

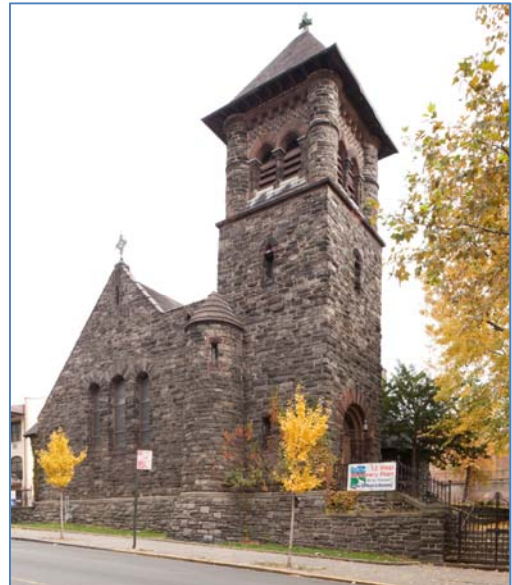
**UNION REFORMED CHURCH OF HIGHBRIDGE** (now Highbridge Community Church), 1272 Ogden Avenue, the Bronx. Built 1887-88; Alfred E. Barlow, architect; D.C. Weeks & Son, builder.

Landmark Site: Borough of the Bronx Tax Map Block 2518, Lot 14 in part, excluding the easternmost 50 feet of the lot.

On December 15, 2009, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Union Reformed Church of Highbridge and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 6). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Three people spoke in favor of designation: representatives of Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr., the Historic Districts Council, and New York Landmarks Conservancy.<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

The Union Reformed Church of Highbridge in the South Bronx was constructed in 1887-88 to the design of Alfred E. Barlow, a little-known architect who began his career in suburban residences. Highbridgeville (later known as Highbridge) developed along the high ridge of land along the Harlem River located to the south and east of High Bridge (1838-48, John B. Jarvis, engineer), part of the Croton Aqueduct system that brought New York City its first adequate water supply. The village was initially populated with the workers (mostly Irish) who built the aqueduct, bridge, and also the railroad along the river. A Protestant “Union Sunday-School of Highbridgeville” was established in 1860, and a chapel was built in 1866 on Highbridge (later Ogden) Avenue. After 1874, the church became affiliated with the Reformed Church of America, and became known as the Union Reformed Church of Highbridge. As the congregation grew, a larger building was needed. The significant firm of D.C. Weeks & Son was the builder. Built of random-coursed, rockfaced gneiss ashlar with red sandstone trim, the church is one story with a taller square bell tower at the southwest corner. The Ogden Avenue facade has a steeply-pitched gable and three round-arched windows with voussoirs, connected to the tower by a tourelle, and both side elevations have buttresses and round-arched windows with leaded stained glass. The eastern (altar) end contains a leaded stained-glass rose window (1889) manufactured by the Tiffany Glass Co., with a geometric design composed of seven circular motifs. The Union Reformed Church of Highbridge (now Highbridge Community Church), one of the Bronx’s significant 19<sup>th</sup>-century religious structures, is also one of the finest surviving churches in New York City in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, named after one of the greatest American architects, Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886). It is particularly unusual within New York as a more informal, suburban example of the style.



## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### Union Reformed Church of Highbridge<sup>2</sup>

Highbridgeville (later known as Highbridge) in the South Bronx developed on the high ridge of land along the Harlem River located to the east of High Bridge (1838-48, John B. Jervis, engineer), which was constructed as part of the Croton Aqueduct system that brought New York City its first adequate fresh water supply. The village was initially settled by the workers who built the Croton Aqueduct and High Bridge, as well as the railroad along the river. Almost entirely Irish originally, these workers were followed later by other European and Jewish immigrants. The Bronx shore of the Harlem River began to be subdivided in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century for building lots along the main thoroughfare, Highbridge Avenue. It was re-named Ogden Avenue in 1876, in honor of William B. Ogden (1805-1877), the first mayor of Chicago and first president of the Union Pacific Railroad, who after his retirement owned a Highbridge estate called “Villa Boscobel.” Initially, there were few neighborhood amenities and but one small district school; this was replaced by Public School 91 (1889, George W. Debevoise), 1257 Ogden Avenue.<sup>3</sup>

