NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION:

CHURCH OF THE BELOVED DISCIPLE & ITS CHAPEL, RECTORY & PARISH HOUSE

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Church of the Beloved Disciple (Episcopal)

Other Names: Talman Memorial Church of the Beloved Disciple (Episcopal); East 89th Street Dutch Reformed Church; Church of St. Thomas More (Roman Catholic)

2. Location

Street & Number: 59-67 East 89th Street

City/Town: New York

State: NY County: New York Code: Zip Code: 10128

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

Private x

Category of Property

Building x

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing: 4

Non-contributing addition: 1

6. Function or Use

Historic Function: RELIGION/religious facility; RELIGION/church-related residence

Current Functions: RELIGION/religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification: MID-19TH CENTURY/Gothic Revival/Early Gothic Revival

Materials: STONE/sandstone (church, chapel, tower, rectory); STONE/Sandstone and BRICK (parish house)

Narrative Description [see below]

8. Statement of Significance [see below]

Areas of Significance:

ARCHITECTURE; RELIGION; SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance: 1870-2014

Significant Dates: 1870-1892; 1929; 1999; 2014

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder:

Church/Chapel: Hubert, Pirsson & Company

Parish House: unknown

Rectory: Louis A. Osborne

10. Geographical Data

Less than one acre

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property has been drawn on the attached map.

Boundary Justification

The boundary has been drawn to include the entire lot on which Beloved Disciple and its chapel, parish house, and rectory are located.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

CHURCH AND BELL TOWER OF THE CHURCH OF THE BELOVED DISCIPLE

The Episcopal Church of the Beloved Disciple, now St. Thomas More Roman Catholic Church, is located at 65 East 89th Street between Madison and Park Avenues in the Carnegie Hill neighborhood of the Upper East Side of the New York City borough of Manhattan, New York County, New York. The church, with its adjoining chapel to the west along 89th and a rectory and parish house to the east along 89th, is located on a densely built block of the Upper East Side, with high rise construction to both sides and additional large scale residential buildings located across the street on the southern side of East 89th Street. Among its towering neighbors, the Church of the Beloved Disciple and its associated structures represent a largely unaltered complex of nineteenth-century buildings surrounded by early twentieth-century apartment buildings and later twentieth-century modernist structures, both residential and mixed use. Due to the high density and close placement of the structures to either side of the church and its affiliated buildings, only the front façades are visible of the chapel, church, and rectory, while a small portion of the eastern elevation of the parish house can be seen from the street. The four structures cover nearly all of their lots except for a slight setback of both the church and chapel which creates a small garden along the street. Due to the construction of the complex over a period of twenty-two years, some alterations were made, including the addition of the left side aisle to the main church, which caused alterations to the connection between church and chapel. The only substantial alteration occurred to the rectory in 1929, where the ground-floor façade was sensitively altered to match the parish house more closely. The group as a whole is a good example of a late nineteenth-century Gothic Revival church complex showing remarkable integrity.

EXTERIOR:

The Church of the Beloved Disciple consists of a gabled Nova Scotia sandstone façade with a square bell tower that tapers as it rises. In its original phase of construction, the church stood alone as

an asymmetrical mass with the church at the center, with a stepped back side aisle on the left, which is countered by the verticality of the bell tower to the right steps forward to nearly the sidewalk along 89th Street. As a unit, this configuration was designed to embody the asymmetrical massing of the Gothic Revival, which, despite the changes to the surrounding urban fabric, retains its integrity today.

The gabled façade contains a primary entrance that projects forward from the structure and features a pointed arch in another steeply-pitched end gable that echoes the larger form of the building. Above this central entrance is a large stained-glass window with geometric tracery, set inside a pointed arch, which is supported by slender colonettes with capitals at the springline. The tracery of this window features three pointed-arch panels set under a large circle with overlapping triangles in the form that today is known as a Star of David; it is flanked by two smaller circles. The shape of this pointed-arch window is carried through the stone lintel and, at the springline of the arch, a hood molding continues horizontally to the right and left to form a stringcourse. Slightly below the sill of this stained-glass window are two angled courses that carry across the façade and are incorporated into the design of the structure's buttresses. Similarly, at the top of the façade a raised molding echoes the roofline of the gable and emphasizes its steep peak. A stylized cross sits at the peak of both this main roofline and the peak over the entry way.

