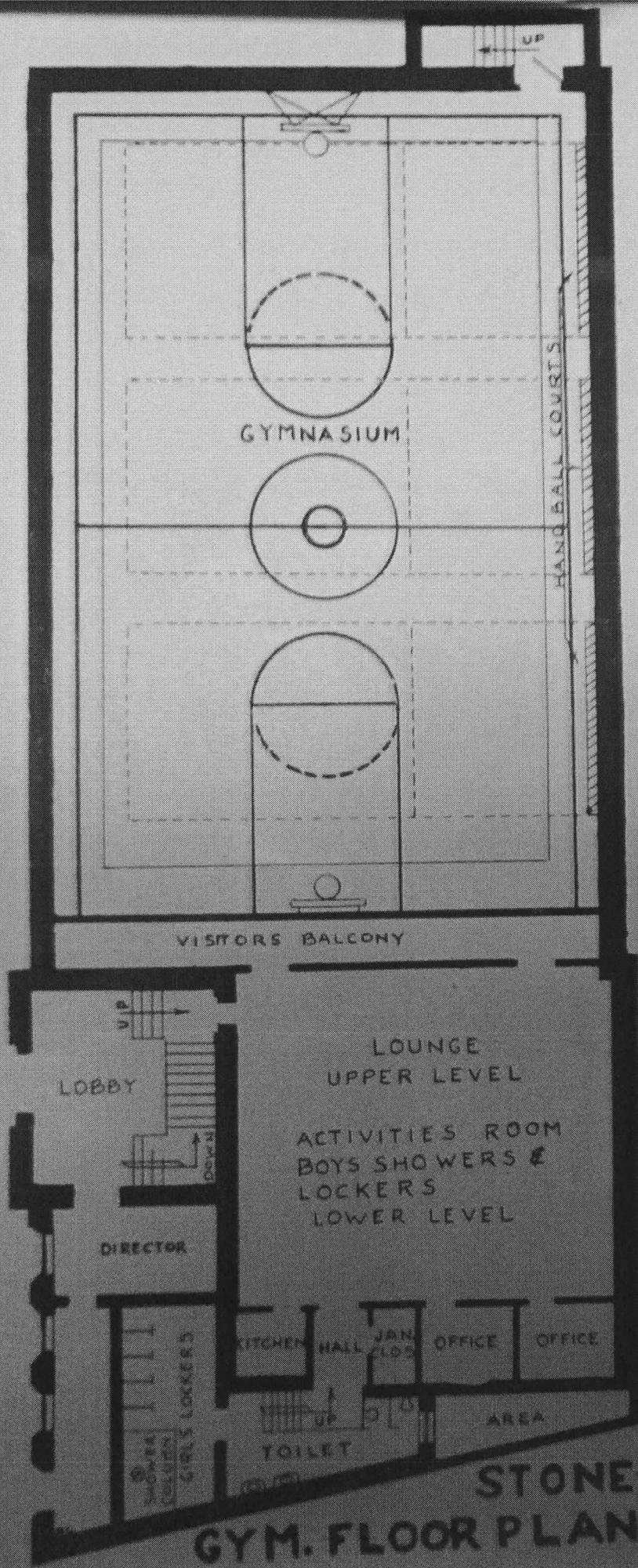


MLK Eighth Floor

Room	Group	Square Footage	Contents
1	Day School	711	Solarium
2	Day School	6768	Playground
3	Corridor	294	
4	Child B/R	103	Restroom
5	Women's B/R	38	Restroom
6	Men's B/R	30	Restroom
7	HVAC/Room	1280	Engineer



Riverside
Church, NY, NY



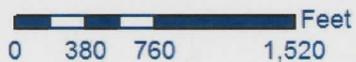
STONE-GYM. FLOOR PLAN

Riverside Church
Manhattan, New York County, NY

490 Riverside Dr. Frnt. 1
NEW YORK, NY 10027-5788



Coordinate System : NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum : North American 1983
Units: Meter



 Riverside Church

USGS Topo Quadrangle from
Services@arcgisonline.com





$\Sigma = 1.71$ Acres

587451E 4518381N

Reinhold Niebuhr Pl

587100

587400

587700

Coordinate System : NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection : Transverse Mercator
Datum : North American 1983
Units : Meter



 Riverside Church

Tax Parcel Data:
NYC ORPM
<http://gis.nyc.gov/doitt/nycitymap>



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Riverside Church
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, New York

