

SAINT BARBARA’S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, 138 Bleecker Street
(aka 122-140 Bleecker Street, 299-307 Central Avenue), Brooklyn
Built: 1907-10; architects Helmle & Huberty

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 3306, Lot 6 in part, beginning at the southwest corner of lot 6, northerly along the western property line of lot 6 to a point in said property line formed by its intersection with a line extending westerly from the northern point of the church’s apse and southern building line of the adjacent rectory, continuing easterly along said building line to the eastern property line of lot 6, southerly along said property line, and westerly along the southern property line of lot six to the point of the beginning.

On July 8, 1980, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of Saint Barbara’s Roman Catholic Church and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 28). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. One person testified in support of the proposed designation. A representative of the owner testified in opposition to the proposed designation. The Commission also received one letter in support of the proposed designation.

On October 8, 2015, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a special public hearing on Backlog Initiative items in the Borough of Brooklyn, including Saint Barbara’s Roman Catholic Church (Item II—Borough of Brooklyn Group, C). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Representatives of the New York Landmarks Conservancy, Historic Districts Council, Victorian Society, Municipal Art Society, and Guides Association of New York testified in favor of the proposed designation. A representative of the Diocese of Brooklyn testified in opposition to the proposed designation. A written submission in opposition to the proposed designation was received from City Councilmember Rafael Espinal.¹ The Commission also received three letters in support of the proposed designation.

Statements about support for St. Barbara’s Roman Catholic Church during the backlog process reflect specific testimony given or submitted during the hearing or while the record was open. In addition, the Commission received numerous more general communications about the backlog that were directed at all items on the backlog. These items were not specifically submitted while the record was open. Due to the volume and variety of these more general emails they are not tallied for individual buildings.

Summary

St. Barbara’s Roman Catholic Church, one of the most unusual and distinctive ecclesiastical buildings in New York City, was built between 1907 and 1910, and is one of the earliest churches in the northeastern United States to incorporate the Spanish Colonial Revival style of architecture, which is fairly uncommon in the region. Constructed of yellow brick and white terra-cotta, the church towers above the low-rise residences of the surrounding area, and is one of Bushwick’s most imposing buildings. St. Barbara’s parish, which was founded in 1893 by German immigrant families, has continued to serve successive waves of residents of varying ethnicities and nationalities.

The church was designed by Helmle & Huberty, a leading Brooklyn architectural firm that was responsible for many important public and institutional buildings. The firm’s buildings were designed in a wide variety of styles and include such landmarks as the Boathouse in Prospect Park and the Winthrop Park Shelter Pavilion in Monsignor McGoldrick Park, as well as many buildings located within designated historic districts. The Spanish Colonial Revival style is unusual for a



church in the northeastern United States, particularly for one built as early as 1907. The style, based in the architecture of 16th- and 17th-century Spain, often combines large unornamented wall areas with sections that are embellished with highly ornate and complex classically inspired forms. The entryways are generally given the most ornate treatment. Spanish architecture was brought to the New World by the early settlers in Mexico and the American Southwest. The design of St. Barbara's appears to have been inspired by the mission churches built in these areas.

St. Barbara's follows the basic form of Roman Catholic churches of the Renaissance. The church is cruciform in plan and a large Renaissance-inspired dome covers the church crossing. The church's Central Avenue facade has a terra-cotta frontispiece in the form of a triumphal arch that gives emphasis to the main facade. This frontispiece is enlivened by projecting Corinthian columns, squat twisted columns, sculptural panels and bands, and a projecting rounded pediment. Heavy unornamented brick pavilions with terra-cotta quoins flank the entryway, crowned by decorated terra-cotta towers. The facade of the north transept on Bleecker Street is designed as a smaller, less elaborate frontispiece.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Saint Barbara's Roman Catholic Church is a one-story building, cruciform in plan and set on a granite base, with two towers and a dome. The brick, Spanish Colonial Revival style building displays elaborate terra-cotta decoration, such as an array of pilasters, entablatures, figurative elements, niches, foliation, quoining, and brackets, among other ornamentation. The entrances have historic, carved paneled doors, enframements, and tympana. Both the bell towers and the dome are octagonal in plan and are topped by cupolas and crosses. The church is topped by red tile roofs and copper with decorative copper flashing at the ridges. There are stained-glass windows throughout and bracketed, copper cornices on the side (east- and west-facing) facades. Both the nave and transept are topped by curved gables. The site is enclosed by historic wrought-iron fences and gates.

