
CENTRAL PARK WEST - 76TH STREET
HISTORIC DISTRICT
DESIGNATION REPORT

1973

City of New York
John V. Lindsay, Mayor

Parks, Recreation and
Cultural Affairs Administration
Richard M. Clurman, Administrator

Landmarks Preservation Commission
Harmon H. Goldstone, Chairman

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The research for this report was begun late in 1970 by John Dale, a volunteer, and the first draft was prepared by John Dale and his wife, Clara, in the spring of 1971. The final text was prepared by Ann Bedell in 1973 -- incorporating additional research including information furnished by Daniel Brunetto, of the City's Urban Corps program -- under the direction of Ellen W. Kramer, Deputy Director of Research, and of Alan Burnham, Director of Research. The District was photographed in 1969 by John B. Bayley, then a staff member. The manuscript was typed by Anne Gewirtz and Mitzi Gevatoff, and was assembled under the direction of John W. Benson, all of the Commission's staff. The map was prepared by Harry Rock of the City's Urban Corps Program.

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Though many individuals have been associated with different phases of this report, final responsibility for the facts and opinions expressed rests with the Commission as a whole.

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION
April 19, 1973

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NOTE: Chairman Harmon H. Goldstone and Commissioner James J. Heslin did not participate in the consideration of this Calendar item.

CENTRAL PARK WEST - 76TH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT, Borough of Manhattan

INTRODUCTION

The Central Park West - 76th Street Historic District, a T-shaped area centered along part of one block of West 76th Street and two adjacent blocks on Central Park West, and a short portion of West 77th Street, comprises over forty-five buildings covering parts of two city blocks.

BOUNDARIES

The Central Park West - 76th Street Historic District comprises the property bounded by the southern property lines of 56 through 8 West 76th Street, part of the southern property line of the church building on Central Park West and West 76th Street, the western property line of 151 Central Park West, West 75th Street, Central Park West, West 77th Street, the western property line of 170 Central Park West, part of the northern property line of 170 Central Park West, the northern property lines of 15 through 37 West 76th Street, the eastern property line of 44-48 West 77th Street, the northern property line of 44-48 West 77th Street, the western property line of 44-48 West 77th Street, part of the northern property line of 47 West 76th Street, the northern property line of 49 West 76th Street, the northern and western property lines of 51 West 76th Street, 76th Street, the western property line of 56 West 76th Street.

TESTIMONY AT THE PUBLIC HEARINGS

On June 23, 1970 the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of this Historic District (Item No. 4). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Three persons spoke in favor of the proposed designation. The witnesses favoring designation clearly indicated that there is great support for this Historic District from the property owners and the residents of West Seventy-Sixth Street. At the public hearing The Universalist Church of New York City opposed this designation.

On December 13, 1966 (Item No. 5), the Landmarks Preservation Commission had held a public hearing on a much smaller proposed Historic District within the area covered by the current proposal. The Commission was not able to act upon all the proposed Historic Districts heard during its first series of public hearings in 1965 and 1966, and so several Historic Districts were heard in 1970, including this proposed Historic District where there continues to be great interest in preserving the fine buildings of the community.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

The history of the Central Park West - 76th Street Historic District can be traced as far back as the 1660's. At that time, Governor Nicolls, the first English governor of New York, granted a parcel of land to a group of five men including Jan Vigne, the first European boy born in New Netherland. The area included a tract of some 1300 acres bounded roughly by what are now 42nd Street, a point midway between 69th and 90th Streets, Central Park West, and the Hudson River. This land was surveyed and broken up into ten equal lots. The blocks included within the Historic District were part of lot seven which was known, after 1745, as the Teunis Somarindyck (also Somerindyke) Farm. The house of Teunis Somarindyck stood near what is now 75th Street and Broadway.

In 1800, the area west of what was to become Central Park, including part of the Bloomingdale section to the north and a section of land lying between what are now 59th and 87th Streets, was known as Harsenville. It was named for Jacob Harsen, whose farm stood between the present 70th and 71st Streets on Amsterdam Avenue.