The entry portal is the most decorated portion of the façade and is composed of three compound pointed arches that step inward as they become smaller. The largest of these arches is in plane with the projecting gable front and springs from two attached squat columns that are decorated with capitols of roses on the left and lilies on the right. The arch itself is decorated with raised lettering that says "We love him because he first loved us." This, in turn, is set underneath an eagle with spread wings within a trefoil. The next arch consists of smooth stone, and springs from two more squat columns; this time the capitals depict morning glories on the left and an unidentified flower with six petals on the right. The innermost arch steps contains paneled wooden double doors with a fixed sash

of clear glass. Above these double doors is a fixed carved wooden panel that fills the point of the arch and holds a lantern.

On the left, balancing the presence of the bell tower on the right, is a buttress that steps out both towards the west and the south and is crowned by a pinnacle that rises slightly above the gable's height. The buttress creates a transition from the gabled front to the lower side aisle. The angled stringcourses of the main façade carry across the buttress to end where the church's façade meets that of the chapel to the west.

The bell tower was constructed as part of the original church design and its off-axis placement and projection forward – almost to the property line – helps to create the picturesque qualities of the nineteenth-century Gothic Revival. This tower rises 125 feet and is divided into four sections through the arrangement of stringcourses. The tower is punctuated with five levels of windows that allow light into the stairwell that wraps around the interior.

The west side of the tower contains a simplified version of the church's main entryway with only one pair of slender attached columns and a shallower projection. The same stylized cross that was used in the main façade is also found over the entrance to the bell tower and is placed at the same level as that of the main entrance. The same double-angled stringcourse from the main façade wraps around the bell tower and its geometric, buttressed corners to divide what appears to be the first floor from the next two stories. On the ground floor the pointed-arch window along the south, or street side, of the tower is aligned to match the peak over the entryway. This same symmetry of design is carried through all other levels of the tower except for the second story where paired segmental-arch, narrow windows on the south side are contrasted with a small round window on the west. It is between the second level of irregular windows and the third level of lancet windows that the buttresses narrow to a triangular cap before giving way to chamfered corners.

Above this is the next banded stringcourse. This section of the bell tower, at the fourth floor, is its most complex with the front corners moving from chamfered edges to squat columns with foliated capitals. Atop these capitals, the corners become attached octagonal piers with more decorative banding to create the final stringcourse. The openings on the fourth floor consist of paired lancets with louvers supported by slender columns and with sills made to look like balustrades. These arched openings are topped with a vertical molding and a raised round element with a central hole (originally intended to hold a clock face that was never installed). This whole grouping, of paired openings and round medallions, is contained with a larger blind pointed arch.

The topmost portion of the tower contains the original Talman memorial bell that was gifted to the church at its construction. Here the opening consists of a Tudor arch filled with louvers that is further bisected by a geometric colonette. The corners extend above a simple balustrade, forming octagonal pinnacles. The northwestern pinnacle is larger than the others, projecting further out from the tower as well as extending higher; an additional portion of the balustrade encloses it but is patterned in a series of quatrefoils instead of the intersecting diagonals of the rest.

Following storm damage in 2009, the church undertook restorations to both the church's roof and tower, and in 2011 the tower underwent a significant restoration that involved repointing, repairing stonework, and applying a light-tinted coating to treat and protect the stone. This coating, while chosen to blend with the stone façade of the church and the original stone of the tower, is now a significantly lighter and less variegated color than the church. However, the coating can be removed and is not damaging to the underlying stone.

INTERIOR:

Within the church, the nave and side aisles are united in one open space, only separated by five wide pointed arches along each side that support the clerestory, with two additional narrow pointed

arches that project past the side aisles to the north to form the chancel. On the left of the chancel is a space to house the church's organ, and to the right is an adjoining room for the choir. Above each of these side arches, at the clerestory level, are two additional paired pointed arches filled with stained glass. Additionally, between every set of paired windows the truss system of a hammerbeam roof with a scissor truss spans the nave. Each truss contains one of two patterns of perforations, either a quatrefoil or a triangle incised in a circle. The rafters of this main roof structure, as well as those in the side aisles, have been painted in polychrome patterns of various colors and designs adding to the overall decoration of the interior. Wooden trusses along the roof of the side aisles also display a variety of perforated geometric patterns.

