

THE PLAYERS, 16 Gramercy Park, Borough of Manhattan. 1845. Remodeled 1888 by architect Stanford White.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 875, Lot 69.

On March 8, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of The Players and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 46). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Four witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This building was remodeled from a Gothic Revival town house. The very distinguished front porch of the Players with its handsome iron railings and gorgeous wrought iron lamps is the work of Stanford White. Few architects today can achieve greater effects in such a small space as did White in making this relatively small alteration. Executed in the Italian Renaissance Eclectic Style, so popular after the World's Fair of 1893 in Chicago, this porch with square uprights below displays a fine series of Tuscan columns in its upper half surmounted by a handsome roof deck topped by an iron railing.

This sort of remodeling is representative of the time when architects were attempting to get rid of the exterior stoops which gave access to a raised first floor. Architects substituted the English basement type entrance at sidewalk level or slightly below when necessary. What is remarkable here is the ease and charm with which the architect made this transition and how skillfully the porch disguised the conversion. This notable entrance established a precedent which was widely followed throughout the City with varying degrees of success.

For many years this building has been the home of The Players, a leading organization of actors. Edwin Booth bought the building in 1888 with the intention of making it into a club for actors. It was altered the same year, and Booth's gift has served as a club ever since.

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 Players 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 Players, as remodeled, represents a handsome addition to our City, that its porch represents the epitome of refinement and elegance and that this handsome addition brought a new gaiety to New York City.

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 Players, 16 Gramercy Park, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 875, Lot 69, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.