DATE RECEIVED: 10/26/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/27/12
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/12/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/12/12
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12001036

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 12-12-12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

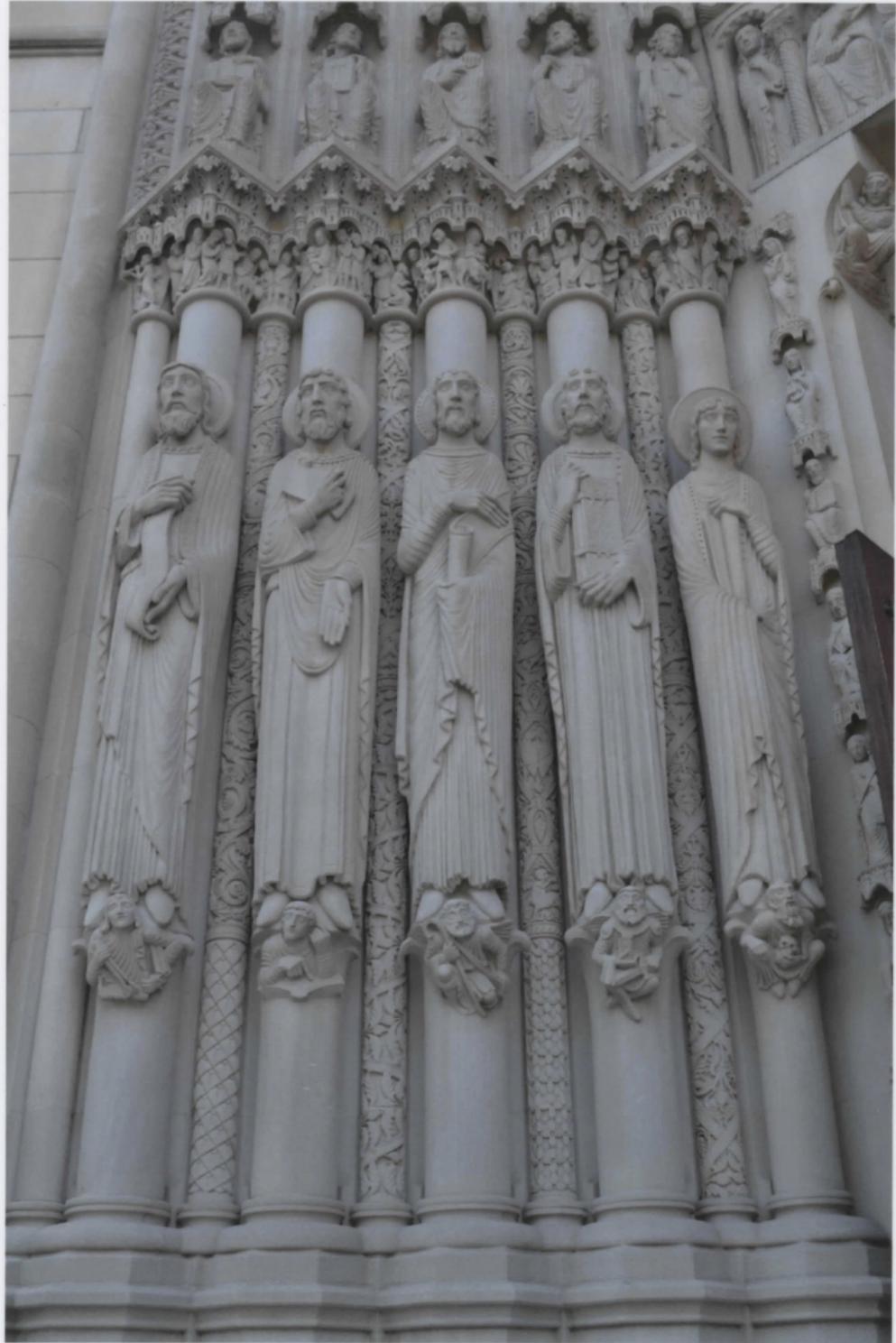
DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Riverside Church
NY, NY