Within the side aisles are a number of pointed-arch, stained-glass windows with stone keys around the windows and corbelled drip lintels. These stained-glass windows depict tales from the life of Jesus Christ. While all of the windows in the church have been rededicated by the Catholic congregation, eight of the windows along the aisles that depict the life of Christ were brought to the Beloved Disciple by the Dutch Reform congregation that moved into the building in 1929. They came from the Dutch Reform church's previous location at Lenox Avenue and West 123rd Street. Additionally, in 1929, the Dutch Reform congregation had the original floor replaced with the Dutch tiles that remains today. The paired hanging lanterns that light the nave are early twentieth-century additions, and the pews that remain today also date from this time period.

The two largest stained-glass windows, the northern altar window and southern window over the entry, feature a triptych arrangement of pointed arches with religious figures and angels, topped with highly geometric tracery and glass work within the curve of the pointed arch. In the northern altar window, these geometric designs consist of a triangles and round trefoils topped with an eight-sided rosette with eight additional triangles depicting angels arranged around it. In the southern window this consists of circular and triangular elements around a six-sided rosette within a double delta (or Star of

David). This rosette contains a white dove and is one of the stained-glass elements that is known to date from the church's first congregation; many of the other geometric patterns in the upper sections of tracery are also believed to date from the first congregation.

A number of alterations and additions of smaller interior elements have been added since 1950 when the structure was consecrated as the Roman Catholic Church of St. Thomas More. Due to the different requirements of the Catholic faith, a sacristy was constructed in the 1950s that connects the right side aisle of the church to the parish house. Additionally, shrines to Mary and St. Joseph were added to either side of the chancel, a modest wooden reredos was placed behind the altar, and the Stations of the Cross have been placed along the side aisles.

THE CHAPEL

The chapel was an 1879 addition designed by J.W. Pirsson that was made to blend with the façade of the church in both material and design. Alterations to the left side aisle of the church sometime after the chapel's construction have led to the loss of some decorative elements to the connection between church and chapel, however, the main façade of the chapel has remained unaltered.

The one-story chapel with one attic window takes the form of a large canted bay across the front façade that rises from the ground. The main entrance is set into the leftmost bay and three windows are to the right. The stone base of the structure is now hidden by a number of plantings in the small garden that fronts the structure. This base is topped with three angled courses that act as a watertable. The entrance sits at the top of a small flight of four steps and a projecting porch with a medium-pitched roof covers the paneled, wooden double doors set under a segmental arch. The porch gable consists of smooth stone, supported by corbels at either side. The three windows along the façade consist of stained glass in segmental arches. The rest of the façade is smooth stone capped with a

decorative band of stonework made to look like a series of small Tudor arches, or a blind balustrade. In the center of this is a dormer, with a pointed arch window, set under a very steeply pitched roof. The roof of the chapel rises at the same pitch to a sharp peak, behind the dormer. At the right corner of the chapel, where it meets the church, is an oversized pinnacle that rises above the height of the chapel's peaked roof and adds to the picturesque asymmetrical massing of the whole, balancing the vertical elements of the church with the low profile of the chapel. As seen in a historic photo, the chapel's roof was originally topped with a double delta, or a Star of David, that is not extant. Additionally, the window within the dormer is now louvered although it was originally filled with leaded glass.

The chapel's interior is one open space, with tripartite Gothic ribbed vaulting, organized into four sections and divided through the arrangement of four pointed arches arranged along either side of the chapel. Each pointed arch, except for the first and last on the right side, has a stained-glass window centered within it, with a stone surround and corbelled drip lintel. The two that do not have stained-glass windows, contain doors through to the left side aisle of the church. At the northern end of the chapel are two additional pointed-arch, stained-glass windows with a circular window centered in the space above. While not all of these windows are original to the chapel, new windows have been created to replicate the color and design of the older windows that remain.