As no church was located within several miles of Highbridgeville, the area’s Protestants organized a religious congregation in October 1860, which was led by William Newton Clark and incorporated in 1864. The “Union Sunday-School of Highbridgeville” held classes in various neighborhood buildings until funds were donated to purchase property and to construct a chapel on Highbridge Avenue. After its completion in 1866, it became the religious center of the community with regular Sunday School meetings. In order to establish a formal church, the congregation called a meeting in June 1874 to vote on a specific Protestant denomination. The Reformed Church of America was chosen and, after official recognition, the church became known as the Union Reformed Church of Highbridge. From 1870 to 1884, the church was served by the pastor of the Mott Haven Reformed Church, Rev. Hasbroek DuBois. After 1884, with the installation of its own minister, Daniel Hoffman Martin, the membership of the church grew rapidly and a larger building was needed. Additional property was purchased, the old chapel was moved to the east, and a new church edifice constructed between December 1887 and its dedication in December 1888,<sup>4</sup> at a contracted cost of \$18,000. The rockfaced gneiss church, measuring 43 by 70 feet, was designed by Alfred E. Barlow in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, then at the height of its popularity. The *New York Times* called it a “new and picturesque home.”<sup>5</sup> D.C. Weeks & Son was the builder. This significant firm, established in 1840 by DeWitt Clinton Weeks and including his son, Francis M. Weeks, as a partner in the 1860s, was responsible for the construction of numerous mansions, churches, institutions, and office buildings in New York and elsewhere, including St. Thomas Church (1865, Richard M. Upjohn; demolished), Fifth Avenue and West 53<sup>rd</sup> Street; the first American Museum of Natural History (1874-77, Calvert Vaux and Jacob Wrey Mould; demolished); World (Pulitzer) Building (1888-90, George B. Post; demolished), Park Row and Frankfort Street; Biltmore, the George W. Vanderbilt Estate (1888-95, Richard Morris Hunt), Asheville, North Carolina; and Morton F. Plant Residence (1903-05, Robert W. Gibson), 651 Fifth Avenue.<sup>6</sup>

The Richardsonian Romanesque style was named after one of America’s greatest architects, Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886), who created an American interpretation of the Romanesque based on French and Italian prototypes. His Trinity Church (1873-77), Boston, as well as his many libraries and other buildings, firmly established Richardson’s professional reputation and launched the popularity and influence of the style. Following Richardson’s

precedent, many architects employed it in the 1880s and 90s for a wide variety of building types, ranging from mansions to courthouses, university structures, and railroad stations, and including many notable churches. The style was characterized by its appearance of massiveness and such features as rockfaced masonry, round-arched fenestration, and steeply pitched roofs with towers and dormers. The noted architectural critic Montgomery Schuyler expressed the opinion in 1903 that “the Romanesque, in the Richardsonian version of it, gave a more rational promise in church building than in almost any other of the phases... there is very much to be said in favor of Romanesque as the most suitable style for church architecture.”<sup>7</sup>

The Union Reformed Church of Highbridge is one of the finest remaining examples of the style in New York City. The major features of the church, including the asymmetrical massing of the forms, the bell tower, the arched openings, and the rockfaced gneiss stonework accented by red sandstone, combine to create a masterful, skillfully articulated, and characteristic example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. It is particularly unusual within New York City as a more informal, suburban example of the style. A contemporary example outside of New York is St. Mary’s-in-Tuxedo (1887-88, William A. Potter), Tuxedo Park. Only a few major, fully-urban examples of the style survive in Manhattan, including Holy Trinity (later St. Martin’s) Episcopal Church, Rectory, and Parish House (1887-89, Potter), 230 Lenox Avenue in Harlem; and St. Agnes Parish House (now part of Trinity School)(c. 1890-92, Potter), 121 West 71<sup>st</sup> Street.<sup>8</sup>

In 1889, a leaded stained-glass rose window manufactured by the Tiffany Glass Co., with a geometric design composed of seven circular motifs, was installed in the rear (altar end) of the Union Reformed Church of Highbridge.<sup>9</sup> Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933), originally a painter and later a decorator, started working in stained-glass windows in the mid-1870s and established the Tiffany Glass Co. in 1885. The firm’s early work was largely in the development of ornamental stained glass for windows, which were notable for their brilliant colors and the varied textures within the glass. Robert Koch, in his study *Louis C. Tiffany, Rebel in Glass* (1982), noted that “the best Tiffany windows made prior to 1890 are generally those of purely decorative and geometric design. Examples of such ornamental use of glass may be seen in... the windows of the Union Reformed Church of Highbridge.”<sup>10</sup> Koch further noted the increasing rarity of *in situ* Tiffany windows in New York, based on an 1893 listing of churches and public buildings in the U.S. containing Tiffany work – “since that time more than half of the churches in New York in which Tiffany had a hand in the decoration have been demolished.”<sup>11</sup>

