

120 EAST 80TH STREET HOUSE (formerly George Whitney House), Borough of Manhattan. Begun 1929, completed 1930; architects Cross & Cross.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1508, Lot 64.

On November 10, 1966, the Landmarks Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 120 East 80th Street House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 63). Two witnesses spoke in favor of designation, and a communication was received from the owner. The Commission continued the public hearing until December 27, 1966 (Item No. 21). At that time no speakers appeared to testify. Both hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. The owner of the building has indicated to the Commission that he does not object to the proposed designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The formal dignity of the Federal Style is evident in the character of this Twentieth Century town house. The virtues of the style are found in its excellent proportions, the refinement of its details, the quality of craftsmanship exhibited in the brickwork, laid in Flemish bond, and the quiet accents of marble trim used with discretion. All these elements are combined here to produce an outstanding architectural entity. This residence is one of a number of fine houses built during the American Renaissance of the late nineteenth-twenties in New York City, reflecting the elegance of its urban taste and the expansive quality of the era.

This facade is divided horizontally into a base of one story, the shaft, consisting of two floors placed between a string course at second floor level and a cornice at the fourth floor. The crowning feature is a mansard roof with an attic story above it. The square-headed windows are double hung and have stone keystones and splayed brick lintels. Three dormers in the slate mansard are covered with segmental arched roofs.

A particularly beautiful feature of the house is the doorway, with a semi-circular marble porch projecting in front of the facade. Two graceful fluted Doric columns support the curved entablature which joins the string course at the wall. Following the contour of the porch roof is an extremely handsome metal railing which is repeated as shallow balconies in front of the second floor windows. A round arch contains the elegantly paneled entrance door. Right and left of the porch, the narrow forecourt is enclosed by a low curb with metal railing. The central window, at the second floor above the main doorway, is a conspicuous feature. It is framed in stone with a low pediment above it.

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 120 East 80th Street 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 120 East 80th Street House is an important example of a Twentieth Century town house executed in the Federal style, that it has distinction, excellent proportions and superb details and that it lends to this street, on which it stands, both dignity and architectural character.

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 120 East 80th Street House, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1508, Lot 64, Borough of Manhattan as its Landmark Site.