THE RECTORY

The rectory was constructed in 1880, with a significant redesign to the first floor in 1929, under the direction of the Dutch Reform Church. The structure lies directly to the east of the church and is connected through a door at the front right corner of the church. The rectory is a three-and-one-half-story structure of brownstone and rough-cut rubble masonry in a Gothic Revival style that compliments the church, yet remains visually distinct through the use of contrasting textures. The building is three bays wide with the entrance set to the left and accessed by a short flight of five steps. The entrance itself consists of narrow wooden paneled double doors fitted within a pointed arch. This arch is

contained within a trio of simple slender attached columns that support a shallow gable capped with a carved foliate bouquet.

To the right of the entry – in the right two bays – is a large opening consisting of three double-hung windows, each capped with a fixed transom. The windows are double hung, with leaded sash, each divided into twenty panes, with ten additional leaded panes in the transoms. In each upper sash, is a stained-glass crest. This grouping of windows is united under one drip molding that ends in a foliate corbel at each end. Above this are two stringcourses, where the upper stringcourse acts as a sill for the second-story windows and marks the transition from smooth stone to a rough-textured stone. On the second story, the left bay recedes very slightly and creates the illusion of a balcony under one window. There is a simple drip lintel above the rectangular windows on both the second and third stories of this bay. On the second story, the right two bays consist of a pair of windows under a single drip lintel above which is a low arch in smooth stone. Keyed window surrounds and end quoins on the second and third stories are of smooth brownstone. On the third floor are two evenly spaced double-hung rectangular windows with drip lintels. All windows in the upper stories are aluminum frame replacements.

The attic story, within a forward-facing, steeply-pitched gable, is delineated by a stringcourse which supports the lintels of the two central attic windows. These double-hung sash windows are each topped with a recessed blind trefoil arch. The topmost portion of the gable is filled with a diaper pattern of stone, and the gable peak is topped with a round cross in stone.

The interior of the rectory consists of a number of small rooms on the upper floors and two larger rooms on the first floor. In the front of the building this larger space is an entry hall that has been opened through the party wall into the front room of the parish house next door. The other room on this floor is currently used as an office.

THE PARISH HOUSE

The three-story, three-bay-wide parish house, built in 1892, and designed by architect Louis A. Osborne, mimics the organization and style of the rectory with a first floor of brownstone and upper floors of beige Roman brick. The first story echoes the parish house with the entrance is to the left and has a swinging door that is not original. The upper floors of the parish house are marked by smooth stone quoins. The recessed, left bay of the façade consists of a single pointed-arch widow that retains its original diamond-paned, leaded upper sash; the lower sash has been altered. Above this, on the third floor, is a rectangular window of double hung sash; only the lower sash retains its original diamond-paned lead work. Both of these windows are capped by drip lintels resting on corbels.

The main portion of the façade focuses on a large decorative leaded-glass, pointed-arch window on the second floor. The window is filled with small panes of clear and yellow glass within three pointed arches and a trio of quatrefoils. The glass work stresses verticality and consists primarily of long thin pieces of clear glass between rows of diamond shaped yellow glass. At the top and bottom of each arched section the yellow glass fans out to fill the arch. This window is surrounded by an ornate raised hood molding lined with crockets and capped with a bouquet.

On the third floor are two small pointed-arch windows under hood moldings resting on corbels. The windows have casements and fixed, leaded-glass transoms. Between these is a raised carved cross in brownstone that is contained within a shield-like form capped by a hood molding. The façade of the parish house is crowned by a steeply-pitched gable with highly decorative foliate carving and the date "A.D. 1892."

