

Landmarks Preservation Commission
February 1, 1966, Number 3
LP-0083

NEW YORK COUNTY COURTHOUSE (New York State Supreme Court), Foley Square,
Borough of Manhattan. 1912; architect Guy Lowell.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 160, Lot 21.

On October 19, 1965, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark the New York County Courthouse and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 55). One witness spoke in favor of designation. The Commission continued the public hearing until November 17, 1965 (Item No. 5), at which time no speakers appeared to testify. Both hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. There were no speakers in opposition to designation at either meeting.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The portico on the front of this great courthouse creates an extremely imposing entrance with its monumental columns and pediment surmounted by three large, sculptured figures. The sides of the building repeat the scale of the portico with impressive pilasters set between the windows. The remarkable shape of this building is notable, and the courthouse relates well in scale with its neighbors on Foley Square. The handsome detail and use of fine materials characterize it as an outstanding example of Civic architecture. This good design resulted from a competition held by New York City.

The hexagonal plan of this building alone gives it an unusual degree of importance. In addition to this feature, its imposing proportions and rich detail make it notable. It has an overall grandeur which is in keeping with its function in housing the New York State Supreme Court Judges for New York County.

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 New York County Courthouse 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 New York County Courthouse has great distinction as an imposing Civic structure, that it has an unusual hexagonal plan, that it is constructed of the finest materials and that it has exceptionally fine classical detail and statuary.

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 New York County Courthouse, Foley Square, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 160, Lot 21, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.