

131-135 EAST 66TH STREET APARTMENT HOUSE, Borough of Manhattan. Begun 1905, completed 1907; architect Charles A. Platt with Simonson, Pollard & Steinam.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1401, Lot 20.

On March 3, 1970, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 131-135 East 66th Street Apartment House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 18). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. In a letter read at the hearing, Mrs. Ann R. Loeb, Chairman of Community Board #8, reported to the Commission that her board approved of the proposed designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. The president of the co-operative has indicated to the Commission that it is in favor of the proposed designation, saying that the board of directors are "deeply appreciative of this coveted honor."

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This distinguished eleven-story deluxe apartment house reflects the influence of Italian Renaissance palazzo in its two principal elevations facing the street. It is an important expression of luxury apartment house architecture of the early Twentieth Century. The design and proportions of its various architectural units are excellently related, harmoniously blended, and carefully executed in limestone, giving the building the character and quality to be found in the best townhouses of the period.

Vertically the facade is divided into four sections separated by band courses or cornices. The first division or base, three stories high, is rusticated and accented at the fourth floor by a wide band course. The second section is only one story. The third section of two stories is surmounted by a cornice at the level of the seventh floor window sills with another smaller cornice below it at the fifth floor window sill level. An added accent is achieved in these two cornices by having them projected forward above all the framed windows. On these two floors all the windows, except the end ones, are joined together by eared frames with keystones and have decorative spandrel panels between them. The next section above is four stories high and has windows set in a plain wall and is separated by a band course from the attic windows, which are set in the architrave of the entablature.

The building is crowned by a bold cornice carried on modillions with dentils below. The cornice is one of the finest in the City. The two entrances on Sixty-sixth Street are superb and command particular attention. A wide broken pediment at the top is supported by large Ionic columns backed up by offset Ionic pilasters. A large console bracket serves as a keystone. A window has been ingeniously introduced on center in the break of the pediment.

In testimony before the Commission, Henry Hope Reed, representing the Municipal Art Society, said, "The New York apartment house is one of the great products of the 'American Renaissance'. One of the finest is, of course, 131-135 East 66th Street designed by Charles A. Platt. Truly this building is one of the great ornaments of the City." In a letter to the Commission, Theodore Hood, architect, said, "131-135 East 66th Street represents unduplicatable artistic and historical value to our City."

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Commission finds that the 131-135 East 66th Street Apartment House 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 131-135 East 66th Street Apartment House is one of the most distinguished early Twentieth Century apartment houses in the City, that it reflects the best of the Italian Renaissance palazzo in its proportions, scale, details and execution, modified to express the highly individualistic style of its designer, and that it is one of the truly great deluxe apartment houses in 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 131-135 East 66th Street Apartment House, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1401, Lot 20, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.