The interior of the parish house, as mentioned above, is connected with the neighboring rectory through a front entry hall that spans both structures. Additionally, doors in the rear of the parish house also connect through to the rectory's offices. The second story of the parish house consists of one long room that has been used in the past as a gym and is used today as a space for the congregation to

gather for community events. A non-contributing addition from the 1960s connects the rear of the parish house to the right side aisle of the church and is used as a sacristy. This structure, a one room bridge, is considered a non-contributing addition for the purposes of this nomination.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Episcopal Church of the Beloved Disciple complex, now St. Thomas More Roman Catholic Church, consisting of the main church, chapel, rectory, and parish house, is eligible for the National Register under both Criteria A, for its association with events that have contributed to the broad patterns of our history, and Criteria C, for its high artistic values. Under Criteria A, the early establishment of the Church of the Beloved Disciple in the Carnegie Hill area of New York City's Upper East Side, illustrates the development of the Upper East Side, and its history of changing demographics helps to add nuance to an understanding of Manhattan's larger developmental trends. The Church of the Beloved Disciple was established in Carnegie Hill during its earliest phase of permanent development. Few structures survive in the area that date from prior to the panic of 1873 beyond seven wooden frame and brick-front residences that have been listed as contributing structures within the locally designated district, a couple of which are also listed on the National Register. At this early date, very few institutions had moved to this section of the city; thus, the Church of the Beloved Disciple is the oldest religious structure in Carnegie Hill, and the second oldest on the Upper East Side, after the Church of the Resurrection at 119 East 74th Street.[1] Additionally, under criteria C, these structures present a complex of remarkable Gothic Revival architecture in the Early English style. The work of the prominent New York architectural firm Hubert, Pirsson & Company in the design of both the church and the chapel adds further architectural value to the structure.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH OF THE BELOVED DISCIPLE:

The area known as Carnegie Hill, stretching from East 86th to East 96th Streets between Fifth and Lexington Avenues, remained largely undeveloped due to its undulating topography that was unsuited to agriculture and its distance from the river, which prevented much commercial development. Until the

[1] The Church of the Resurrection, originally the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, was built in 1868 by architect James Renwick, Jr..; "The Free Church of the Holy Sepulchre," *New York Tribune,* (November 18, 1868), 2.

development of adequate transportation between lower Manhattan and Harlem by the New York and Harlem Railroad, and the refinement of this system with its submergence underground in the 1870s, the area was too remote and underdeveloped to attract much construction and land speculation. Yet, with the improvement of the rail lines and the addition of the Third Avenue Elevated Railroad in 1878, the area began to attract residential development that catered to the working class.[2] The establishment of the Church of the Beloved Disciple and its affiliated structures took place prior to and throughout this phase of early development, taking advantage of cheaper land and available space to pursue a mission-focused goal of serving the women of Saint Luke's Home for Indigent Christian Women.

The original St. Luke's Home, opened in 1852 and located at 487 Hudson Street near St. Luke's Church in the West Village, had outgrown its space by the late 1860s and needed to relocate in order to provide for the seventy women under its care.[3] St Luke's Home was not the only institution to make this move northwards, nor was it the only religious institution to expand the activities of its mission-oriented goals. Due to increased concerns over the welfare of the working and poor classes, many religious institutions targeted specific sectors of the population for their Christian works. Trinity Church's Chapel of Chrysostum focused on the spiritual well-being of the expanding middle class, while other churches like the Chapel of the Good Shepard on Blackwell's Island specifically targeted residents of the city's almshouse.[4] The theme of philanthropy was a common one, with donations and endowments to a variety of institutions provided by the wealthy citizens of New York.

St. Luke's Home and the Church of the Beloved Disciple were built with funds generously provided by Caroline Talman, an heiress with the desire to build a church in memory of her parents,

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[2] New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. "Expanded Carnegie Hill Historic District." (NY: Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1993).

[3] St. Luke's Home, *Seventh Annual Report of St. Luke's Home for Indigent Christian Females* (New York: E.B. Clayton's Sons, Printers and Stationers, 1859), 1, 2, 22.; "Laying the Corner-stone of the Talman Memorial Church of the Beloved Disciple." *New York Times,* November 2, 1870, 3.

[4] Robert A.M. Stern. *New York 1880.* New York: 308, 311.; For the Chapel of Chysostum see 311, for the Good Shepard see 308.

John H. and Sarah Somerindyke Talman. Talman had previously approached Trinity Church with plans for a memorial church, however Trinity had already agreed to support the chapels of St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine and therefore turned down her offer.[5] Reverend Dr. Isaac Tuttle, the Rector at St Luke's, approached Talman with the need of St Luke's Home, thus inaugurating a long-term relationship of philanthropy and patronage between St. Luke's Home, the Church of the Beloved Disciple, and Caroline Talman.