By 1811, the area of the Historic District was a part of two farms owned by John Delaplaine and David Wagstaff. The Delaplaine farm comprised the northwest section of the Historic District. In 1834, it was divided into lots and sold. David Wagstaff, who was a successful dry goods merchant, owned a larger estate

stretching along the entire south side of the present 76th Street and extending north and then west to border the Delaplaine farm on three sides. The breaking up of the original Wagstaff farm began in 1852. Lots were parceled off along the south side of the present 76th Street, and four years later additional lots were sold on the north side of the street. However, not all of the property was sold, since some of the original land was retained by the Wagstaff family into the late 1880's.

Bloomingdale Road, whose rambling course is now roughly followed by Broadway, and Eighth Avenue, which was opened in 1816 from Greenwich Lane to the Harlem River, were the only main thoroughfares near the Historic District until 1855. In that year Ninth Avenue was opened to 125th Street. During the next decade, the following streets were legally opened from Eighth Avenue to the Hudson River: Seventy-Sixth Street on July 12, 1861, Seventy-Seventh Street on November 30, 1865, and Seventy-Fifth Street on February 9, 1869. The means of transportation to the area at that time included a stage line which followed Bloomingdale Road, and a horse-car line to 84th Street on Eighth Avenue which had started operation in 1864.

The horsecar line had been the first factor to enhance the value of land north of 59th Street. In 1867, the first legislative Act for the Improvement of the West Side was passed. The interest in the development of this area of Manhattan in the 1860's was made even more apparent with the filing of the Central Park Commissioners' maps of the lines and grades of the street system of the West Side in 1868. It was in this same year that the beginning of the West Side real estate boom occurred, with land north of 59th Street increasing 200% in value between 1868 and 1873.

The panic of 1873 severely affected this speculative movement, and the great public plans produced during the 1860's were forced to remain dormant for a number of years. The value of West Side lots decreased considerably, and there was little building activity there, although building operations continued, in part, on the East Side.

Although this period of stagnation did not end completely until 1879, a large amount of capital had already been invested in the region of the Historic District. The erection of the American Museum of Natural History between 1874 and 1877, in Manhattan Square, between 77th Street and 81st Street, indicated the emerging role of this section of the West Side as a setting for cultural activities. In this same year, 1877, Edward Clark, President of the Singer Sewing Machine Company, purchased a block of thirty lots between 72nd and 73rd Streets on Eighth Avenue. The changing character of the area was made even more evident in 1879 when the Ninth Avenue Elevated Railroad was opened from 59th to 83rd Streets, with stations at 71st and 81st Streets.

The "Great West Side Movement" is generally considered to have begun in 1879, but in 1880 the development of the West Side was still largely restricted to individual entrepreneurs. Slowly, however, in the early 1880's, speculative builders were attracted to the West Side. The demand for residential dwellings there had burgeoned as a result of the overflow from the East Side, where land values had increased spectacularly. Gradually, through this decade a community grew up on the side streets around Edward Clark's elegant apartment house, The Dakota, on Eighth Avenue between 72nd and 73rd Streets, built from 1880 to 1884. Development along Eighth Avenue, which was renamed Central Park West between 59th and 110th Streets in 1883, was delayed for several years, since it was hoped that it would become an avenue for millionaires' mansions, outclassing those on Fifth Avenue.

In 1887 construction began on the first houses, as they stand today, in the Historic District. These first houses on West 76th Street comprised two rows and were financed by Leonard Beeckman, a real estate broker. The row on the south side of the street (Nos. 40-56) was built for the contractor Bernard S. Levy, and the group of houses on the north side (Nos. 27-37) was erected for John C. Umberfield, a builder and developer of many areas of the West Side. Twenty-nine more town houses were erected on the street during the next twelve years. By 1898, the Fourth Universalist Society, now known as the Church of the Divine Paternity, had been established at the southwest corner of 76th Street and Central Park West. Among its more prominent members was Andrew Carnegie, who attended services regularly. It was flanked to the south by the Kenilworth Apartments and, a decade later, by the New York Historical Society which moved to its new quarters on the block to the north.

Approached from Central Park West, 76th Street displays an impressive entrance flanked by The New York Historical Society and the Church of the Divine Paternity with its striking corner tower. The grandeur of these large buildings is continued on a smaller scale along both sides of West 76th Street between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue. Many of the handsome town houses of the Historic District have been converted into multiple dwellings since their original erection, but the architectural character of this area has changed very little during the last sixty years.