### Alfred E. Barlow, Architect<sup>12</sup>

Little is known of the background of architect Alfred E. Barlow (1855-1926), who was apparently born in Brooklyn, the son of English-born machinist John Barlow. His career, however, strongly parallels that of fellow architect William Augustus Bates. Barlow was first listed in New York and Brooklyn directories as an architect in 1877, thereafter with an office in Manhattan and residence in Brooklyn. Bates and Barlow were two of the founders (along with Thomas Hastings and Cass Gilbert, etc.) in 1879 of the Architectural Sketch Club, which became the Architectural League of New York the following year. A League publication in 1906 stated that “most of [the founders] were at that time in the employ of Herter Brothers,”<sup>13</sup> one of the nation’s leading interior decoration firms. Bates (1853-1922), the son of a New Jersey lumber merchant, was born in Michigan, educated in Cleveland, and entered Herter Brothers as a draftsman in 1872, where he remained until around 1881, working on one of the most noteworthy commissions of the day -- the decoration of William H. Vanderbilt’s twin mansions (1879-82, Trench & Snook; demolished),

Fifth Avenue and West 51<sup>st</sup> Street. Bates established his own architectural practice in 1882, which specialized in country estates, resort buildings, and suburban houses. He was one of the leading (if lesser known) East Coast proponents of the Queen Anne style (closely influenced by English architect Richard Norman Shaw), as well as the Shingle style. Both Bates and Barlow contributed designs to William T. Comstock's publication *American Cottages* (1883), and numerous of Bates's designs around the country were published in contemporary architectural periodicals, as were some of Barlow's, including "Astonfield" (1882), a Queen Anne style country estate for Samuel Rhodes. Bates designed Wentworth Hall and Cottages (1881-89), a large resort complex in the White Mountains at Jackson, New Hampshire, as well as the Wentworth residence (1891-92); and at least five houses (1888-99) in the exclusive enclave of Tuxedo Park, New York.<sup>14</sup> The wealthy pharmaceutical businessman and real estate developer William Van Duzer Lawrence (who founded Sarah Lawrence College in 1926), a friend of Bates from Michigan, hired him in 1890 as lead architect for the planned suburban community of Lawrence Park in Bronxville, New York. Bates moved here by 1893, and worked in the community until his death in 1922, including as a partner in the firm of Bates & [Kenneth G.] How after 1910. Bates's houses (at least 35 of which are extant) were mostly in variants of the Shingle style.

The exact nature of the collaboration between Barlow and Bates is unknown, although they shared the same office address from 1885 until 1910, and an architectural directory listed them as "Barlow & Bates" in 1892. It is probable that Barlow performed work for Bates. They were also associated architects for the Mission Revival style Hotel Gramatan (1905; demolished) in Lawrence Park (which became Bates's residence). *New York's Great Industries* in 1884 had described Barlow as a partner in the firm of Charles W. Romeyn & Co., along with Arthur Jay Stever, working on projects such as Alfred Corning Clark's enormous Dakota Stables building (1883; demolished) at Broadway and West 75<sup>th</sup> Street. There are not many known independent commissions of Alfred E. Barlow, though a few of them were prominent. He designed five rowhouses (1887) at 15-23 West 120<sup>th</sup> Street;<sup>15</sup> the Ivy Club remodeling (1887; demolished), Princeton University; the Berkeley Lyceum (1887-88; demolished), 21 West 44<sup>th</sup> Street, a theater for amateur players; the Union Reformed Church of Highbridge (1887-88); the medieval chateau-inspired Samuel R. Smith Infirmary (1888-90), 101 Stanley Avenue, Staten Island; a stable/loft building (1891) at 19 Vestry Street;<sup>16</sup> a neo-Federal style town house (1904) at 868 Lexington Avenue;<sup>17</sup> and a store-and-loft building (1907) at 49 West 45<sup>th</sup> Street. In 1910, Barlow was living in Red Bank, New Jersey, he declared bankruptcy in 1916, he had moved by 1920 to Long Island City, and died in St. Petersburg, Florida.

### Later History of the Church<sup>18</sup>

A large stone parsonage was constructed nearby in 1890, which remained in use until 1925 – it was sold and moved down the block, extant today at No. 49 West 167<sup>th</sup> Street. Due to the growth of the congregation, utilitarian additions were made to the rear of the church (apparently in 1901 and 1913). Rev. Daniel G. Verway served as the pastor for thirty years, until 1946. The old chapel building was demolished for an ambitious educational building (Walter J. Campbell, architect) planned with quarters for the pastor and sexton and administrative offices – it was never completed and only a utilitarian two-story, brick-clad Sunday School building was constructed in 1924 at the eastern end of the church property (this structure and the easternmost 50 feet of the lot are excluded from this designation).