#1



Riverside Church
NY, NY

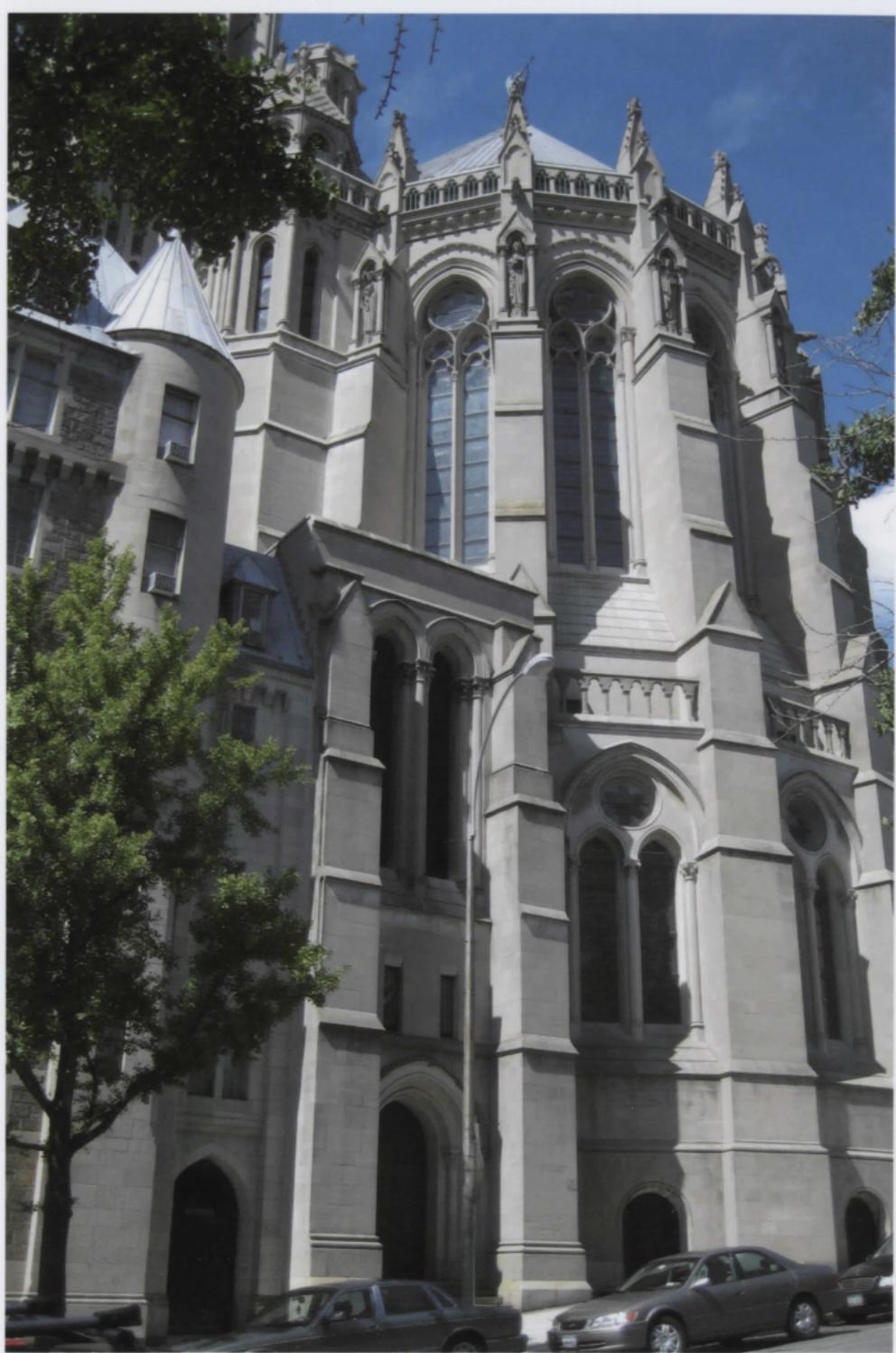
#2



Riverside Church

NY, NY

#3



Riverside Church

NY, NY

#4