ARCHITECTURAL INTRODUCTION

Today, this quiet, tree-lined street of four and five-story town houses retains the dignity and individuality it first displayed. The great variety of architectural styles which characterize the Historic District is representative of a particular phase of late 19th century American eclecticism. At that time, the principles of the French Ecole des Beaux-Arts were being freely interpreted by American architects who, if not actually trained in Paris, were nonetheless exposed to the work of the French school by means of the proliferation of architectural journals published from the 1880's onward. The French Beaux-Arts style, therefore, gained in authority and prestige during the latter part of the 19th century, and was treated with a special pre-eminence by the architectural leaders of the day. By the close of the century, the Beaux-Arts style in America had become a popularized architectural mode.

The town houses on West 76th Street, between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue, are indicative of this late 19th century American approach to architecture. While several of the buildings were designed by important architects of the period, many were constructed by lesser-known firms who imaginatively interpreted various historical styles. These town houses reflect combinations of neo-Italian Renaissance, the French neo-Grec, the Romanesque Revival, and the French Beaux-Arts. Their facades express affluence and prestige. The elegance of their designs, together with their handsome details, lend special interest and pleasure to this fine street.

The impact made by the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 was also influential in determining the character of the street, since the ideal of uniformity of design was one of the principal contributions of the Exposition. Americans who visited the Fair saw in its architecture and planning a realization of the beautiful European urban vistas which up to this time had been largely absent in America. Three groups of buildings on West 76th Street were constructed before the Fair, but the later facades were designed with a special awareness of the existing buildings. Even before the Fair, the owners of the land on which all of the town houses in the Historic District stand had signed an agreement in 1890 which specified the setbacks, dimensions, and general design of these buildings--a fine example of community planning and a concern for homogeneity of design. Although the town house facades vary from one house to the next, and although they were constructed over a period of more than a decade, the uniformity of cornice and building lines serves to tie the buildings together. In addition, the recurring design motifs of the facades give an overall unity to these residences. As a whole, the buildings work with one another and the street presents a rare example of successful urban aesthetics: the effect of the whole is greater than the details of its individual parts.

For the most part, the original designs of these facades have been well preserved. However, some of the original metal roof cornices have been removed, as have several of the doorways and fine wrought iron doors, and many elegant stoops have been replaced by basement entrances.

The Historic District comprises several building types: apartment houses, town houses, a museum and a church. The architecture of these buildings represents a diversity of styles adapted to many different purposes. Their facades illustrate the tendency of American architects to rely upon the traditions of the past, and to create from these traditions a new grandeur, adapted to the social and cultural needs of the period.

CENTRAL PARK WEST Between 75th & 76th Streets

No. 151. The Kenilworth is a French Beaux-Arts style apartment building erected in 1906-08 for the Lenox Realty Company. The architectural firm of Townsend, Steinle, & Haskell, well-known for its work on large apartment hotels in New York, designed this building. The first two floors are of rusticated limestone with the keystones of the first floor windows serving as brackets supporting the second story windowsills. The monumental entrance portico displays carved banded columns, inspired by late 16th century French prototypes. A "broken-arched" pediment crowns the doorway which is enframed by richly carved moldings. The upper floors have stone window frames keyed with the brickwork. The console brackets, flanking the third story windows, carry stone balustrades serving the fourth story windows. The fifth floor windows are crowned by a rich array of triangular or "broken-arched" pediments. Swags embellish the spandrel panels below these windows. The windows of the ninth floor are flanked by paired console brackets which carry a continuous cornice. Dormer windows are set in a convex, slate French Second Empire mansard roof which is crowned by elegant copper crestings. One of the notable features of this building is the contrast between its dark red brickwork and its limestone trim and base.

The Church of the Divine Paternity, at the southwest corner of Central Park West and West 76th Street, was designed in the neo-Gothic style by William A. Potter, the eminent church architect, and was erected in 1897-98. The architect drew upon late English Gothic sources for his design, as is seen in the striking stained glass window of the main facade which recalls the chancel window of the 14th century Gloucester Cathedral in England. The intricate ogival tracery of the window has the qualities of lightness and clarity characteristic of the Gothic style. An interesting detail is the incised bandcourse at the spring line of the pointed arch of the window, linking it with the corner stepped buttresses which are capped by finials. The great window is enframed by the simple stone gable of the high nave which is surmounted by a cross. The pointed-arch central doorway has a steep gable with delicate ornament and is flanked by pinnacled structures displaying three tiers of niches. This main entrance is flanked by smaller pointed-arch doorways. A projecting bandcourse extends across the facade and around the picturesque, high corner tower.