Alterations

General: Southern part of the building, including the main facade and the towers, covered with scaffolding and netting; sidewalk bridge on all sides; protective metal grilles at all windows on all sides of the building.

Front facade (faces south): Sign boards attached to the bricks flanking the frontispiece; light fixtures above the doorways; wood transom above the center doors modified for the installation of a light fixture.

West Facade (faces Bleecker Street): Light fixtures above the transept doorway; metal gutters and drainpipes.

East Facade (faces alleyway): Metal gutters and drainpipes; fiberglass awning at entryway.

Roof: Sections of cornice facing Bleecker Street patched/replaced with a non-matching metal.

SITE HISTORY

History of Bushwick²

St. Barbara's Roman Catholic Church is located within the historic boundaries of the town of Bushwick near the present boundary line between Brooklyn and Queens. Bushwick was one of the five towns that formed Kings County. Bushwick's early character was mainly rural and agricultural in character, but this began to change in the 1850s, when large numbers of people from Prussia immigrated to the New York area following the political upheavals in central Europe in the late 1840s and settled in large numbers in the Williamsburgh/Bushwick area. Hundreds of houses were built and new businesses were established in the neighborhood. Chief among these was the beer industry, and beer became Bushwick's most celebrated product. The area boasted a number of features attractive to the brewing industry: an abundant water supply, soil suitable for the construction of underground storage chambers, and convenient water and rail transportation. Henry R. Stiles, the notable Brooklyn historian, wrote in 1870 that "That quarter of Brooklyn, the Eastern District... has been for some time the centre of the lager bier manufacturing interest in the Metropolitan District. Here are located some of the largest breweries in existence in the country."³ He also observed that the population of the area was "almost exclusively" German.

Development accelerated after the opening of the elevated railroad along Myrtle Avenue in 1888, making the area an attractive alternative to the congestion of Downtown Brooklyn and Lower Manhattan.⁴ Development, consisting primarily of three- and four-story multiple dwellings, spread eastward toward the Queens border during the following two decades. Many civic and institutional buildings were constructed in Bushwick in the late-19th and early-20th centuries to serve its increasing population. These included clubhouses, fire houses, police stations, schools, and churches, including St. Barbara's.

German immigrants and German-Americans remained the predominant ethnic group in Bushwick at the turn of the 20th century, but were joined in increasing numbers by immigrant families from southern Europe, especially Italy. People from the Caribbean, especially Puerto Rico, as well as African-Americans from the southern United States looking for opportunity and better living conditions replaced much of the neighborhood's European-American population after the Second World War, and are still the area's largest group. They were joined by Asians and additional Caribbeans in the late 20th century. More recently, the neighborhood has been attracting young artists and professionals from Manhattan and Brooklyn looking for affordable housing.

History of the Catholic and the German Catholic Church in New York⁵

Although Catholics arrived in the colonies with the earliest explorers and settlers, their early numbers were quite small and there is no documentation of formal practice of the religion. Several Jesuit missionaries worked in New York State during the 17th century but Catholicism was not really practiced in New Amsterdam until the Duke of York took charge of the colony in 1664.⁶ Thomas Dongan, the Catholic governor from 1683-88, enacted the first law in New York establishing religious liberty, however, when William of Orange ascended the English throne in 1688, intolerance and persecution of Catholicism and its followers prevailed. The anti-Catholic sentiment continued through most of the 18th century. Following the American Revolution, St. Peter's, the first Roman Catholic Church of New York City, was established on

Barclay Street in 1785.⁷ The majority of the parishioners at St. Peter's Church were of Irish descent, followed by French and Germans, and a few of Italian, Spanish or English origin.