The 19<sup>th</sup>-century character of Highbridge, composed mostly of small homes, changed

greatly with the construction of large apartment buildings in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, spurred in part by the Jerome Avenue elevated railroad in 1918 and the subway (with a stop at the Grand Concourse and 161<sup>st</sup> Street) in 1933. The Art Deco style Noonan Plaza Apartments (1931, Horace Ginsberg and Marvin Fine), bordering the church's property to the south, is one of the premiere complexes in the neighborhood.<sup>19</sup> After World War II, the southwest Bronx, including Highbridge and the area of the Grand Concourse, began to suffer a severe decline. The rapid de-industrialization of the city, increasing suburbanization, heavy-handed urban renewal policies, disinvestment by area landlords, and the redlining of much of the Bronx by local banks all contributed to the economic downturn of the area. The owners of Noonan Plaza defaulted in 1976, and during the 1970s, many apartment buildings were abandoned by their owners and were set on fire, and the neighborhood suffered a catalogue of ills until it began to stabilize in the 1980s. The demographic composition of the Highbridge neighborhood also underwent substantial changes. The area's residents, largely of European Jewish extraction, began to move to suburban areas, and the west Bronx became a diverse urban community as African-Americans and Latin Americans settled here. By the 1980s, the neighborhood began to experience renewal, as seen by the rehabilitation of Noonan Plaza in 1980-82 for federally subsidized apartments. The former Union Reformed Church of Highbridge, now Highbridge Community Church (sharing its building with Emmanuel Presbyterian Church) stands as a poignant reminder of the earlier history of the Highbridge neighborhood, and is one of the most distinctive churches in the Bronx and New York City.

### Description

Built of random-coursed, rockfaced gneiss ashlar with red sandstone trim, the Union Reformed Church of Highbridge is a one-story structure with a taller square bell tower at the southwest corner. The wide, steeply-pitched roof (originally covered by slate shingles, now asphalt shingles) terminates at the eastern end in a polygonal louvered cupola with a tall conical roof.

*West (Ogden Avenue) Facade:* The west facade, rising from a stone foundation/retaining wall with a stone watertable, consists of the main body of the church with a steeply-pitched gable and three round-arched windows with voussoirs, connected to the bell tower by a tourelle with a conical roof (capped by roofing tiles) and a pierced parapet wall. The base of the tourelle was originally columnar, but was re-built battered. The three windows have geometric-patterned leaded stained glass (covered by plexiglass panels). The gable, tourelle, and tower are pierced by slit windows. A utility meter is attached to the base of the church. The peak of the gable bears an historic ornamental wrought-iron cross. *Tower:* A cornerstone at the base of the tower bears the date "1888." Each face of the top section of the tower (which contains an 1866 bell, from the earlier chapel) has large corner columns above a stone molding, two round sandstone arches (originally with louvers, many of which survive) supported by sandstone colonnettes, surmounted by a checkerboard-patterned spandrel and a corbelled stone cornice. The eaves are bracketed. The pyramidal roof of the tower was originally covered with slate shingles (now asphalt shingles); the base of the original ornamental weathervane is extant.

*South Facade:* The main entrance is in the base of the tower, approached by three bluestone steps. The round-arched surround consists of a compound-molded sandstone arch, surmounted by rockfaced sandstone voussoirs, and supported by triple rockfaced sandstone columns with molded capitals, edged by quoins. There are non-historic wooden double doors. The wooden tympanum is ornamented by carved foliation surrounding a circle. A small Gothic lantern hangs above the entrance. The main body of the church has stone buttresses alternating with round-arched windows

with leaded stained glass (covered by metal-mesh grilles) and voussoirs. The east end flares out into a polygonal wing capped by a peaked polygonal roof that joins the main gable roof; a stone chimney rises from the juncture with this wing. There is a non-historic metal door in the basement at this end.

*North Facade:* The north entrance, at the western end, is located in a pedimented portico, supported by bracketed stone piers, with grey slate shingle facing and a peaked roof. The round-arched entrance surround consists of a sandstone tympanum surmounted by double rows of rockfaced sandstone voussoirs, supported by triple rockfaced sandstone columns with molded capitals. The spandrel has stone corbels supporting a molded cornice. There are three bluestone steps and non-historic wooden double doors. The main body of the church has stone buttresses alternating with round-arched windows with leaded stained glass (covered by metal-mesh grilles) and voussoirs. Two non-historic lanterns are placed next to the buttresses. The east end flares out into a polygonal wing capped by a peaked polygonal roof that joins the main gable roof.

