

OLD MERCHANT'S HOUSE, (Seabury Tredwell House), 29 East 4th Street, Borough of Manhattan. Begun 1831, completed 1832, architect: attributed to Minard Lafever.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 544, Lot 71.

On September 21, 1965, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Old Merchant's House as a Landmark and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Calendar No. 6). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. More than 10 witnesses spoke in favor of designation of the building including the secretary of the Historic Landmark Society, the owner of the building. The Deputy Borough President of Manhattan wrote to the Commission supporting the proposed designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Old Merchant's House is a brick town house with three stories, a basement and an attic. Completed in 1832, it was one in a row of six. Joseph Brewster built the houses and lived in number 29 until it was sold to Seabury Tredwell in 1835. His daughter, Miss Gertrude Tredwell, was born in the house in 1840 and died there in 1933. The house was then purchased and preserved intact as a museum.

The building has existed for 130 years in its original state, inside and out. The house is a unique document of its period; it shows with unrivaled authenticity how a prosperous merchant of the 1830's lived. In addition, the building is a fine example of New York architecture of the Greek Revival period. It has been given national landmark status through its designation by the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

At the public hearing, the Chairman of the Borough President's Community Planning Board No. 2 noted that the Old Merchant's House is one of the expressive buildings in its area showing the character of urban New York in the 19th century. "The neighborhood is again becoming residential, and these old buildings should stand with the new."

The curator of the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art evaluated the building as "a unique, and I stress the word unique, survival in the City of New York It remains today inside and out a perfect example of Greek Revival domestic architecture and style The preservation of the house with its contents is of the utmost importance for both historical and aesthetic reasons."

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

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 Old Merchant's House has a special character, 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 Old Merchant's House stands as one of New York City's outstanding landmarks because of its remarkable state of preservation, its excellent representation of Greek Revival architecture and its notable presentation of the life of a prosperous merchant family of the 1830's.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 8-A of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Old Merchant's House (Seabury Tredwell House), 29 East 4th Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 544, Lot 71, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.