In 1808, when the Diocese of New York was established under the Archdiocese of Baltimore, German Catholics petitioned Archbishop Carroll to send a priest "who is capable of undertaking the Spiritual Care of our souls in the German language, which is our Mother Tongue."⁸ The petition was not answered at the time, and the immigrants of different nationalities continued to practice in common churches, where mass was said in Latin, but other services such as sermons and confessions were conducted in English. Catholic immigration continued in the first half of the 19th century, largely from Ireland and Germany, and by the 1830s the Irish community was well established in New York with its own papers, fraternal societies, lawyers, priests, physicians, teachers, and political leaders, and also a controlling interest in the Catholic Church.⁹

Part of the 19th-century German immigrant experience was maintaining the language, traditions, and customs of the Fatherland. Germans immigrants settled together in certain neighborhoods, including Kleindeutschland on the Lower East Side, and the Melrose section of Westchester (later the Bronx), establishing stores with German signs, beer gardens, breweries and social clubs, creating a distinctive area of New York. Having a national parish, where services were conducted in German and their children could be educated in German was part of that experience.

For the Germans it was a question, not only of preserving their identity in an American city, but also of protecting their traditions in an Irish-dominated church. The national parish was one way in which they could achieve these goals: it strengthened their sense of ethnicity and fenced them off from the Americans and Irish around them.¹⁰

Although the Irish dominated the Catholic population, in 1833 Bishop DuBois established the first German parish in New York City. Early services were conducted on Delancey Street, east of the Bowery, where a German-speaking immigrant community had been established. The following year property was purchased for the construction of a new church on East Second Street, between First Avenue and Avenue A, and on April 20, 1835, the cornerstone of the new church, dedicated to St. Nicholas of Myra, was laid. At the time the parish was established, the German Catholic population of New York was estimated at about 3,000. Within 10 years, the same population had grown to 15,000 to 18,000, and following the Civil War, German Catholics numbered 40,000 to 50,000.¹¹

Many Catholic immigrants settled in New York City during the first half of the 19th century, creating the city's largest Christian denomination. Between 1840 and 1860, the number of Catholics reached 400,000. During the same period, the Diocese of New York was elevated to an Archdiocese (1850), and the separate dioceses of Albany and Buffalo (1847) and Brooklyn and Newark (1853) were created.¹² At the time, Brooklyn was still a separate city from New York City. The Diocese originally included all of Long Island. Nassau and Suffolk Counties were split to form the Diocese of Rockville Centre in 1957, but Queens remains a part of the Brooklyn Diocese. At the time of the establishment of the Brooklyn Diocese, the foremost German-speaking community was Williamsburg, and many of the churches in the neighborhood were established by members of the German community. By the late 19th century, however, German immigration began to slow and the descendants of older German families were assimilating in greater numbers. During this period, fewer German-speaking parishes were

founded, including St. Barbara's (1893), on the Bushwick side of the Brooklyn side of the Brooklyn/Queens border, and St. Aloysius (1892) just across the county line in Ridgewood, Queens.

The Redemptorists in New York City¹³

St. Barbara's was founded by the Redemptorist order of priests, members of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, a Roman Catholic missionary organization. The congregation was founded in Scala, Italy in 1732 by St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, who had left a promising law career to perform missionary work serving "the poor and most abandoned" in the countryside around Naples.¹⁴ By vocation, the Redemptorists are a missionary society, and by their rule they "strive to imitate the virtues of and examples of Jesus Christ, Our Redeemer, consecrating themselves to the preaching of the word of God to the poor."¹⁵ The order established several other missions in Italy and was canonically approved by Pope Benedict XIV as the "Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer" in 1749. The congregation spread north of the Alps with the help of a young Austrian named Clement Maria Hofbauer, who arrived in Rome in 1785 and shortly after ordination received permission to establish a mission in Vienna or other Austrian city.

In 1832, at the request of the bishop of Cincinnati, three fathers and three brothers were sent to America from Vienna. Since the Redemptorist priests in America came from Vienna, although non-German descendants were among them, they "all spoke German and understood the German character." Care of the German Catholics, who were undergoing the same struggles as those in New York, became the focus of the Redemptorists' work in America.¹⁶ The fathers restored peace in divided German congregations, in which unhappy parishioners had been clamoring for native-speaking priests. Their success prompted bishops to invite the Redemptorists to take charge of other German parishes.¹⁷

The first Redemptorist priest in New York was Gabriel Rumpler, who was sent in 1842 to the German congregation of St. Nicholas. Due to disagreements with the congregation and Trustees in charge of the church, Rumpler received permission to establish a new church two years later. The Church of the Most Holy Redeemer on East Third Street was founded in 1844 as a German national parish by the Redemptorists, their first church established in New York City. Three years later, the Redemptorists established another church, originally an offshoot of Most Holy Redeemer, St. Alphonsus on Thompson Street. The order continued to serve the German community, taking charge of Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Bronx in 1886, establishing Our Lady of Perpetual Help in 1887 to serve the Bohemian community in Manhattan's East 60s, and forming St. Barbara's in 1893.