Riverside Church

NY, NY

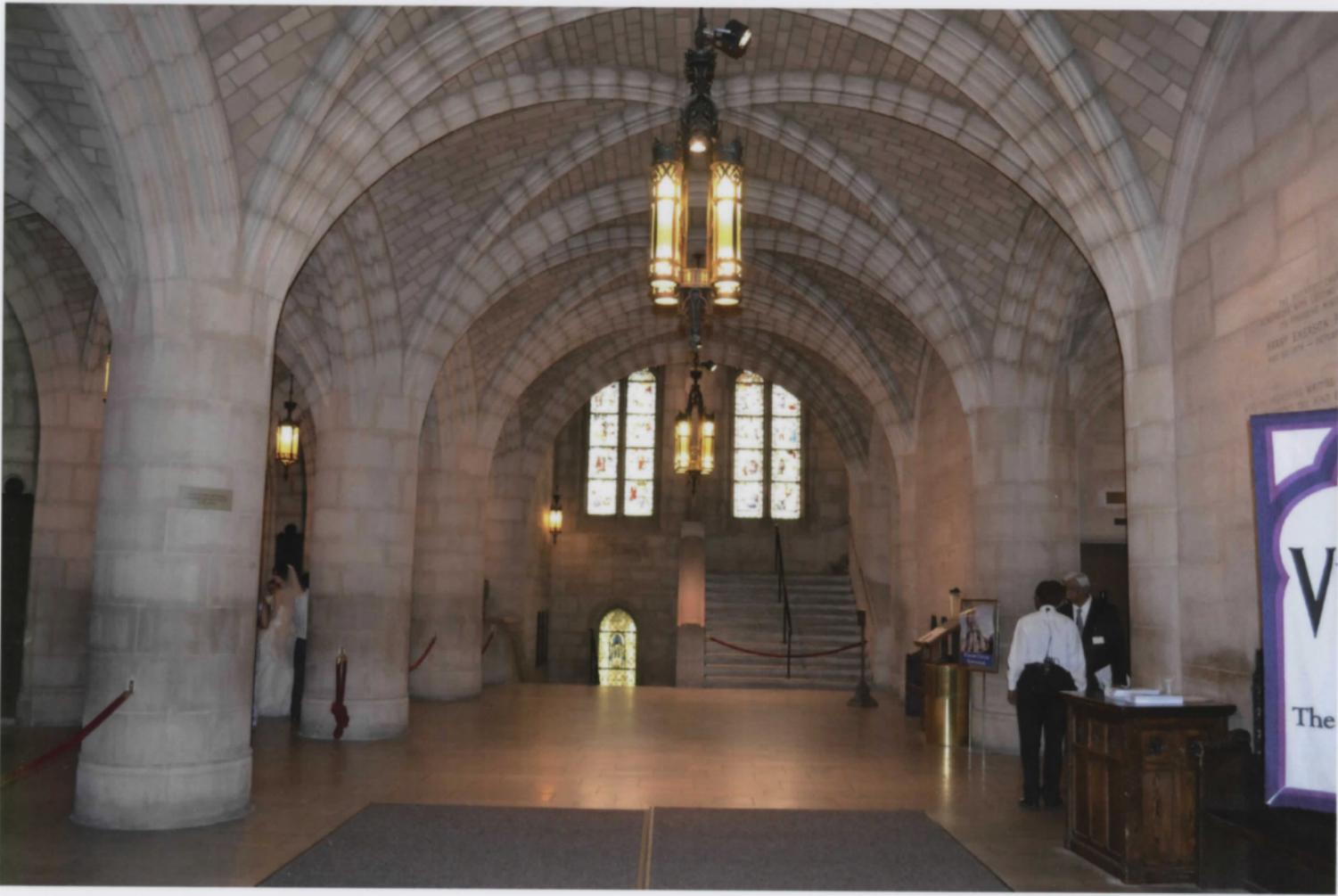
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Riverside Church

