

June 9, 2017

City of Rochester Preservation Board
Christopher Carretta, Chair
30 Church St.
City Hall - Room 125B
Rochester, NY 14614

RE: Application for Landmark Designation – Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School Campus

Dear Mr. Carretta:

I submit for consideration to the Preservation Board an application for landmark designation of the historic campus at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, 1100-1120 South Goodman Street and 117-125 Highland Parkway. Specifically, I seek designation of the exterior of the property and grounds comprising the Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School campus before its subdivision in 2014, and designation of the interior of the Colgate Memorial Chapel (one of the component buildings of the campus).

Enclosed you will find application materials documenting the history, physical appearance, and the architectural and cultural significance of the campus, which should amply justify the worthiness of the campus for designation. I understand, in reviewing applications for landmark designation, that the subject property must meet one or more of the standards outlined in Section 120-193 of the City's Zoning Code. I trust that you will find the enclosed materials more than justify the designation of Colgate Rochester campus.

To specifically address those standards:

[1] Presence of significant character or historic or aesthetic interest or value as part of the maritime, architectural, economic or social heritage of the City, county, state or nation.

The Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School is one of the most recognizable architectural sites in the City of Rochester. The campus of buildings crowns the center glacial moraine of the Pinnacle Range like a coronet. The bell tower, visible from considerable distance in all directions serves as a visual beacon to the dramatic "City on a hill" above its broad sweeping south lawn. It is considered one of the most significant designs executed by nationally renown architect, James Gamble Rogers and nationally recognized and locally based landscape architect Alling Deforest.

The campus is the culmination of the evolution of the Colgate Theological Seminary begun in 1817 in Hamilton, NY, and expanded to Rochester in 1850, with their former campus on Alexander Street. The Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School has been a center of religious and academic study, and a center for debate and support of civil rights in the region.

[2] Identification with an historic person or event.

The campus has been associated with numerous social and cultural events and people throughout its history, including Reverend Walter Rauschenbusch, a key figure in the Social Gospel movement; the establishment of the Commission on Negro and Theological Education in the early 1960s and the

Program of Black Church Studies in 1969 in response to protests from their African American seminarians who temporarily seized Strong Hall demanding reforms; and a speech by Malcolm X in 1965.

[3] Embodiment of the distinguishing characteristic of an architectural style.

and

[4] Significance as representative of the work of a master builder, designer, architect or landscape architect.

With a landscape designed by noted regional landscape architect Alling DeForest and buildings designed by James Gamble Rogers, an architect of national renown, the campus is a work of a master architect and landscape architect. Certainly, the buildings are excellent examples of the Collegiate Gothic style that was so common in educational buildings during the early 20th century.

[5] Significance as an established and familiar visual feature of the City because of a unique location or singular physical characteristic.

and

[6] Relationship to a distinctive area of the City, lakefront or riverfront.

Situated on a 23.5 acre site on the western portion of the central rise in the Pinnacle Range of hills, the campus is located in a distinctive and highly visible area of the city, along with such notable historic sites as Cobbs Hill Park, Highland Park, Pinnacle Hill, and Mt. Hope Cemetery. The sweeping lawn along Highland Parkway and at the corner of Goodman and Highland combined with the imposing architecture at the top of the hill are distinctive visual features along the Pinnacle Range.

[7] Presence or potential presence of information important to history or prehistory.

Not applicable

[8] Worthiness for inclusion or listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places.

The New York State Historic Preservation Office under the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has determined that the campus as a whole is officially eligible for listing in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Determination is attached.

The Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School Campus is unique within our greater Upstate New York region, and is one of the most important designed properties in the City Rochester. This lofty statement is corroborated not only due to its design by the nationally renown architect James Gamble Rogers, regionally significant landscape architect Alling S. DeForest, and locally esteemed architect Charles Carpenter, but also due to its cultural significance of being a center of religious and academic inquiry that educated, fostered, and/or supported many leaders in the civil rights movement including Bernice Fisher, Mordecai Wyatt Johnston, Howard Thurman, and Malcolm X.

Thank you for your consideration.