Saint Barbara's Church¹⁸

Established in 1893, St. Barbara's parish was founded by residents of Bushwick who were of German extraction. Many of the church's early parishioners worked nearby in Bushwick's many breweries. Creation of the parish was approved by the Diocese of Brooklyn in order to relieve crowding at the nearby St. Leonard's Roman Catholic Church, another German-speaking congregation. St. Barbara's built its first church on Bleecker Street next to what was the Eppig & Ibert Brewery; the brewer Joseph Eppig was a founding member of the church.¹⁹ The congregation soon outgrew its original church, and began raising funds as early as 1900 to build a larger facility. The original church and rectory were demolished to make room for the present building, which required the church to acquire additional lots at the northeast corner of Bleecker

Street and Central Avenue. The lots were acquired by the Diocese in 1906 and turned over to the church the following year.

Plans for the new church were filed in August 1907 by the architects Helmle & Huberty. The architects appear to have worked closely with the church's pastor on choosing the Spanish Colonial Revival style for the new edifice. According to a newspaper account, in preparation for the planning and design of the new church, the pastor James F. Hanselmann went to Europe to study church architecture to find an appropriate aesthetic for the new edifice, although undated church literature from the mid-20th century, possibly from the parish's silver jubilee, states that it was modelled on a church in Mexico. The church, however, was not identified.

The Spanish Colonial style derives from the architecture of the Spanish Renaissance of the 16th and 17th centuries, which heavily embraced the principles and practices of the Italian Renaissance and Roman Classicism, sometimes blending it with carved Islamic elements that originated in the Middle Ages. At the end of the 17th century, Spanish architects began incorporating more a more creative and elaborate use of ornament known as Churrigueresque,²⁰ in which decoration was piled on around entryways, windows, and other major building elements between relatively unadorned wall surfaces. This architecture was brought to the New World during the Spanish Conquest, where it was often further embellished with the intricate ornamentation of the Native Americans, as in the Mission San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo (c.1768-82) in San Antonio Texas.

American architecture during the early 20th century was characterized by a diversity of styles competing for attention at the same time. There were revivals and combinations of all kinds—Classical, Gothic, Colonial, Byzantine, Baroque, and many others—as well as the emergence of new styles less obviously connected to traditional styles—Arts & Crafts, Deco, and Prairie style, for example. Spanish Colonial architecture, which remained common in the American southwest until the end of Spanish domination in the early 19th century, was revived as a revival style in California around the turn of the 20th century and used widely for all kinds of buildings, such as train stations, hotels, churches, and houses. Buildings in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, such as the Second Owls Club (1903, Henry Trost) in Tucson, Arizona, used a variety of colonial-era design elements derived from Mediterranean and Mexican traditions. The Spanish Colonial Revival style was fairly uncommon in the northeastern United States.

The design of St. Barbara's Church, featuring a yellow and white color palette, cruciform plan, highly ornate and complex classically inspired decoration, multi-stage towers, and Renaissance-inspired dome, was clearly influenced by Spanish Colonial mission and church architecture. Although church literature alludes to the design of St. Barbara's being based upon a particular church in Mexico, it seems more likely that Helmle & Huberty drew upon several prototypes in formulating an original design for the church. Cruciform plans and octagonal domes, based on il Gesu in Rome, were common in Spanish Colonial architecture and are found at St. Barbara's. Main entryways featuring highly embellished triumphal arches like the one found on St. Barbara's Central Avenue facade were fairly common for churches, missions, and monasteries found in Mexico and the southwestern United States. Two well-known examples of this are The Church of St. Augustine (c. 1560) in Acolman, Mexico, and The Alamo Mission (1744-57) in San Antonio, Texas. Multi-stage towers like St., Barbara's are another common feature, major examples of which are found at Santa Prisca y San Sebastian (1751-58) in Taxco, Mexico, and San Xavier del Bac (1784-97) in Tucson, Arizona. St. Barbara's terra-cotta ornament displays detailing of the Spanish and Italian Renaissance, such as fluted pilasters,