NY, NY

#6



Riverside Church

NY, NY

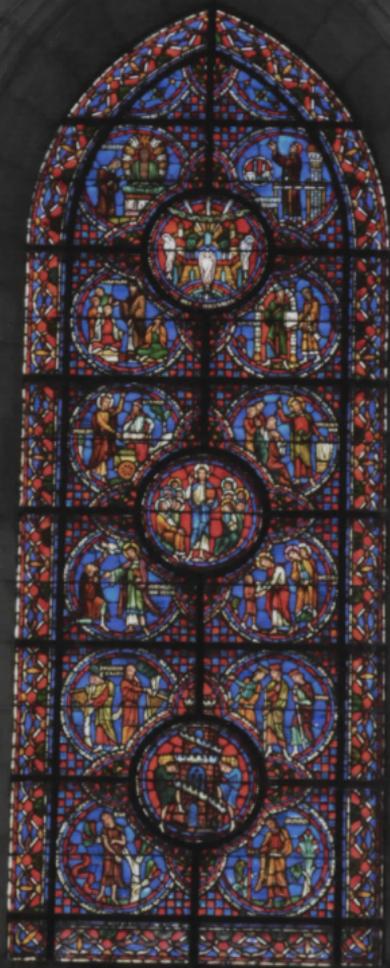
#7



Riverside Church

NY, NY

#8



Riverside Church

NY, NY

#9



Riverside Church
NY, NY

#10



Riverside Church

NY, NY

#11



Riverside Church

NY, NY

#12



Riverside Church

NY, NY

#13



Riverside Church

NY, NY

#14



Riverside Church

NY, NY

#15



Riverside Church

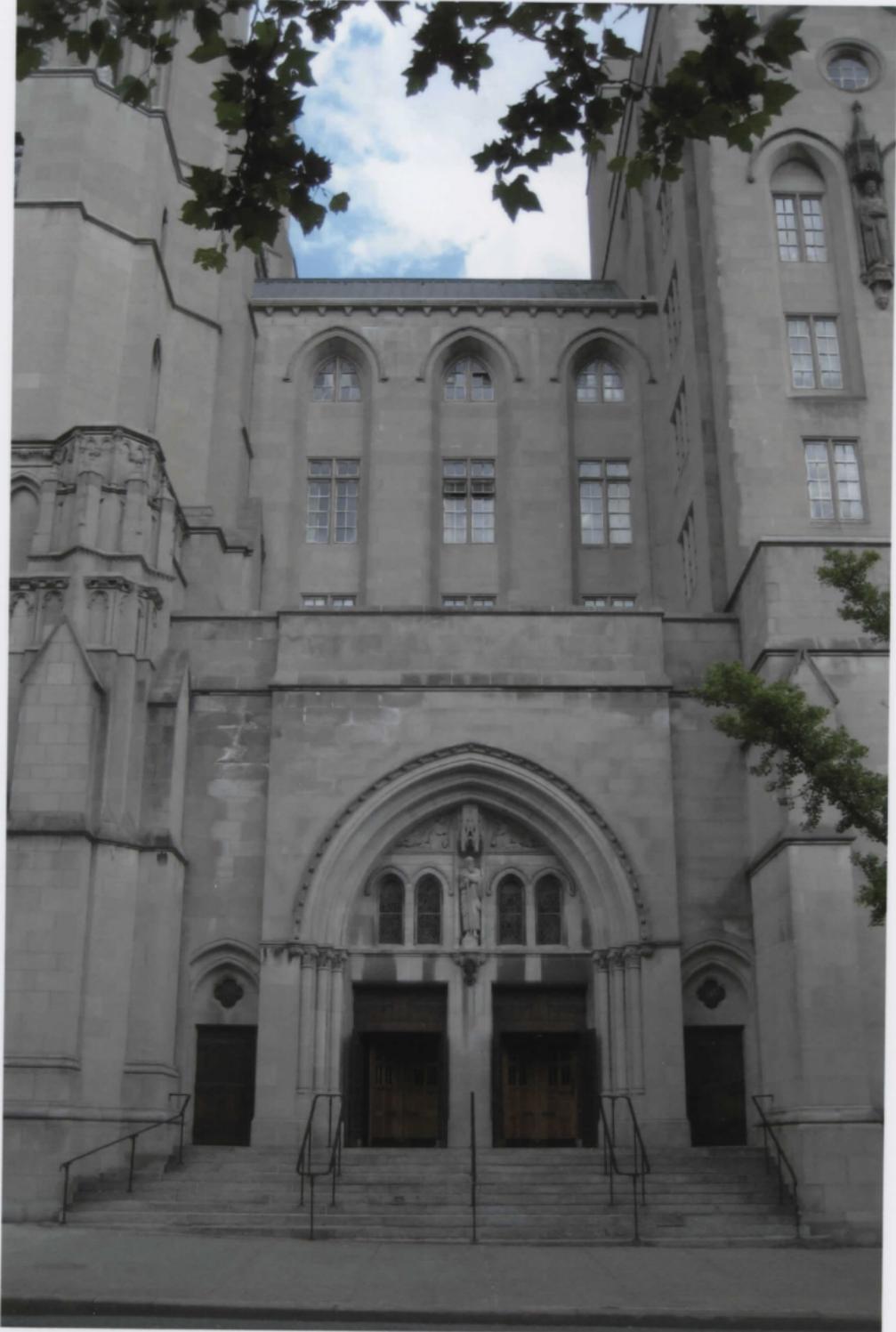
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Riverside Church
NY, NY