*East Facade:* The original east facade, clad in red brick, consists of the main central body of the church (now partly obscured) having a taller central pavilion with a hipped roof that rises to the polygonal louvered cupola, flanked by the polygonal wings. The central pavilion contains a Tiffany Glass Co. leaded stained-glass rose window (1889), composed of a geometric design with seven circular motifs (covered by a square metal-mesh grille). The southern polygonal wing has a paneled wooden door and a window (both covered with metal-mesh grilles). There are two utilitarian one-story additions (apparently 1901 and 1913), clad in brick (the northernmost is parged with concrete) and pierced by windows and a door.

*Property Features:* Along Ogden Avenue there is a stone post with non-historic wrought-iron gates, and an historic wrought-iron fence (with signage) atop the stone retaining wall to the north of church; and bluestone steps, stone posts, historic wrought-iron gates, and an historic wrought-iron fence atop the stone retaining wall to the south. On the south side are bluestone stairs (with iron railings) leading to the basement at the east end; bluestone stairs with cheek walls and wrought-iron railings leading to the entrance; a low rubble stone retaining wall bordering the lawn; and a flagstone and concrete walkway. On the north side are an asphalt driveway; a flagstone walkway by the church; and a yard. On the east side are an asphalt parking lot, yard, and a walkway.

Report researched and written by  
**JAY SHOCKLEY**  
Research Department

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> The church was previously heard at public hearing on July 8, 1980 (LP-1193).

<sup>2</sup> Bronx County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances; New York City, Dept. of Buildings (NB 1979-1887); Charles A. Chrastil, "The Union Reformed Church of Highbridge, Bronx, New York: A History 1860 – Present" (undated manuscript); "A New Church Organized," July 1874, clipping in the

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collection of the Bronx County Historical Society; “Ogden Plimpton Playground,” [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org) website; Mothers’ Association of P.S. 11, “Souvenir Book of Highbridge, New York” (1915); Donald W. Allyn, *A Short Historical Sketch of the High Bridge Neighborhood* (New York: New York Public Library, 1958); “Some of the Important and Successful Building Operations of D.C. Weeks & Son,” *The World 1908 Almanac and Encyclopedia* (New York: Press Publ. Co., 1907), 824.

3 The school is a designated New York City Landmark.

4 Dept. of Buildings records indicate an official completion date of February 1890.

5 “Church Dedication at High Bridge,” *New York Times (NYT)*, Dec. 7, 1888, 3.

6 The latter building is a designated New York City Landmark.

7 Montgomery Schuyler, *American Architecture and Other Writings* 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Pr., 1961), 226.

8 The church complex is a designated New York City Landmark and located within the Mount Morris Park Historic District, and the Trinity School complex is a designated New York City Landmark.

9 Robert Koch, *Louis C. Tiffany, Rebel in Glass* (New York: Crown Publrs., 1982), 56.

10 Ibid.

11 Koch, 57.

12 Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), architects files; *New York City Directories* (1876-96); *Lain’s Brooklyn, N.Y. Directories* (1876-86); Dennis S. Francis, *Architects in Practice, New York City 1840-1900* (N.Y.: Comm. for the Pres. of Archl. Recs., 1979), 13-14; James Ward, *Architects in Practice, New York City 1900-1940* (N.Y.: Comm. for the Pres. of Archl. Recs., 1989), 5-6; “William A. Bates,” *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* 19 (New York: James T. White & Co., 1926), 436; Loretta Hoagland, *Lawrence Park: Bronxville’s Turn-of-the-Century Art Colony* (Lawrence Park Hilltop Assn., 1992); [William A. Bates] in Vincent J. Scully, *The Shingle Style and the Stick Style* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Pr., 1979), 76-77, *In Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986), 356, 360, and Temple Buell Ctr. for the Study of American Architecture, *The Architecture of Summer: The Flowering of the Shingle Style* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989); William T. Comstock, *American Cottages* (New York: W. T. Comstock, 1883); “Thorn Mountain House, Jackson, N.H.,” *American Architect & Building News*, Dec. 12, 1885, 282; Bryant F. Tolles, *The Grand Resort Hotels of the White Mountains: A Vanishing Architectural Legacy* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1998), 84-90, and *Summer Cottages in the White Mountains: the Architecture of Leisure and Recreation, 1870 to 1930* (Hanover, N.H.: Univ. Pr. of New England, 2000), 38-43, 54-58; W.A. Bates obit. notice, *NYT*, July 29, 1922, 7; “Alfred E. Barlow,” U.S. Census (Brooklyn, 1860, 1880 and 1900; New Jersey, 1910; Queens, 1920); “Astonfield,” *American Architect & Building News*, Apr. 15, 1882; “Charles W. Romeyn & Co.,” *New York’s Great Industries* (New York: Histl. Publ. Co., 1884), 202; “Berkeley Lyceum,” Walter Geer, *Terra-Cotta in Architecture* (New York: Gazlay Bros., 1891), and Moses King, *King’s Handbook of New York* (New York: M. King, 1892), 562; “House Near Morristown, N.J.,” *American Architect & Building News*, Mar. 10, 1894; “Ivy Club,” etcweb.princeton.edu website; “Bankruptcy Notices,” *NYT*, Sept. 23, 1916, 16; Barlow obit. notice, *NYT*, Dec. 25, 1926, 13.