Corinthian capitals, quoins, and bracketed entablatures, plus some Islamic elements like the Solomonic pilasters at the center stage of the frontispiece, as well as Native American-influenced carvings at the center bands of the columns. In addition, curved elements, such as inverted brackets and semi-circular gables, hint at the Baroque. The terra cotta was fabricated by the South Amboy Terra Cotta Company, one of the many brick and terra cotta manufacturers located in central New Jersey and Staten Island, which shared the same soil characteristics that were favorable to producing building materials. The South Amboy Terra Cotta Company's products were widely used in apartment buildings in New York City in the early 20th century.

The builder of the church was the P.J. Carlin Construction Company, which was founded in New York and remains active today. The company also built the Eagle Warehouse & Storage Company in Brooklyn and the Brooklyn Museum, as well as Shea Stadium and numerous other buildings around New York City. The face brick was supplied by Carter, Black & Ayers, another New York building supply company that also provided face brick for the famed Singer Building (demolished), which was located in lower Manhattan.²¹ The church's basement was completed and being used for services at the time of the laying of the cornerstone in 1909; the completed church was dedicated and put into full use in December, 1910.

The Architects²²

The firm of Helmle & Huberty, originally called Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell, was formed in 1902 by a trio of established Brooklyn architects. Frank J. Helmle (1869-1939) was born in Ohio and educated at Cooper Union and the School of Fine Arts of the Brooklyn Museum; in 1890 he entered the office of McKim, Mead & White, but by the mid-1890s he had formed his own firm in Williamsburg with Ephraim Johnson under the name of Johnson & Helmle. Ulrich J. Huberty (1876-1910) served as the head draughtsman in architect Frank Freeman's office and began practicing on his own by 1897. William H. Hudswell, Jr. (dates not determined), opened his own architecture office in the Fort Greene area of Brooklyn in 1896; prior to that, he was listed as a draughtsman residing at the same Brooklyn address as William H. Hudswell, Sr., a manufacturer.

Among Brooklyn architects, Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell, along with its successor firms, was among the most notable proponents of the brand of Classicism espoused by the City Beautiful Movement. A significant number of the borough's most prominent bank and commercial buildings were designed by members of the group. Many of the firm's buildings are designated New York City landmarks, including the Williamsburg Trust Company (1905-06), the Greenpoint Savings Bank (1908), the Hotel Bossert (1908-13, within the Brooklyn Heights Historic District), and the Winthrop Park Shelter Pavilion in Greenpoint (1910). The firm's notable municipal commissions included the design for several structures within Prospect Park (a New York City Scenic Landmark), including the Boathouse (1904, a designated New York City Landmark). Numerous residences and ecclesiastical buildings throughout the borough were also designed by the firm, many of which are located within New York City Historic Districts.

The firm of Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell lasted only until 1906 when Hudswell left to open an independent office. Helmle & Huberty continued in partnership until the latter's death in 1910. Helmle subsequently joined with Harvey Wiley Corbett in 1912, sometime working under his own name and sometimes under the firm name Helmle & Corbett (later Helmle, Corbett & Harrison).

Later History²³

A three-story, brick Colonial Revival style rectory, designed by architect Francis J. Berlenbach, was built behind the church, facing Bleecker Street in 1926, which is not on the landmark site, except for the connector between the rectory and the church which, while on the landmark site, is not a significant feature. While the parish continued to serve successive generations of German-Americans well into the 20th century, its demographics began to change to include an increasing number of Italian-Americans and, after World War II, Latino-Americans. The population of the neighborhood and the parish's congregation shrunk significantly after a power blackout in 1977 resulted in widespread looting and fires, and in the aftermath, housing abandonment. St. Barbara's remained, for a period of time, one of the only buildings left standing in its immediate neighborhood. However, by the early 1980s with the construction of Hope Gardens, a large housing project consisting of three-story houses and multi-story residential towers spread out over thirty acres of formerly abandoned blocks, the recovery of the neighborhood had begun. The success of Hope Gardens led to additional low-rise developments in the area, as well as the revival of St. Barbara's, which saw the number of parishioners return to pre-riot levels.