The pinnacled, four-stage tower of the church dominates the site and recalls the mid-15th century Magdalen College in Oxford, England. Each side of the tower displays pointed-arch windows, with drip moldings. The tower is crowned by four tall crocketed pinnacles; they are linked by a high openwork balustrade above a bandcourse of quatrefoils.

WEST SEVENTY-SIXTH STREET (Nos. 2-56) Betw. Central Park West & Columbus Avenue.

SOUTH SIDE

No. 2. The 76th Street side of the Church of the Divine Paternity exhibits many of the same design motifs as the main entrance facade. The large and elegant stained glass window on this side of the church is almost identical to the one on Central Park West, but here a row of ogee arches has been added beneath it. This window is also enframed by a simple stone gable surmounted by a cross. The side of the church, like the front facade, is flanked by stepped buttresses crowned with finials. Pointed arch windows with drip moldings at the first level are separated from the larger windows above by horizontal bandcourses. A cornerstone at the base of this side of the church has been incised with the dates "1838-1897", commemorating the founding of the congregation in 1838.

No. 4 (No. 6 in the City's street numbering system). The Parish House of the Church of the Divine Paternity was also designed by William A. Potter, and erected in 1897-98. The horizontal bandcourses, drip moldings, and stepped buttresses of the church have been skillfully repeated here. Its facade is also of limestone ashlar. The Parish House makes a fine transition between the large church and the residential row beyond it.

Nos. 8 and 10 are a pair of elegant five-story French Louis XIII town houses, built in 1899-1900 by a neighborhood owner-builder, Cornelius W. Luyster. They were designed by John H. Duncan, the architect who designed Grant's Tomb. Duncan

and Luyster were also responsible for six houses (Nos. 15-25) on the north side of the street. The ground floors of both houses are of rusticated limestone, while the second and third floors are of smooth ashlar in courses of alternate widths. The two buildings are literally tied together by a projecting bandcourse of bound reeds crowning their three-sided bays. Simple rectangular panels flank the fourth floor windows, above which a uniform metal cornice has brackets with gutae. The handsome original wrought iron door of No. 8 is crowned by an arched pediment enframing a cartouche. The curvilinear wrought iron railing of the stoop complements the flowing lines of the doorway. Herculean heads embellish the keystones of the parlor floor windows, and also act as brackets to support the three-sided bay above. The fine original door of No. 10 is crowned by an unusual stilted segmental arch, supported on garlanded brackets. The garland motif is combined with a bracket below the segmental arch. The three-sided bay extends through the third story and is decorated at its center by a scallop shell and a bracket interlocked with a panel beneath the third story window. The double dormer window of No. 8, set in the mansard roof, is crowned at the center by a lion's head and is flanked by volutes.

Nos. 12-16. This handsome row of three stone houses was erected by the builder James Carlew in 1899-1900, and designed in a modified French Renaissance style by the architectural firm of Cleverdon & Putzel. They are five stories high and have rusticated English basements, entered at first story level. Foliate spandrels separate the second and third floors of each building. All are crowned by sheet-metal cornices supported on evenly spaced ornamental brackets. An interesting innovation is the introduction of house numbers within a diamond or circular shape in the door jambs, thereby enabling a passer-by to read the number before he reaches the front of the building. The swell-front of No. 12 displays two tiers of paneled pilasters with diamond motifs, each crowned by an ornamental band. A low balustrade terminates the swell-front. Nos. 14 and 16 are an identical pair with round-arch windows above the third story balustrades of the bays. The elegant Ionic porticoes of the first floors have garlanded bulls-eye windows set to one side. The windows of the two-story curved bays above the doorways have richly carved ornaments on "eared" enframements. Foliate panels separate the windows of the fourth story.