13 “The Development of the Architectural League,” *The Architectural League of New York: Officers, Committees, Members, Constitution and By-laws* (New York: ALNY, 1906), 3; “The Story of the Architectural League,” *The Craftsman* (Apr. 1906).

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<sup>14</sup> The clients for Bates' houses included: H. Casimir de Rham (1889), Alexander T. Van Nest (1893), Herbert C. Pell (c. 1895), Charles H. Coster (c. 1899), and William R. Garrison (1899). Christian R. Sonne and Chiu yin Hempel, eds., *Tuxedo Park: The Historic Houses* (Tuxedo Park, N.Y.: Tuxedo Park Histl. Soc., 1982), 301-302.

<sup>15</sup> These houses are located within the Mount Morris Park Historic District.

<sup>16</sup> This building is located within the Tribeca North Historic District.

<sup>17</sup> This building is located within the Upper East Side Historic District.

<sup>18</sup> NYC, Dept. of Buildings (Alts. 2020-1901 and 522-1913, NB 2850-1922); "Pastor Retires Tomorrow After 30 Years in Bronx," *NYT*, June 15, 1946, 19; LPC, *Noonan Plaza Apartments Designation Report* (LP-2400) (New York: City of New York, 2010), written and researched by Jay Shockley.

<sup>19</sup> Noonan Plaza is a designated New York City Landmark.



## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Union Reformed Church of Highbridge has a special character and a 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, the Union Reformed Church of Highbridge in the South Bronx was constructed in 1887-88 to the design of Alfred E. Barlow, a little-known architect who began his career in suburban residences; that Highbridgeville (later known as Highbridge) developed along the high ridge of land along the Harlem River located to the south and east of High Bridge (1838-48, John B. Jarvis, engineer), part of the Croton Aqueduct system that brought New York City its first adequate water supply, with the village initially populated with the workers (mostly Irish) who built the aqueduct, bridge, and also the railroad along the river; that a Protestant “Union Sunday-School of Highbridgeville” was established in 1860, built a chapel in 1866 on Highbridge (later Ogden) Avenue, after 1874 became affiliated with the Reformed Church of America and was known as the Union Reformed Church of Highbridge, and as the congregation grew, a larger building was needed, which was constructed by the significant building firm of D.C. Weeks & Son; that, built of random-coursed, rockfaced gneiss ashlar with red sandstone trim, the church is one story with a taller square bell tower at the southwest corner, the Ogden Avenue facade having a steeply-pitched gable and three round-arched windows with voussoirs, connected to the tower by a tourelle, both side elevations having buttresses and round-arched windows with leaded stained glass, and the eastern (altar) end containing a leaded stained-glass rose window (1889) manufactured by the Tiffany Glass Co., with a geometric design composed of seven circular motifs; and that the Union Reformed Church of Highbridge (now Highbridge Community Church), one of the Bronx’s significant 19<sup>th</sup>-century religious structures, is also one of the finest surviving churches in New York City in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, named after one of the greatest American architects, Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886), and is particularly unusual within New York as a more informal, suburban example of the style.