The church has recently begun restoring the exterior of the building, including the repairing and/or replacing many architectural elements with either in-kind or substitute materials. Other work includes repointing and cleaning of the masonry facades, removal of coatings from the masonry, and the repair of the church's windows.

Report prepared by
Donald G. Presa
Research Department

NOTES

¹ After the record was closed, a letter in support from Councilmember Espinal was received by the Commission.

² This section is adapted from Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *Public School 116 (The Elizabeth Farrell School) Designation Report* (LP-1975), (New York: City of New York, 2002), prepared by Donald Presa, Research Department and LPC, *Engine Company 252 Designation Report* (LP-1931), New York: City of New York, 1995), prepared by Andrew S. Dolkart, and includes the following sources: Eugene L. Armbruster, *Brooklyn's Eastern District* (Brooklyn, 1942); Brooklyn Daily Eagle, *Bushwick* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Daily Eagle, c.1947); Henry Isham Hazelton, *The Boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens Counties and Suffolk Long Island, New York 1609-1924* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1925); Henry Styles, ed., *The Civil and Ecclesiastical History and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn, New York from 1683 to 1884* (New York: W.W. Munsell & Co., 1884), and the following additional sources: LPC research files; LPC, *Public School 86 (Irvington School) Designation Report* (LPC-1808), (New York: City of New York, 1991); and Elizabeth Reich Rawson, "Bushwick," *Encyclopedia of New York City*, ed. Kenneth W. Jackson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 171-172.

³ Henry R. Stiles, *History of Brooklyn*, cited in Amy P. Schlagel, "Nineteenth Century Brewery Architecture in America, With Specific Reference to Brooklyn, New York," M.S. thesis (Columbia University, 1976), 20.

⁴ Joseph Cunningham and Leonard DeHart, *A History of the New York City Subway System, Part II, Rapid Transit in Brooklyn* (New York: 1977), and 9-13.

⁵ Sources for this section include: Jay P. Dolan, *The Immigrant Church* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); Reverend J. R. Bayley, *A Brief Sketch of the Early History of the Catholic Church on the Island of New*

York (New York: The Catholic Publication Society, 1870); “Archdiocese of New York,” *Catholic Encyclopedia: New York* available on-line November 23, 2015 at: <http://www.bewadvent.org/cathen/11020a.htm>; “Catholic Church in the Thirteen Colonies,” *Wikipedia* available on-line November 24, 2015 at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church_in_the_Thirteen_Colonies; “St. Nicholas Kirche (New York City)” *Wikipedia* available on-line November 24, 2015 at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Nicholas_Kirche_\(New_York_City\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Nicholas_Kirche_(New_York_City)); John K. Sharp, *History of the Diocese of Brooklyn, 1853-1953, The Catholic Churches on Long Island*; v.2 (New York, 1954), 82-83.

