Landmarks Preservation Commission
November 23, 1965, Calendar No. 6
LP-0036

JAMES WATSON HOUSE (a part of the Shrine of Blessed Elizabeth Seton), 7 State
Street, Borough of Manhattan. Right portion 1793, left portion 1806, architect:
attributed to John McComb, Jr.; restored in 1965, architect Shanley & Sturgis.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 9, Lot 7 in part, consisting
of the land on which the described building is situated.

On October 19, 1965, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public
hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the James Watson House and
the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Calendar No. 8). The
hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Two
witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to
designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This fine brick, Federal town house is significant as the last of the row of
elegant town houses which once lined State Street. It is three stories high with
an attic and is set on a stone basement. The unusual feature of this house is in
the portion added in 1806 where there is a great curved portico which follows the
curve of State Street. At the first floor level the portico has square wooden
columns, and the part above has circular Ionic columns, believed to have been made
from ships masts.

As restored today, on the basis of a print from Valentine's Manual of 1859,
the house has been returned to its original appearance with its fine cornice,
distinctive second floor porch windows and its attractive railing (balustrade) at
the edge of the roof. This building is notable for its remarkable oval windows
in the west wall, for its splayed window lintels and for its fine rectangular and
oval panels of stone set between the windows.

At the public hearing the architect of the 1965 restoration said, in re-
ferring to the Watson House, "While it was an important city residence when it
was built, its preservation to this day is a near miracle; and the present owner,
appreciating its architectural merit and historic importance, has spared no pains
or expense to maintain the building and restore it insofar as possible to its
original appearance."

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 James Watson House has a special character, special historical and aesthetic
interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural character-
istics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, part of the
James Watson House is one of the few fine 18th century Federal town houses re-
maining in Manhattan and that the colonnade of the 19th century portion is unique
both in its adaptation to the curve of State Street and in its monumental scale.

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 James
Watson House (a part of the Shrine of Blessed Elizabeth Seton), 7 State Street,
Borough of Manhattan and designates as its related Landmark Site that part of
Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 9, Lot 7 which contains the land on which the
described building is situated.