

Landmarks Preservation Commission
May 25, 1967 Number 8
LP-0583

311 EAST 58TH STREET HOUSE, Borough of Manhattan. Completed 1857.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1351, Lot 5.

On December 27, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 311 East 58th Street House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 73). 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 owner approved the proposed designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This charming two-story and basement house with painted brick walls and stone trim has a clean scrubbed look that is refreshing to behold. Vernacular in style, it has a small wooden stoop, raised four steps above the sidewalk, and a sunken front yard, attractively landscaped, enclosed at the property line by a white picket fence. It has escaped the wrecking ball and is a handsome example of the many small, modest houses that once dotted the crosstown streets of New York. Historically anonymous but well maintained, it is today a reminder of the residential architecture of a bygone day.

In 1930, during the construction of a new approach to the Queensborough Bridge just fifty feet east of this house, the roadway and sidewalk in front were raised to meet the grade of the new ramp. To a pedestrian, observing the building from across the street, the house appears to be only two stories high, because the sloping sidewalk and picket fence obscure the large basement area. The changes wrought to the stoop and frontyard, due to the raising of the roadway, have actually added to the attractiveness of the house, rather than detracting from its charm.

At the basement and first floor level the house is two windows wide. Both of these floors have entrance doors, the basement door being under the stoop. The first floor double glass-panelled doors with over-door transom are modestly framed, and the doorway is topped by a handsome lintel with bold cornice of excellent proportion. All the muntined windows of the house are of the double-hung sash type with plain lintels, and the three windows of the third floor are beautified by the addition of flower boxes. Four scroll brackets support a molded cornice that crowns the building.

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 311 East 58th 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 house at 311 East 58th Street is a dignified example of vernacular architecture, that this modest two-story and basement brick dwelling has withstood the changes of the surrounding community, having been carefully preserved, and that it is a reminder of the residential architecture of a bygone day.

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 311 East 58th Street House, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1351, Lot 5, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.