

THE APTHORP APARTMENTS, 2201-19 Broadway, Borough of Manhattan. Begun 1906, completed 1908; architects Clinton & Russell.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1170, Lot 1.

On June 14, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of The Apthorp Apartments and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 20). The public hearing was continued and was finally closed on January 31, 1967 (Item No. 10). All hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Three witnesses testified in favor of designation, and the attorney for the owners also spoke. The Commission has received numerous communications in favor of designation from tenants in the Apthorp. The tenants' attorney has also submitted material to the Commission in favor of designation.

The Commission has had a number of meetings with the owners of the Apthorp and their attorney. At these meetings the provisions of the Landmarks Preservation Law have been fully reviewed, and the owners have informed the Commission that they have no objection to the proposed designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This handsome apartment house built around a large central courtyard fills a short city block between Broadway and West End Avenue. Designed in the Italian Renaissance style by Clinton & Russell for the Astor Estate, it remains today much as it was when originally built with the exception that stores have been added at street level on the Broadway side.

The most conspicuous feature of this handsome apartment house is the use of rustication as contrasted with the smooth ashlar masonry of the wall planes. Notable also is the adaptation of the Renaissance vocabulary from the scale of a single palazzo, perhaps three stories in height, to a block-long, twelve-story edifice. In order to minimize the apparent size of the apartment house, the large wall planes were divided vertically into a three-story high rusticated base, a smooth center portion and two stories at the top with pilasters and arched windows just below the handsome, boldly projected cornice. Similarly, where quoins would have appeared out of scale and far too small, each corner has been emphasized by a wide band of rustication for its entire height. Additional vertical rusticated areas signalize the center portions of these great walls.

On the Broadway side a monumental arch, flanked by paired corinthian pilasters capped by statues of distinguished quality, provide an imposing entrance to the drive-in courtyard.

This great apartment house was remodeled in the nineteen-thirties to reduce the sizes of the apartments which had set a precedent for the luxury apartment when it was built, but except for the shops, there were no exterior changes.

Important apartment houses, such as The Dakota, The Apthorp and The Belnord, which have always been well maintained, have contributed conspicuously to the quality of the West Side of Manhattan.

William Waldorf Astor named his apartment house after the very fine old Apthorp mansion which once stood at Ninety-first street. Historically, the site of the apartments was once occupied by the country house of Baron John Cornelius van den Heuvel, former governor of Demerara. This house was built in 1792 and demolished in 1905. Among the notable tenants who have lived in The Apthorp are Robert P. Doremus, one time president of the New York Stock Exchange, Robert M. Ingersoll of dollar watch fame, Ferdinand Pecora, a justice of the New York Supreme Court, Robert C. Weinberg, prominent city planner, and the choreographer George Balanchine.

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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 Apthorp Apartments 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 Apthorp Apartments, following the lead of the Dakota at Seventy-second Street, is one of the first apartments with a central drive-in courtyard, that it is an outstanding example of Italian Renaissance architecture modified to meet the needs of an early twentieth century apartment house, and that, located on its conspicuous site, it is an adornment to the City.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 63 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 Apthorp Apartments, 2201-19 Broadway, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1170, Lot 1, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.