Nos. 18-24 were built in 1898-1899 by the same James Carlew and were also designed by Cleverdon & Putzel. The facade of No. 18 is almost identical to that of No. 12 and of No. 22. Nos. 16 and 20 are similar, except that No. 20 has arched windows on the first floor and a masonry parapet replacing its original roof cornice. No. 24 is stepped down in height to provide an even transition to the lower adjoining house, No. 26, built two years earlier. In contrast to Nos. 18-22, which are five stories high with English basements, No. 24 is a four-story house approached by a right-angle stoop.

No. 26 is the only house on this street which was not built as part of a row. It was erected in 1896-98 for Herman Goldman, realtor, and designed by the noted architectural firm of Schickel & Ditmars. This four-story house has its entrance at basement level. The basement is of rusticated limestone like the parlor floor above. The three-sided, neo-Italian Renaissance bay and the third floor windows have a common "eared" enframement, crowned by an elegant cartouche. Handsome original wrought ironwork embellishes the top of the bay.

Nos. 28-38 were erected for William C. G. Wilson and James Tichborne in 1891, and designed by G. A. Schillinger. These brownstone houses, four stories high with rough-faced basements, all have sheetmetal roof cornices of uniform height and display a stylistic combination of neo-Italian Renaissance, French neo-Grec, and Romanesque Revival elements. Widely-spaced triple fluting on the pilasters, flanking certain doorways, is a French neo-Grec detail. Originally a bandcourse with widely-spaced flutes ran the length of these six houses at the level of the first story. Many of the windows in this row have Renaissance enframements. The influence of the Romanesque Revival is seen in the round-headed windows at the top floors of Nos. 30 and 36, and in the first and third stories of No. 34, the only building to have retained its original brownstone color. A number of recurring designs appear within this group: the use of an arched pediment over the center top floor window and of a triangular pediment on the floor below is seen at Nos. 28 and 38. The triangular window pediment also recurs at the third stories of Nos. 30 and 36. The variety in the treatment of the bay windows makes this group of buildings interesting both in its diversity and imaginative handling of design elements.

The next row, Nos. 40-56, is the longest and one of the two earliest in the Historic District. These nine brownstone houses, four stories high with basements, were erected in 1887-89 for Leonard Beeckman from designs by architect George M. Walgrove. A uniform roof cornice line spans the row. Five of the buildings retain their original stoops. These houses display a combination of architectural styles, including elements of the French neo-Grec and the neo-Italian Renaissance. The second story oriel of No. 40 rests upon a corbel supported by an elegant column, and is crowned by wrought iron cresting. A projecting foliate bandcourse links the third story windows beneath the brackets supporting the lintels. The three-sided bay of No. 42 is also crowned by an iron cresting, while the first story of the bay has delicate spiral colonettes set at the angles between the windows. The arched doorway of No. 44 is enframed by rough-faced stone with floral ornament above. Flat ogee arches over the bay windows and incised rosettes are unusual features of this facade. The three-sided corbeled oriel of No. 46, also crowned with an iron cresting, has handsome panels enriched with swags beneath the windows. The paired windows of No. 48 are enframed by pilasters to a height of three stories and separated at the first story by an engaged column. This building is the only one in this group which retains its original brownstone color. At No. 50 the middle windows of the top three floors have been individually accentuated. At the fourth story the center window lintel is higher than those flanking it, a triangular pediment crowns the middle window of the third story, and an arched pediment on brackets gives distinction to the second story center window. At No. 52, where the former doorway, replaced by a window, is crowned by a similar projecting pediment, as is the top of the two-story bay. The decorative brackets supporting the window lintels of the top three stories of this house recur as well at Nos. 54 and 56. The first floor of No. 54 displays Romanesque Revival arches at the doorway and window. The pediment above the doorway of No. 56 has a scallop shell motif at its center and is supported by elongated brackets. The architect skillfully made the transition from No. 56 to the advanced corner building (outside the Historic District) by projecting a full-height bay out to the building line.

