

HENRY T. SLOANE RESIDENCE, 9 East 72nd Street, Borough of Manhattan. Built 1894-96; architects Carrère & Hastings.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1387, Lot 9.

On July 13, 1976, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Henry T. Sloane Residence and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 8). At the request of the Lycée Français de New York the hearing was continued to September 14, 1976, (Item No. 1) and again to November 9, 1976 (Item No. 1). All hearings had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A total of three witnesses spoke in favor of designation at the three hearings. The representative of the Lycée Français de New York spoke against designation. The Commission has received several communications in favor of designation.

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The prominent architectural firm of Carrère & Hastings was commissioned in the early 1890s to design this large townhouse for the merchant prince, Henry T. Sloane. This elegant house is an especially fine example of the French Beaux-Arts style, a Parisian mode of design which reached its zenith of popularity in this country at the turn of the century. By 1900 East 72nd Street, like much of the Upper East Side near Central Park, was lined with mansions and townhouses. Rich New Yorkers vied with each other in building increasingly opulent and distinctive residences. At the time the Sloane house was under construction, in 1894-96, the great Rhinelander Waldo mansion at the corner of Madison Avenue and 72nd Street was being completed and in 1896 the Jennings townhouse was begun on the property adjacent to the Sloane House. These houses still stand, but gone are the great mansions of the Tiffanys, Vanderbilts, and other prominent New York families who once lived on East 72nd Street. Only a handful of these grand houses survive in New York, and thus, the few that remain, among them the Sloane house, serve as important reminders of the architectural splendor of late 19th-century America.

The firm of W. & J. Sloane, today the well-known New York furniture store, was founded in 1843 by Henry T. Sloane's father. Under the management of the second generation of the family, the business continued to flourish, dealing exclusively in carpets, rugs, and upholstery material. Known for its vast and varied stock, W. & J. Sloane sold everything from machine-made carpeting to the finest Aubusson and antique oriental rugs.

The famous maroon and gold interior of the old Metropolitan Opera House was the generous gift of Henry T. Sloane, and no doubt served as a gentle reminder to opera patrons of the fine merchandise to be found at W. & J. Sloane.

Henry T. Sloane (1846-1937) graduated from Yale University and in later years, as a loyal alumnus of his school, presented the University with a recitation hall and the Sloane Physics Laboratory. In the early 1880s, he married Jessie Robbins of Brooklyn, the daughter of Daniel Robbins, a founder of the drug firm McKesson & Robbins. Jessie, known for her beauty and listed among the best dressed women of New York society, moved with her husband and children into the new 72nd Street house in 1897. Two years later, however, Mrs. Sloane was divorced from her husband on April 28, and she was remarried on the very same day to Perry Belmont, a diplomat and member of one of New York's most distinguished families. The divorce and remarriage caused a sensation in New York society with front page coverage of the "scandal" appearing in the New York Times.

In 1898 Sloane had deeded the new house to his wife. At the time of the divorce, the Times called the house "one of the handsomest of the newer uptown residences" and noted the beauty and costliness of the furnishings. Soon after the divorce, Mrs. Belmont signed the house and its contents over to the State Trust Company, with the understanding that if they were not claimed by her former husband, the house was to be sold and the proceeds divided equally between her two children.

arched pediments aligned with the windows beneath them. The entire facade is beautifully proportioned and is divided in three sections, reflecting the base, shaft, and capital of the classical column, a compositional device typical of the Beaux-Arts style.

No. 9 East 72nd Street, a fine example of French-inspired design by French-trained architects, is appropriately occupied today by the Lycée Français de New York.

#### 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 Henry T. Sloane Residence 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 Henry T. Sloane Residence is an especially fine example of the French-inspired Beaux-Arts style, that it is the work of the prestigious American architectural firm of Carrère & Hastings, that it was the home of several prominent New Yorkers, that it is one of the few truly grand houses to survive in New York, and that its opulent design is a reminder of the elegance of Manhattan at the turn of the century.

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 Henry T. Sloane Residence, 9 East 72nd Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1387, Lot 9, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.