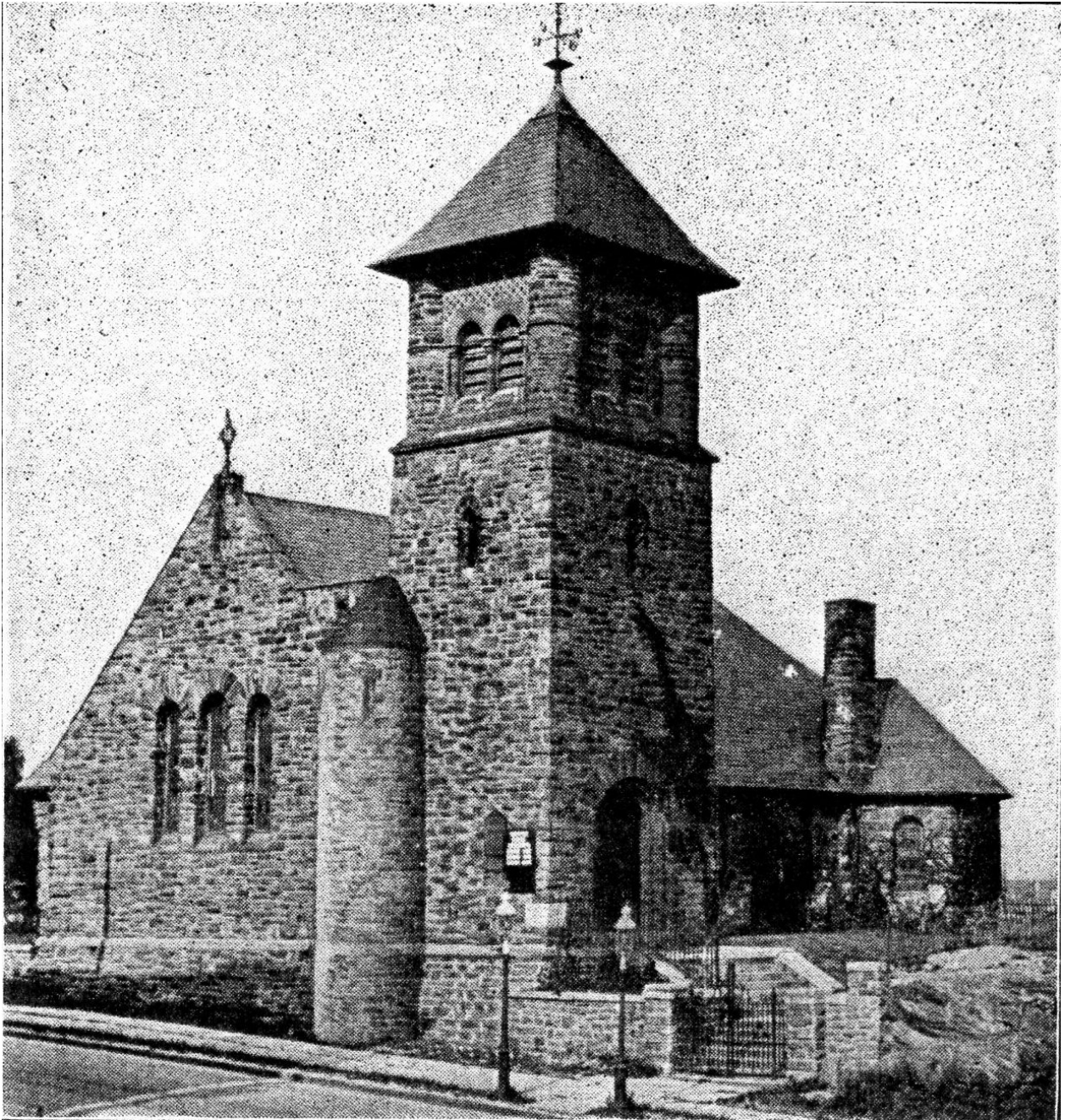
Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Union Reformed Church of Highbridge (now Highbridge Community Church), 1272 Ogden Avenue, Borough of the Bronx, and designates Bronx Tax Map Block 2518, Lot 14 in part, excluding the easternmost 50 feet of the lot, as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair; Pablo E. Vengochea, Vice Chair  
Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin, Joan Gerner, Michael Goldblum, Margery Perlmutter, Elizabeth Ryan,  
Commissioners



**Union Reformed Church of Highbridge** (now Highbridge Community Church)

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2010)



**Union Reformed Church of Highbridge** (now Highbridge Community Church)

Source: Undated church program, in the collection of the Bronx County Historical Society



**Union Reformed Church of Highbridge** (now Highbridge Community Church)

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2010)



**Union Reformed Church of Highbridge** (now Highbridge Community Church)  
North facade

Photos: Christopher D. Brazee (2010)



**Union Reformed Church of Highbridge** (now Highbridge Community Church)  
South facade

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2010)



**Union Reformed Church of Highbridge** (now Highbridge Community Church)  
Tower detail

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2010)



