



March 23, 2021

**STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF HOLYROOD EPISCOPAL CHURCH- IGLESIA SANTA CRUZ, 715 WEST 179TH STREET, MANHATTAN AS AN INDIVIDUAL LANDMARK**

Good morning Chair Carroll and Commissioners. I am Andrea Goldwyn, speaking for the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy has a long history with Holyrood Church – Iglesia Santa Cruz and is pleased to support this designation.

Holyrood merits designation for its architectural significance and for the role it has played in its Washington Heights community.

The building was completed in 1916 in a robust Gothic Revival style, with towering pinnacles at the front façade and numerous pointed-arch windows. The stone facade features extensive terra cotta decorative elements and handsome stained-glass windows. Overall, the building maintains its original appearance with only minor alterations, including a ramp at the entry.

The church was constructed as Washington Heights developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, following transportation improvements and population surges into this Northern Manhattan neighborhood. As demographics evolved, the church has responded, becoming a center of the Latino community. It now offers services in English, Spanish and American Sign Language.

The Conservancy has worked with Holyrood many times. We provided financing for major roof and drainage system repairs in the early 2000s. The congregation retained the architect from that project to complete façade restoration work, which received a Lucy Moses Award in 2006. Our Sacred Sites Program staff was instrumental in getting the Church listed on the State/National Register of Historic Places last year. Recently, leaks have emerged at areas of the roof not part of the early 2000s project. Sacred Sites awarded a grant for professional services to create construction documents, and we hope to continue our relationship with the congregation.

Holyrood is an architectural treasure and an anchor of this community. We thank the Commission for bringing this designation forward and urge a swift vote. Thank you for the opportunity to express the Conservancy's views.