Construction on St. Luke's Home and the Church of the Beloved Disciple began with the laying of the cornerstone on November 1, 1870, with the home completed in 1872 and the church completed the following year, 1873.[6] At its construction the building was named the 'Talman Memorial Church of the Beloved Disciple' and was given a memorial bell and two marble plaques engraved with dedications to Ms. Talman's parents. The plaques were relocated to the Church of the Heavenly rest in 1929 and only the bell remains at Beloved Disciple today.

Over the next twenty years, Beloved Disciple continued to grow, quickly becoming a complex of ecclesiastical structures. The chapel, between St Luke's Home and the church, was constructed in 1879 and was also designed by James W. Pirsson of Hubert, Pirsson & Company. The rectory, located to the east of the church, was next, completed in 1880 by an unknown architect, followed by the adjoining parish house, completed in 1892 and designed by Louis A. Osborne.[7]

Although the Church was intended to benefit the ladies of St Luke's Home, they were not the only congregants at the Beloved Disciple, and as the second oldest church of any denomination, as well as the second oldest Episcopal church, on the Upper East Side (after the Church of the Resurrection on

[5] John A. Dix, ed. *A History of the Parish of Trinity Church in the City of New York.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950): 88-89.
[6] "Laying the Corner-stone of the Talman Memorial Church of the Beloved Disciple." *New York Times.* November 2, 1870; 3.
[7] Louis Osborne. [Parish House Blueprints]. Church of St. Thomas More. 1892.

East 74th Street), Beloved Disciple was properly situated to take advantage of the area's rapid growth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The church was intended to support itself through the sale of pews to the new residents of Carnegie Hill and the ladies of St. Luke's Home were provided with any open seats on the left side of the church. By 1896, St. Luke's Home was once again becoming too crowded and plans were made to move the institution north into a less developed area of Manhattan; settling at the southeast corner of Broadway and West 114th Street in the Morningside Heights neighborhood. [8]

With the development of Harlem as a growing African-American neighborhood – beginning in the 1910s – and the commercialization of East Midtown, the Carnegie Hill area saw significant adjustments in its population that can be illustrated through the movement of its institutions, namely its churches. In Harlem, older affluent white populations began moving south, into the Upper East Side. Simultaneously, the growth of commerce in East Midtown also pushed residential populations north into the Upper East Side. As residential populations adjusted, churches slowly followed. In 1920, the Episcopal Diocese had Beloved Disciple absorb the congregation of St. Andrew's which moved from Fourth Avenue (now Park Avenue) and East 127th Street in Harlem. [9] Very soon after, the joining of the congregations of the Church of the Heavenly Rest (at Fifth Ave and East 45th Street) and the Church of the Beloved Disciple resulted in the plan to build a new church at Fifth Avenue and East 91st Street.[10]

The Church of the Heavenly Rest had been in direct competition with two other Episcopal churches in East Midtown as the area's declining residential population could not support three full congregations. The completion of the Mayers, Murray & Phillip designed Church of the Heavenly Rest

[8] "St. Luke's Women's Home: Forty-Fourth Anniversary Observed in St. Thomas's Church." *New York Times.* October 19, 1896: 5.
[9] "Terms of Church Merger: St Andrew's to Sell Property and Members Go to Beloved Disciple." *New York Times.* January 22, 1920; 6.
[10] "2 Churches to Unite And Build $3,000,000 Edifice in 5th Av." *New York Times.* November 3, 1924; 1.

and the Chapel of the Beloved Disciple in 1929 resulted in the relocation of the Beloved Disciple's congregation and the sale of the building. The Harlem Dutch Reform Church was looking to leave its Harlem location at West 123rd Street and Lenox Avenue, and purchased Beloved Disciple in 1926, renting it to the Episcopal congregation until Beloved Disciple's congregation moved to the newly completed Church of the Heavenly Rest.[11]

On February 10, 1929 the final Episcopal service was held at Beloved Disciple. The Dutch Reformed church undertook some small renovations, including the replacement of the floor and the installation of eight stained-glass windows brought from its previous church.[12] The Dutch Reform Church was one of the oldest religious groups in New York, but by the late 1920s it was in decline, with falling membership. The change of location, as the East 89th Street Dutch Reformed Church, did little to help the congregation, and in 1950 it sold the complex to the Roman Catholic Church which consecrated it as the Church of Saint Thomas More in 1950, after some minor interior changes such as the addition of the Stations of the Cross and the installation of a new reredos.