- ⁶ Under Dutch rule, Willem Keift, Director of New Netherland, was said to be tolerant of other religions, however Governor Peter Stuyvesant banned the practice of any religion other than that of the Dutch Reformed Church.
- ⁷ According to the St. Peter’s Church website, New York’s position as temporary capital of the newly independent United States helped bring about the establishment of a Roman Catholic Parish. Foreign Ambassadors and businessmen, among them Catholics, and several members of Congress who were Catholic joined a small group of residents already practicing privately in the city to form a congregation and build a church. “St. Peter’s Church,” available on-line November 24, 2015 at: <http://spcolr.org/st-peters-church>.
- ⁸ Dolan, 69. The Diocese of New York as originally established included all of New York State and seven counties in northeastern New Jersey. In 1847, Dioceses of Albany and Buffalo were separated from New York. And six years later, separate dioceses were created in Brooklyn and Newark.
- ⁹ Dolan, 21.
- ¹⁰ Dolan, 71.
- ¹¹ Dolan, 70. The 1865 German Catholic population was divided into eight German parishes in New York. This area did not include the southeastern portion of the Bronx, where Immaculate Conception Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary is located, as that area was not considered part of New York County until 1874.
- ¹² This information is adapted from LPC, *Church of St. Paul the Apostle Designation Report* (LP-2260), prepared by Matthew A. Postal, (New York: City of New York, 2013). John Hughes served as coadjutor, bishop and later archbishop of New York from 1837 until his death in 1864. Among his accomplishments were protecting the church from American nativist anti-Catholic attacks of the mid-19th century, promoting the rights of Catholics in the public school system, promoting the creation of parochial schools, and the commencement of the building of St. Patrick Cathedral (a NYC Landmark), which was completed after his death. John Gilmary Shea (ed.), *The Catholic Churches of New York City* (New York: Lawrence G. Goulding & Co., 1878), 49-58.
- ¹³ This section was adapted from research prepared by Tara Harrison and includes the following sources: John V. McGuire, C.S.S.R., *The Redemptorists, A Tradition of Hope*, (Brooklyn: The Redemptorists, undated); *The Catholic Church in the United States of America, Undertaken to Celebrate the Golden Jubilee of His Holiness, Pope Pius X*, (New York: The Catholic Editing Company, 1912); George Stebbing, C.S.S.R., *The Redemptorists*, (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1924); “Redemptorists,” *Catholic Encyclopedia* available on-line December 1, 2015 at <http://www.newadvent.org/athen/12683a.html>; “Our History” and “St. Alphonsus Liguori, Our Founder,” The Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province website available on-line December 1, 2015 at: <http://www.redemptorists.net/our-history.cfm> and <http://www.redemptorists.net/our-founder.cfm>; Margaret M. McGuinness, “Church of the Most Holy Redeemer,” in Jackson, 251; Stanley Nadel, “St. Nicholas Kirche,” in Jackson, 1140.
- ¹⁴ “St. Alphonsus Liguori, Our Founder.”
- ¹⁵ “Redemptorists.”
- ¹⁶ From 1840 to 1850, the Redemptorists were called to Baltimore (1840), New York (1842), Philadelphia (1843), Buffalo (1845), Detroit and New Orleans (1847), and Cumberland, Maryland (1849), establishing many well-organized parishes that continue to operate today.
- ¹⁷ *The Catholic Church in the United States of America*, vol. 1, 357-58. The Trustee system, where lay persons were given authority over some or all of the church’s governance, was also a source of discontent within the early 19th century parishes.

