

THE REGIS HIGH SCHOOL, 55 East 84th Street, Borough of Manhattan. Begun 1913, completed 1917; architects Maginnis & Walsh.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1496, Lot 26.

On November 10, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Regis High School and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 52). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Two witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. In a letter to the Commission, the Rev. Edward D. Horgan, S. J., Principal of the High School, expressed gratification over the proposed designation. He commented, "Needless to say, we are very pleased that your Commission thought well of our building."

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Regis High School is five stories high, built of stone, and functionally designed to meet the needs of urban education. It presents an appearance of classic monumentality because of the rows of Ionic columns that enrich its facades.

Regis occupies a site that runs through from 84th Street to 85th Street between Madison and Park Avenues. To make maximum use of the available space and to provide the quiet and seclusion that are so desirable for effective education, the architects planned their building around a central courtyard with most of the classrooms opening on it. Because the building is located at mid-block, only the two facades on the cross streets can be seen on the exterior, and it is on these that the designers demonstrated their ability to apply the classical idiom to a modern high school.

On the 84th Street side, the first story, which one enters through an imposing central door, is occupied by administrative offices. This story also serves as a base for the monumental, engaged Ionic columns that rise through four stories. The result is an appearance of great strength and serenity. But even here the architects kept in mind the fundamental purpose of the building and designed the columns with a spacing wide enough to provide the light and air needed for a library, and for the classrooms and activity rooms that are located on this side of the building. An imposing entablature carries the inscription "Deo Et Patriae Pietas Christiana Erexit". ("Christian Devotion Built This for God and Country".) An attic story surmounts the cornice.

On the 85th Street side, the architects faced the problem of designing another exterior wall in the classical manner to enclose a large auditorium on the first three stories and laboratories on the top two. They solved it by expressing two stairways in slightly projecting end bays with imposing doors at street level and with a large expanse of blank wall, broken only by a high row of small frameless windows, in front of the auditorium. This wall also provides a strong base for a handsome row of Ionic columns which screens the laboratories and classrooms on the upper two stories. The entablature carries the Jesuit motto: "Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam". ("To the Greater Glory of God".)

Regis High School is nationally known for its scholastic achievements and is the only Jesuit high school in the country which, because of its endowments, charges no tuition.

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 Regis High School 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, Regis High School demonstrates the successful adaptation of classical design to a modern building, that it expresses interior function remarkably well on the exterior and that it is one of the most dignified school buildings 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 Regis High School, 55 East 84th Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1496, Lot 26, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.