Since 1950 St. Thomas More has remained deeply involved with the community, providing the use of its parish house as a community meeting space. Additionally, the church has close connections to St. David's, a nearby Catholic boys school at 12 East 89th Street, and also runs its own daycare service. St. Thomas More was the church of Jaqueline Kennedy and her family while they were living in New York. Following the death of her son John F. Kennedy, Jr. in 1999, his memorial service was held at St. Thomas More. The need for security at this event resulted in the use of the bell tower for secret service snipers, and a residential cooperative across the street, the Park Regis (50 East 89th Street), volunteered their structure for the use of additional security needs. This action has been mentioned by members of Park

[11] "Harlem Church Buys Beloved Disciple Edifice." *The New York Herald.* (April 21, 1926), 40.
[12] Dr. J.C.R.L Villamaria III, "St. Thomas More: The Church for all People and For All Seasons." [Brochure]. (New York: Church of Saint Thomas More, June 2000).

Regis to illustrate the relationship between the church and the co-op at recent community hearings regarding the future of the church.

Recently, in late 2014, the Catholic Archdiocese, released a list of intended church closures and mergers. The list affects 112 parishes, among which is St. Thomas More, and constitutes the largest reorganization in the history of the catholic archdiocese.[13] Although the congregation is still large and financially self-reliant, even completing renovations to the structure in 2011, many have speculated that the high value of real estate in the Upper East Side is a strong motivator for the diocese's choices. In May of 2015 the archdiocese announced that the church would merge with Our Lady of Good Counsel (on East 90th Street), sharing staff and priests, but St. Thomas More will remain open for Mass and sacraments.[14]

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The Church of the Beloved Disciple was designed by Hubert, Pirsson & Company, a New York architectural firm formed by Philip Gengembre Hubert and James W. Pirsson in 1869.[15] Hubert was a Frenchman, and the son of an architect, while Pirsson was a native New Yorker, but had studied with an English architect named Walker.[16] The early commissions of Hubert, Pirsson & Company consisted primarily of private houses, but also included the commissions for both the Church of the Beloved Disciple and the Church of the Puritans, at 15 West 130th Street.[17] In later years, before the death of Pirsson in 1888, the firm became synonymous with co-operative residential housing, a form that Hubert

[13] Sharon Otterman. "New York Archdiocese Appears Likely to Shutter More Churches." *New York Times.* (December 14, 2014).
[14] Melanie Grayce West, "Archdiocese of New York Announces Parish Merger Decisions," *The Wall Street Journal,* (May 8, 2015).
[15] Sherill Tippins. *Inside the Dream Palace: the Life and Times of New York's Legendary Chelsea Hotel.* (NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 15-16.
[16] "James W. Pirsson Obituary," *Architecture and Building*, (NY: W.T. Comstock Co., 1888), 76.
[17] *The Church of the Puritans: Presbyterian.* (New York: The De Vinne Press, 1889), 20.

is given credit for bringing to American cities. Examples of this type include the National Register listed Hotel Chelsea at 222 West 23rd Street, New York.

According to the New York City docket books, Pirsson is listed as the designer of the Church of Beloved Disciple; additionally, credit was given to Pirsson for the design of both the Church of the Puritans and the chapel at Beloved Disciple, implying that he was largely responsible for the ecclesiastical design of the firm. In both of these churches, the English Gothic style is reflected through a variety of elements. In the church, the simple lines of the buttressing with its angled coursing recalls the Early English Gothic, while the level of tracery in the widows reflects the later Decorated Style. Additionally, the hammerbeam truss interior recalls such examples as Westminster Hall, in London or Christ Church, Oxford, although the roof of Beloved Disciple is at a steeper pitch. The simplicity of the chapel is also reminiscent of the Early English Gothic style, particularly in the use of Tudor arched windows that, while filled with stained glass, lack the decorative stone tracery seen in later iterations of English Gothic.