CENTRAL PARK WEST (No. 170) Between West 76th & 77th Streets

No. 170. The New York Historical Society was designed by the architectural firm of York & Sawyer and erected in 1903-08. The north and south wings were added in 1937-38 by architects Walker & Gillette. The building, of fine gray granite is in the Roman style of the Eclectic period. The Central Park West facade displays a pedimented main entrance enframed by elaborately carved moldings. The rusticated first story is crowned by a bandcourse of rosette and rectilinear design. Directly above, a second bandcourse extends around the entire building. An impressive Ionic colonnade extends through the upper stories, where large rectangular windows are set between the three-quarter engaged columns. A richly ornamented roof cornice crowns the entablature of the colonnade. The later north and south wings act as end pavillions to this main facade, and were so skillfully integrated with the existing building that the whole structure appears to have been designed by the same architectural firm at one time. The New York Historical Society was designated as a New York City Landmark in 1966.

WEST SEVENTY-SIXTH STREET (Nos. 1-51) Betw. Central Park West & Columbus Ave.

NORTH SIDE

Nos. 1-13 include The New York Historical Society building, described under No. 170 Central Park West, and its garden.

Nos. 15-19 were designed by the well known architect John H. Duncan, and built by Cornelius W. Luyster in 1892-93, their earliest work in the Historic District. These four story houses with basements are faced with combinations of ashlar and brick and retain their handsome original roof cornices carried on uniformly-spaced console brackets. No. 19 still has its original doorway and stoop. A continuous corbeled bandcourse extends across the facades of Nos. 15 and 17 and serves as a sill for the top floor arched windows. The top floors are flanked by ornamental Ionic pilasters. Foliate panels embellish the base of the three-sided oriel of No. 15, while the first story window enframements display delicately decorated moldings. By contrast, the curved bay of No. 17 reveals a more simple handling of the neo-Italian Renaissance style, while the windows to its right have been joined vertically by ornament. The first story openings of No. 19 are enframed by pilasters. The pilasters flanking the central window support brackets which carry the three-sided oriel, with distinctive center window enframement, at the second story.

Nos. 21-25 were also built by C. W. Luyster in 1894-95, after designs by the same architect, John H. Duncan. They are four stories high above basements and are characterized by neo-Italian Renaissance bays. The two lower stories and basements are faced with brownstone ashlar, painted to resemble limestone. Roman brick has been used for the top two floors. Quoins delineate the party walls between Nos. 21 and 23, and Nos. 23 and 25. A band of rectilinear ornament extends across the three facades at the top of the second story, crowning the bays. The handsome original doors of both Nos. 21 and 25 have been retained, as have their stoops. They are enframed by delicately detailed moldings. An elegant framed cartouche embellishes the center panel of the three-sided bay at No. 21. No. 25 retains its original copper roof cornice.

Nos. 27-37 comprise one of the two earliest rows in the Historic District. This row was designed by George M. Walgrove and built in 1887-89 for Leonard Beeckman, the same two men responsible for Nos. 40-56 on the south side of the street. The six residences on the north side have rough-faced fronts with square-headed windows. The design of the window enframements alternates from one facade to the next. These facades display features of the French neo-Grec style, particularly in the use of fluted enframements at the first floors. The doorways of Nos. 29 and 37 (No. 37 doorway replaced by a window) are quite similar in design, whereas those of Nos. 31 and 35 are identical. The boldly projecting roof cornices alternate with pyramidal Queen Anne style roofs at Nos. 27, 31 and 35. No. 33 is only two windows wide. No. 31 retains its handsome original stoop.

Nos. 39-51 are seven town houses built in 1891-93 by Alfred G. Nason and designed by G. A. Schillinger. The buildings, originally of brownstone with rough-faced basements, combine elements of both the French neo-Grec and the Romanesque Revival styles. These four-story houses maintain a uniform roof cornice line, varied in decorative detail, and are enlivened by alternating curved and three-sided bays and by alternating round-arched and square-headed windows at the top floors. Only Nos. 41 and 51 retain their original doorways and stoops. No. 39 has a full-width, three-sided oriel at the second story and French neo-Grec grooved pilasters enframing the openings at the two upper floors. No. 41 is a fine example of late Romanesque Revival architecture, with its handsome arched doorway and two round-arched windows separated by triple colonettes and surmounted by a two-story curved oriel. The fourth story of this house has three arched windows resting on colonettes. No. 43 has a three-sided oriel supported on a bracket between the two first floor windows which are enframed by rusticated moldings. No. 45 has a three-sided, two-story oriel, corbeled out above the column separating the two windows of the first floor. The top floor displays arched windows. Brackets support the first story windowsill of No. 47, and the triangular window pediment to the left of the curved oriel at the second story is the only one of its type in this row. No. 49 has arched openings at its first and fourth stories. The two-story curved oriel is carried on a carved corbel which is gracefully curved down between the arched first floor windows to rest on an engaged Corinthian column. These columns recur at both levels of the oriel. The effect of a bay has been created at the two first floor windows of No. 51 through the use of broad pilasters seated on paired corbel blocks. This effect has been maintained through the upper floors through the use of bold window enframements.

