

BROOKLYN INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES (BROOKLYN MUSEUM), Eastern Parkway at Washington Avenue, Borough of Brooklyn. 1894; architects McKim, Mead & White. Altered 1936.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 1183, Lot 26.

On February 8, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences (Brooklyn Museum) and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 56). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Three witnesses spoke in favor of designation including the Director of the Museum. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

With one of the great American facades in the Eclectic Roman Style, the Brooklyn Museum is an outstanding institutional building, in the best tradition of Classical architecture. Designed by McKim, Mead & White this impressive building, of monumental scale and grandeur, is ranked as one of their finest works. In plan, the building consists of a long rectangle with a square central portion topped by a circular drum with a low saucer-dome. An impressive hexastyle portico forms the central feature of the front facade while handsome projections, at east and west, signalize the terminations of the ends. The building displays much beautiful Classical detail.

Among the outstanding features of this facade are the twenty-eight heroic size sculptural figures. They stand on low pedestal blocks resting on the cornice shelf and in solemn splendor cast their shadows on the wall of the attic story and weave a silent spell of untold beauty. This building remains impressive despite the removal of its handsome entrance steps in 1936.

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 Brooklyn Museum 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 Brooklyn Museum is a fine example of Roman Eclectic architecture, that it displays excellent proportions and superb detail and statuary and that the Museum has contributed to the cultural life of Brooklyn for many years.

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 Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences (Brooklyn Museum), Eastern Parkway at Washington Avenue, Borough of Brooklyn and designates Tax Map Block 1183, Lot 26, Borough of Brooklyn, as its Landmark Site.