**Union Reformed Church of Highbridge** (now Highbridge Community Church)  
East facade

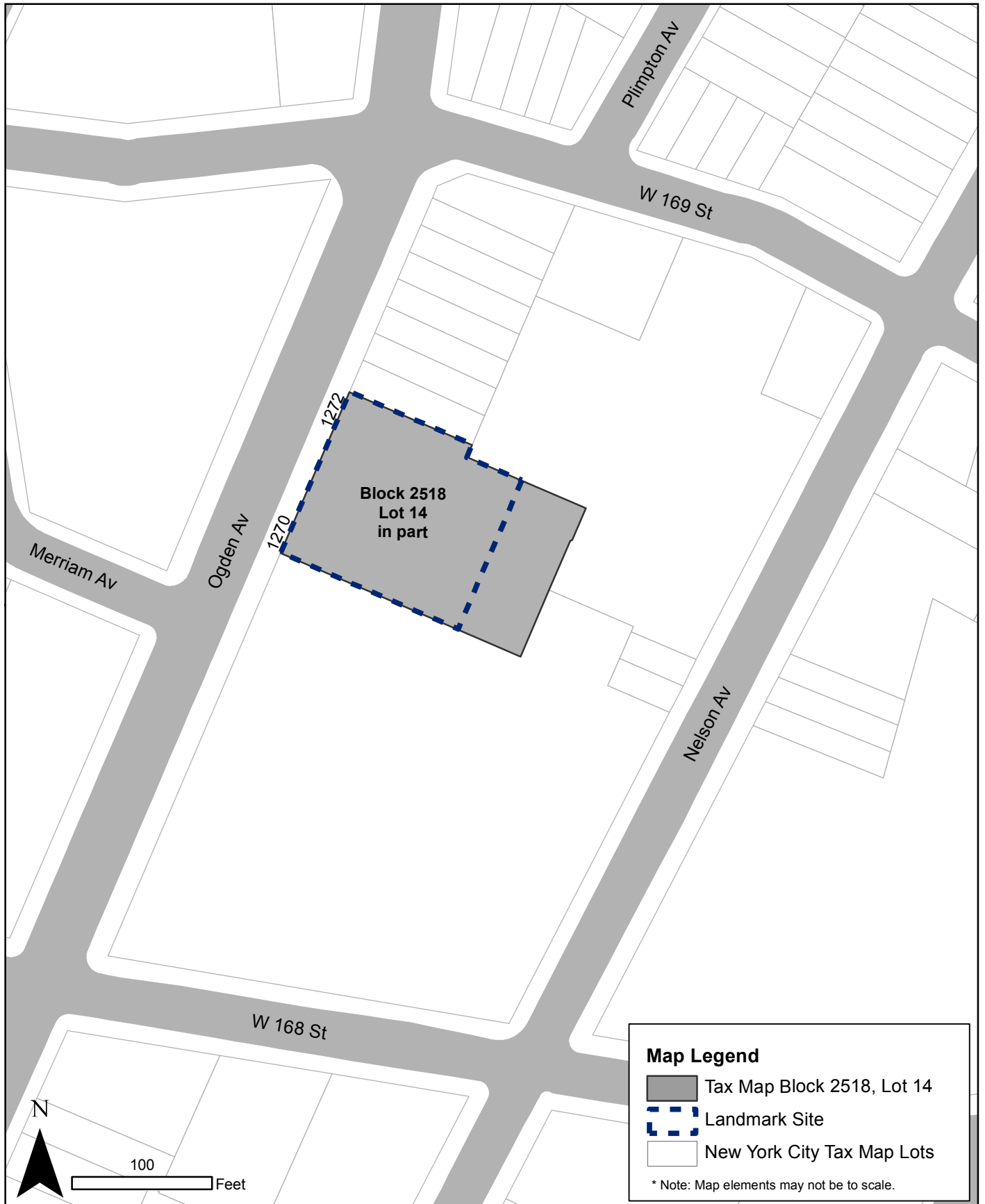
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2010)





**Union Reformed Church of Highbridge** (now Highbridge Community Church)  
Tiffany Glass Co. rose window (1889), east facade

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2010)



UNION REFORMED CHURCH OF HIGHBRIDGE (NOW HIGHBRIDGE COMMUNITY CHURCH) (LP-2401),  
 1272 Ogden Avenue (aka 1270-1272 Ogden Avenue). Landmark Site: Borough of the Bronx,  
 Tax Map Block 2518, Lot 14 in part, excluding the easternmost 50 feet of the lot.

Designated: November 16, 2010