(The buildings at the western end of the block are outside the Historic District.)

WEST SEVENTY-SEVENTH STREET (No. 44) Betw. Central Park West & Columbus Ave.

SOUTH SIDE

No. 44. The Studio Building was built in 1907-09 for the Walter Russell Bond & Realty Company and was designed in the neo Gothic style by the firm of Harde & Short, who were also the architects of the Alwyn Court Apartments on West 58th Street. The doorway is set in a richly carved and elaborately enframed arch. The windows flanking this entranceway have been treated as recessed niches. The flat brick wall of the building is enlivened by three sections of many-tiered window bays separated by finely detailed spandrel panels. These great windows are an eloquent expression of two-story high studios behind them. Full advantage was taken of the north light provided by the open square occupied by the Museum of Natural History. The center section of the facade is flanked by window bays with ribbed enframements, which terminate below the two top stories of the bays. A steep roof with dormers crowns the left-hand bay. The verticality of this facade and the extensive use of glass in the studio windows give it a contrapuntal character which combines early 20th century functionalism with the neo-Gothic detail. The high rooms of the center section have a duplex relationship to those in the side bays.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission recognizes that the needs of the church in the Central Park West-76th Street Historic District may change in the years ahead. By this designation it is not intended to freeze the properties of the church in its present state for all time, thus preventing future appropriate alterations. The Commission believes it has the obligation and, indeed, it has the desire to cooperate with owners in Historic Districts who may wish to make appropriate changes to their properties to meet their current and future needs. This attitude reflects the Commission's endorsement of the view that Landmarks are often successfully preserved through imaginative adaptive re-use.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this area, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Central Park West - 76th Street Historic District contains buildings and other improvements which have a special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value and which represent one or more periods or styles of architecture typical of one or more eras in the history of New York City and which cause this area, by reason of these factors, to constitute a distinct section of the City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Central Park West - 76th Street Historic District is an unusually fine residential area, that it is one of the most distinguished and beautifully situated neighborhoods of the Upper West Side, that it retains an aura of the past with its many trees and rows of architecturally notable houses, that it is a representative residential neighborhood which has the pleasing quality of predominantly low uniform building heights, that the restrictive covenants governing the setbacks, height and general design of the town houses along Seventh-sixth Street have achieved a special quality of homogeneity and regularity, which reflects a concern on the part of the developers, architects and builders for sound principles of community planning, that the apartment houses, church and New York Historical Society building are all compatible with their surroundings, that all the buildings in the Historic District were built within a brief span of two decades, that they are fully expressive of the developing city and of the social and cultural aspirations of the upper middle class at the turn of the century and further, that these buildings

provide, in microcosm, a picture of many of the important architectural styles of the period, reflecting the Romanesque Revival, neo-Italian Renaissance, neo-French Renaissance and neo-Gothic styles and that above all they show the influence of the French Ecole des Beaux Arts and the neo-Classicism of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893.

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 an Historic District the Central Park West - 76th Street Historic District, Borough of Manhattan, containing the property bounded by the southern property lines of 56 through 8 West 76th Street, part of the southern property line of the church building on Central Park West and West 76th Street, the western property line of 151 Central Park West, West 75th Street, Central Park West, West 77th Street, the western property line of 170 Central Park West, part of the northern property line of 170 Central Park West, the northern property lines of 15 through 37 West 76th Street, the eastern property line of 44-48 West 77th Street, the northern property line of 44-48 West 77th Street, the western property line of 44-48 West 77th Street, part of the northern property line of 47 West 76th Street, the northern property line of 49 West 76th Street, the northern and western property lines of 51 West 76th Street, 76th Street, the western property line of 56 West 76th Street.