#17



Riverside Church
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Riverside Church

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Riverside Church

NY, NY

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Riverside Church

NY, NY

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Riverside Church

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Riverside Church

NY, NY

#23



Riverside Church
NY, NY

#24

Missing Core Documentation

Property Name
Riverside Church

County, State
New York, NY

Reference Number
12001036

The following Core Documentation is missing from this entry:

Nomination Form

Photographs

USGS Map

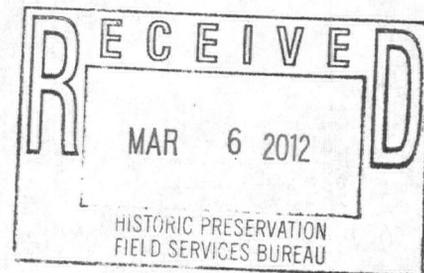
STATEMENT OF OWNER SUPPORT

The Riverside Church is the owner of the property located at 490 Riverside Drive, New York, New York 10027. The Riverside Church Council, the governing body of The Riverside Church, supports its consideration and inclusion in the State and National Registers of Historic Places.



Jean L. Schmidt
Chair, The Riverside Church Council
490 Riverside Drive
New York, NY 10027

2/28/12
Date



NYC
Landmarks Preservation
Commission

Robert B. Tierney
Chair

Kate Daly
Executive Director
kdaly@lpc.nyc.gov

1 Centre Street
9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

212 669 7926 tel
212 669 7797 fax

August 16, 2012

Ms. Ruth Pierpont, Director
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Peebles Island
Waterford, NY 12188-0189



Re: Riverside Church, 490 Riverside Drive, Manhattan

Dear Ms. Pierpont:

I write on behalf of Chair Robert B. Tierney in response to your request for comment on the eligibility of Riverside Church, located at 490 Riverside Drive in Manhattan, for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The Commission strongly supports the nomination of Riverside Church. On May 16, 2000 the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission voted to designate this church as an individual New York City landmark. The church was designed by architects Henry C. Pelton, of New York, and Allen & Collens, of Boston, between 1928 and 1930. Riverside Church was designed in the neo-Gothic style and is one of the best-known religious structures in New York City.

Therefore, based on the Commission's prior review and designation of this church, the Commission has determined that Riverside Church appears to meet the criteria for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Daly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Kate Daly

Cc: Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Mary Beth Betts, Director of Research

**Morningside Heights Historic District Committee
Columbia Station
PO Box 250405
New York, NY 10025
(646) 721 4651
Morningsideheights.org**

September 19, 2012

Ruth Pierpont
Deputy Commissioner
New York State Division for Historic Preservation
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
Peebles Island State Park
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Re: State and National Register Listing
Riverside Church
490 Riverside Drive
Manhattan, New York

Dear Ms. Pierpont:

The Morningside Heights Historic District Committee is pleased to endorse the listing of Allen & Collens, Henry C. Pelton et al.'s Riverside Church on the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places. Riverside Church is distinguished by multiple areas of significance reflected in its towering Gothic design referencing several European prototypes, state-of-the-art construction, intricate ornamentation, distinctive interior finishes, and its carillon and bell, which are purported to be the largest in the world.

Beyond its architectural and engineering significance, Riverside Church is culturally significant as the fulfillment of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and Harry Emerson Fosdick's objectives for a progressive ecumenical center whose activities would not only promote spiritual values through its sermons and teachings, but also through its activities. Then and now, Riverside Church continues to be a multi-faceted interdenominational and interracial center dedicated to education, charitable outreach, and community engagement.

The Morningside Heights Historic District Committee wholeheartedly supports the listing of this local landmark which is both a beacon to the Morningside Heights community and to the city at large.

Sincerely yours,

Laura Friedman
President
Morningside Heights Historic District Committee



Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor

Rose Harvey
Commissioner

**New York State Office of Parks,
Recreation and Historic Preservation**

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau • Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

518-237-8643

www.nysparks.com

12 October 2012

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to enclose the following three National Register nominations to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Cold Spring Harbor Beach Club, Suffolk County
Randolph Historic District, Cattaraugus County
Riverside Church, New York County

Thank you for your assistance in processing these proposals. Please feel free to call me at 518.237.8643 x 3261 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office