



Eleazar Bueno, Chairperson  
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

## Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

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March 31, 2021

Hon. Sarah Caroll, Chair  
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission  
David N. Dinkins Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North  
New York, NY 10007

Re: SUPPORTING THE LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION'S PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF HOLYROOD EPISCOPAL CHURCH – IGLESIA SANTA CRUZ AS AN INDIVIDUAL LANDMARK BUILDING

Dear Chair, Caroll:

At General Meeting on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, Community Board 12 Manhattan passed a resolution with a vote of 35 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 0, not voting ratifying the resolution passed by Community Board 12 Manhattan, Executive Committee on Monday, March 15, 2021, with a vote of 13 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstention, strongly supporting the Landmarks Preservation Commission's proposal to designate Holyrood Episcopal Church – Iglesia Santa Cruz as an individual landmark building.

Whereas: On January 19, 2021, the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission ("LPC") calendared Holyrood Episcopal Church - Iglesia Santa Cruz ("Holyrood") for the proposed designation as an individual landmark building and is holding a public hearing on March 23, 2021. In 2020 Holyrood was added to the New York State Register of Historic Places and to the National Register of Historic Places. Holyrood is located at the corner of West 179<sup>th</sup> Street and Fort Washington Avenue in Washington Heights and is significant for both its architectural and its long-term cultural connections to the community; and

Whereas: Holyrood was erected as the population of Manhattan moved northward, transitioning Washington Heights from a sparsely settled rural area to an urbanized built environment. The parish was founded in 1893. Its first church was built in 1895 at Broadway and West 181<sup>st</sup> Street. Planning for the current church began in 1910; it was commissioned in 1911 and built from 1911 to 1916; and

Whereas: Holyrood is a beautiful, sophisticated, and well-executed example of Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architectural design that displays a high degree of both interior and exterior integrity of design, material, and workmanship. Holyrood was designed by the architectural firm of Bannister & Schell, which specialized in church design including the National Register-listed North Presbyterian Church, also located in Washington Heights. The firm also designed the National Register-listed Harlem Savings Bank on East 125<sup>th</sup> Street in East Harlem; and

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Whereas: Holyrood remained an important social and cultural resource within the community over the years during which the neighborhood demographics changed. Today, Holyrood is "The People's Church." The congregation is a multicultural, multiracial, multiethnic, and multigenerational community that worships in English, Spanish and American Sign Language. Holyrood has played an important role for 40 years in the Dominican, Puerto Rican and other Spanish-speaking communities of Washington Heights. It continues to hold Sunday Mass for racially and ethnically diverse congregants, some of whom have been members for more than 50 years. Its food ministry has been serving 800 meals a week during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also belongs to the New Sanctuary Coalition of NYC, an interfaith network that helps immigrants, and is providing refuge to an immigrant woman who threatened with deportation, and her three children, each U.S. citizens. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Holyrood garnered widespread publicity for its liberal positions, due in large part to its rector, Rev. Gustav Cartensen, who came to Holyrood from Christ Church in the Bronx, where his position on permitting Black children from a nearby orphanage to attend led to his resignation at the request of members of the vestry. In 1901 Holyrood was involved in the dedication of the Fort Washington memorial plaque, located on the Fort Washington Avenue side of Bennett Park. An interior plaque at Holyrood is dedicated to Margaret Corbin, who stood by her husband John Corbin as he fired a cannon at the invading Hessians in the Battle of Fort Washington during the Revolutionary War, and after he was killed operated his cannon until she was wounded; and

Whereas: Representatives of Holyrood attended the March 3, 2021 meeting of the Land Use Committee and expressed great pride in the church being considered for designation by LPC and enthusiastic commitment to continuing to serve and to be a home to a diverse community and various community groups; and

Whereas: In January 2021 Community Board 12-Manhattan ("CB 12") passed a resolution reiterating its previous request to LPC for it to engage in ongoing dialogue and partnership with CB 12 and community residents to advance the designation of historic districts and structures in Washington Heights and Inwood, to ensure that the history, culture, contributions and legacy of people and communities of color are recognized, acknowledged and preserved, and to implement policies and procedures to increase the diversity and inclusion in its designation of buildings, structures and historic districts; now, therefore, be it

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Resolved: Community Board 12-Manhattan strongly supports the Landmarks Preservation Commission's proposal to designate Holyrood Episcopal Church – Iglesia Santa Cruz as an individual landmark building.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Bueno', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Eleazar Bueno  
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor  
Hon. Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate  
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller  
Hon. Brian Benjamin, State Senator  
Hon. Robert Jackson, State Senator  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President

Hon. Al Taylor, Assembly Member  
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Assembly Member  
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member  
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member