-
- ¹⁸ Sources for this section include: Ancestry.com, *1900 United States Federal Census* [database on-line] (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry Operations Inc., 2004); *Architects' and Builders' Magazine* v.40 (1908), 435; *The Brickbuilder*, v. XXI, No.11 (Nov. 1912), 306; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Sept. 7, 1893, 7.36, 1893, 17; Dec. 4, 1893, 1; Nov. 25, 1900, 39; Aug. 15, 1907, 1; Mar. 19, 1909, 21; Mar. 22, 1909, 10; Nov. 28, 1910, 7; Dec. 4, 1910, 54; *Brooklyn Tablet*, Dec. 10, 1907; Mark Gelenter, *A History of American Architecture* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England,1999), 71-71, 94-95, 190-207; Cyril M. Harris, *American Architecture An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 60; *Insurance Map of the City of Brooklyn, NY* v.9, pl.255 (New York, NY Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., 1888); Kings County Office of the Register, Deeds Liber 3009, Page 80; "J.P. Carlin," *NYT*, July 8, 1948, 23; William H. Pierson, Jr., *American Buildings and Their Architects, The Colonial and Neo-Classical Styles* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books,1976), 173-201; Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koeper, *American Architecture 1607-1860* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press,, 1992), 41-52; http://skyscraper.org/EXHIBITIONS/WOOLWORTH/case2_ext.php; and www.academia.edu/.../Moving_Beyond_the_Factory_Gates_The_Industrial_Archaeology_of_New_Jerseys_Terra_Cotta_Industry
- ¹⁹ The wives of both Joseph Eppig and Leonard Eppig, both local brewers, as well as Leonard's daughter, were named Barbara, and it has been said that the church was named for either the wife or daughter of Leonard Eppig, who was mainly associated with St. Leonard's Church. However, this has not been confirmed. St. Barbara was an early Christian martyr believed to have been born in the 3rd century in what is modern-day Lebanon. Of great importance to both the Eastern Orthodox Church and to the Spanish military, she is known as the patron saint of artillerymen, military engineers, miners and others who work with explosives, possibly because her father was supposedly killed by lightning after beheading her in a church tower. St. Barbara is also venerated in Germany as one of the "Fourteen Holy Helpers," who are thought to help ward off diseases.
- ²⁰ The term was named for the Spanish architect Jose Benito Churriguera (1665-1725).
- ²¹ The interior vaulting was done by the prominent R. Guastavino Company, but the church's interior is not subject to designation. (Avery Library Archives).
- ²² This section was adapted from: LPC, "Architects' and Builders' Appendix," *Bedford Stuyvesant/Expanded Stuyvesant Heights Historic District* (LP-2496), section prepared by Marianne Percival (New York, NY: City of New York, 2013) and includes the following sources: *AIA Guide to New York City*, 4th edition, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 979-980; Brooklyn directories; Francis, 32, 91; *Guide to New York City Landmarks*, 124, 178, 211; "F. J. Helmle Dead; Retired Architect," *NYT*, July 16, 1939, 16; "Obituary Notes [Ulrich J. Huberty]," *NYT*, February 13, 1910, 11; LPC, *Crown Heights North Historic District Designation Report*; New York City directories; Withey, 277.
- ²³ Sources for this section include: *Brooklyn Eagle*, Aug. 8, 1926, 3; Martin Gottlieb, "Bushwick, a Shambles in '77, Showing Signs of Recovery," *NYT*, July 17, 1984, B1; and "Bushwick's Hope Is a Public Project," *NYT*, Aug. 15, 1993, 35.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of the building and site, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that Saint Barbara's Roman Catholic Church has a special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, Saint Barbara's Roman Catholic Church is one of the most unusual and distinctive ecclesiastical buildings in New York City; that it is one of the earliest churches in the northeastern United States to incorporate the Spanish Colonial Revival style of architecture, which is fairly uncommon in the region; that it was designed by Helmle & Huberty, a leading Brooklyn architectural firm that was responsible for many important public and institutional buildings; that the design of the church combines large unornamented wall areas with sections that are embellished with highly ornate and complex classically-inspired forms; that the design of St. Barbara's appears to have been inspired by Spanish architecture brought to the New World by the early settlers in Mexico and the American Southwest and the mission churches built in these areas; that St. Barbara's is an important presence in the Bushwick both in terms of its architecture and its contribution to the social fabric of its neighborhood; and that the church's appearance remains remarkably intact.

Accordingly, pursuant to provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark Saint Barbara's Roman Catholic Church, 138 Bleecker Street (aka 122-140 Bleecker Street and 299-307 Central Avenue) and designates Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 3306, Lot 6 in part, beginning at the southwest corner of lot 6, northerly along the western property line of lot 6 to a point in said property line formed by its intersection with a line extending westerly from the northern point of the church's apse and southern building line of the adjacent rectory, continuing easterly along said building line to the eastern property line of lot 6, southerly along said property line, and westerly along the southern property line of lot six to the point of the beginning as its Landmark Site.

Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair

Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin, Wellington Chen, Michael Devonshire, Michael Goldblum,
John Gustafsson, Jeanne Lutfy, Adi Shamir-Baron, Kim Vauss, Commissioners



Saint Barbara's Roman Catholic Church
138 Bleecker Street
Brooklyn Block 3306, Lot 6 (in part)
(Photo: Christopher D. Brazee 2007)



Saint Barbara's Roman Catholic Church
Main facade
(Photo: Christopher D. Brazee 2007)



Saint Barbara's Roman Catholic Church
Main facade details
(Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2007)



Saint Barbara's Roman Catholic Church
Main facade
(Photo: Christopher D. Brazee 2007)



Saint Barbara's Roman Catholic Church
Dome detail
(Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2007)



Saint Barbara's Roman Catholic Church
Tower detail
(Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2007)



Saint Barbara's Roman Catholic Church
Main facade details
(Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2007)



Saint Barbara's Roman Catholic Church, circa 1960
(LPC files)



Legend

- Landmark Site
- Block 3306, Lot 6
- Building Footprints
- New York City Tax Map Lots

Address: 183 Bleecker Street (aka 122-140 Bleecker Street and 299-307 Central Avenue)
Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn, Tax Map Block 3306, Lot 6 in part (excluding the rectory at the rear of lot, facing Bleecker Street)
Public Hearings: July 8, 1980
Designated: December 13, 2016

