

75 MURRAY STREET BUILDING, Borough of Manhattan. Built about 1865; architect unknown.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 132, Lot 6.

On December 27, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 75 Murray Street Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 91). The Commission continued the public hearing until January 31, 1967. (Item No. 37). Both hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. The owner has informed the Commission that he is in favor of the proposed designation.

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Conspicuous for its fine design and structural details, this five-story commercial building is a good example of the Italianate style of cast-iron architecture. This strikingly handsome facade, with its superimposed, attached columns at each story and semicircular windows, is strongly reminiscent of a late Fifteenth Century Venetian palace. Although more than one hundred years old, this building, recently painted, looks unusually fresh and remarkably young for a centenarian. With the exception of changes made to the facade at street level, to accommodate a storefront and an elevator door, most of the original features of the building are intact.

This five-story building is three windows wide. On each floor level, four large engaged columns, standing on paneled pedestals, support a full entablature. These entablatures also serve as band courses running across the facade at each story, and they are decorated with ornate modillions and leaf moldings. The columns are all handsomely fluted. The basic cast-iron unit, between the columns and repeated twelve times, consists of a semicircular arch supported by smaller engaged columns standing on paneled pedestals. All the windows are double hung. The windows of the two upper floors are reminiscent of the Palazzo Vendramini in Venice. They are composed of paired semicircular arches with a bull's-eye opening resting on them. Trefoil openings on either side of the bull's-eye complete the remaining space within these arches. Crowning the building is an impressive cornice supported by four large brackets. Nine intermediate brackets fill the spaces between the large ones, and they are all richly ornamented. Completing this composition, beneath the brackets, is a frieze consisting of ornately decorated panels.

This structure is important as one of New York's handsomest cast-iron buildings. The United States led in the production of the castings which made possible these pre-fabricated structures. Cast-iron buildings, such as this, exerted considerable influence on the ultimate structural development of the skyscraper.

The national secretary of the Society of Architectural Historians said, "It is not generally known to the public what a magnificent architectural heritage the commercial cast-iron palaces of downtown New York really are. This is a very specific New York thing, not equalled anywhere else, antedating the rise of the steel-frame skyscraper, a group of buildings of the greatest social, technical and aesthetic significance."

#### 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 75 Murray Street Building has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

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The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the 75 Murray Street Building is an extremely fine Italianate example of commercial cast-iron architecture of the 1860's and that it combines, with its aesthetic attributes, the distinction of being one of a group of cast-iron buildings which made this City a leader in their development.

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 75 Murray Street Building, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 132, Lot 6, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.