The massing of the church, bell tower, and chapel create a cohesive balanced unit that reflect the asymmetry of the Gothic Revival and the concurrent popularity of the picturesque. In setting back the chapel and church, while pulling the bell tower forward to the sidewalk, Hubert, Pirsson & Company planned the tower to draw the attention of passerby, drawing them from Madison and Park Avenues towards the midblock site on East 89th Street. Additionally, the unfulfilled plan to include a clock on the tower would have added to this function. Although the structures around Beloved Disciple, particularly along Madison Avenue, have increased in height dramatically since the nineteenth century, the tower is still a prominent feature of the midblock, and is accentuated by the fact that the parish house and rectory to the east of the bell tower are also set back.

Architectural historians Andrew Scott Dolkart and Robert A.M. Stern have cited Edward Buckton Lamb's St. Martin of Gospel Oak in London, completed in 1865, as likely source of inspiration for Beloved Disciple.[18] This comparison is quite apt as St. Martin is a similarly asymmetrically massed, picturesque, Gothic Revival church. While many elements are similar in the design of the two structures, including the decorative stringcourse that echoes the pitch of the gable on the front façade, and the placement of pinnacles for symmetry of massing, the relationship between the entry, nave, chapel, and tower of Beloved Disciple have been adapted in a unique way to fit the needs of the site. St. Martin's bell tower in particular must have influenced Pirsson's design, as the articulation of its corners, which change massing as the structure rises and tapers, as well as the design and placement of windows, looks to be a very close adaptation of Lamb's design. The uneven pinnacles, as seen in contemporary etchings of St. Martins and recently restored after decades of absence, are also a unique design feature that was applied to Beloved Disciple. The articulation of the large pinnacle was adapted by Pirsson to be enclosed by the balustrade along the top of the tower and was simplified in shape, in contrast to Lamb's stacked double pinnacle that rises right from the tower's rear buttressing. Another possible source of inspiration for the bell tower is the Tour Saint-Jacques in Paris, a sixteenth-century Gothic church tower that was named a Monument Historique in 1862. The Tour Sainte-Jacques was published in contemporary architectural journals and may have inspired the asymmetrical pinnacles of the Beloved Disciple and the articulation of the octagonal corners of the tower.

The subsequent additions to the church that were not designed by Hubert, Pirsson & Company were executed in a similar Gothic Revival style to complement the core of the Hubert, Pirsson & Company design. Constructing the rectory and parish house in a complimentary style but with different materials helps to maintain the cohesion of the complex, while clearly delineating the difference in uses

[18] Gray, Christopher. "St. Thomas More Roman Catholic; A Touch of the English Countryside in Manhattan." *New York Times.* April 2, 1989.

between the structures. The scale and setback of the two structures, as well as the use of brownstone on the facades and the employment of Gothic-inspired design elements would have provided cohesion among the buildings of the complex.

The only major alteration to these structures was the alteration of the first-floor façade of the parish house, while the interior floors were adjusted to align with the rectory. These alterations appear to have occurred in 1929, and were undertaken by the Dutch Reform Church upon taking over the complex.[19] Aligning the floors of the parish house and the rectory allowed for greater connection between these structures, and greater flexibility of use within the buildings. The first floor and basement of the parish house were altered to match the 1892 Louis A. Osborne design of the rectory and to illustrate the connection between these buildings, both in use and purpose. This alteration is historic and does not negatively impact the cohesion and integrity of the Beloved Disciple complex.

As a religious complex the Beloved Disciple and its chapel, parish house, and rectory are a significant remnant that speaks both to the early institutional and residential development of Carnegie Hill. As an example of the Gothic Revival in New York, Beloved Disciple represents a significant contribution by a well-known architectural firm that engages with international precedent while adapting form to site specific conditions. The four structures compose a strong unit that possesses an extremely high level of integrity and is a rare survivor in the New York landscape.

[19] Records of *St. John the Divine Ecclesiastical Archive*. "Alteration 1929, Reformed Church of Harlem." Handwritten records of the now lost NYC Department of Buildings records.

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