

Landmarks Preservation Commission
May 13, 1980, Designation List 133
LP-1060

165 EAST 73RD STREET BUILDING, Borough of Manhattan,
Built 1903-04; architect George L. Amoroux.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 1408, Lot 26.

On June 19, 1979, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 165 East 73rd Street Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 10). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. One witness spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The 165 East 73rd Street Building and its twin at No 167 are fine examples of the type of private carriage house built during the late 19th and early 20th centuries in this area of Manhattan. They were constructed between 1903 and 1904 for Henry Harper Benedict who lived at 5 East 75th Street. Architect George L. Amoroux designed both carriage houses in the fashionable Beaux-Arts style.

The carriage house at No. 165 is a component of the rare surviving group of carriage houses, stables, and garages built on East 73rd Street between Lexington and Third Avenues to serve the wealthy families who lived on or near Fifth Avenue. Stables were a necessity during the period when private urban transportation was limited to horses and carriages. Only the very wealthy, however, could afford to build and maintain a private carriage house such as those found on this street. Others boarded their horses in large commercial stables such as that at 182 East 73rd Street.

The private carriage houses tended to be two- or three-story structures often designed in the most stylish architectural modes of the period. On the interior were two major ground-floor spaces--a front room for the carriages and a rear room with stalls for the horses. At the upper stories were one or two apartments for the coachman, groom, or related employees. Some of the larger carriage houses had interior ramps located on the ground floor that led to additional horse stalls on the second floor. Early in the 20th century, as automobiles began to replace carriages as the primary means of transportation for the wealthy, these stables were converted to garages and chauffeur's residences. Later in the 20th century, when private garages became too expensive to maintain, most of the buildings were converted to stylish residences.

The carriage houses were built on streets that were convenient to the East Side mansions, but were not so close that their noises and smells would mar the exclusive character of the residential streets. A few carriage houses were erected between Madison and Park Avenues, but most were constructed on the less elegant streets east of Park Avenue. Like many streets on the Upper East Side, East 73rd Street between Lexington and Third Avenues was initially developed in the 1860s with modest Italianate style residences. Most of these houses were replaced as the block became a prime site for carriage houses; only two of the original rowhouses (Nos. 171 and 175) survive.

The building at No. 165 is designed in a form characteristic of contemporary carriage houses. A two-story structure with a facade constructed of yellow Roman brick set on a high limestone base, it has a centrally-placed, round-arched vehicular entry with a chamfered stone enframingent flanked by rectangular pedestrian entrances (that to the right was originally a window). The archway is capped by a bold keystone in the form of a console bracket that supports a projecting second-story sill. Exuberant foliate carving emanates from the keystone and a recessed brick plaque is located to either side. The second floor is articulated by a pair of windows set within a raised brick and stone enframingent and by two single windows with splayed brick lintels framed by stone end blocks. A well-proportioned, galvanized-iron, modillioned cornice and a brick parapet crown the building.

The carriage houses at 165 and 167 East 73rd Street were built for Henry Harper Benedict (1844-1935), the president of the Remington Typewriter Co. and a founder of the typewriter industry in America. Although Benedict sold No. 167 in 1909, he retained title to No. 165 until 1929, when ownership was transferred to his wife Katherine Geddes Benedict (1891-1961). Mrs. Benedict sold the building in 1942. Today the carriage house is used as a residence. It has been maintained virtually intact in its original form on the exterior, and it remains a major component of the unusual group of East 73rd Street carriage houses, stables, garages, and residences.

Report prepared by
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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 165 East 73rd 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.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the 165 East 73rd Street Building is a fine example of an early 20th-century carriage house; that it is a beautifully massed Beaux-Arts style structure; that the building, a rare survivor, is a reminder of an elegant lifestyle that has passed; that the carriage house was owned by important New Yorkers including Henry Harper Benedict, the founder of the American typewriter industry; and that the carriage house is a vital component of the group of unusual buildings on East 73rd Street between Lexington and Third Avenues.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 21 (formerly 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 165 East 73rd Street Building, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Tax Map Block 1408, Lot 26, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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New York Times, Oct. 30, 1961, p. 19.

Who's Who in America, Vol. 6 (1910/11), p. 138.



165 East 73rd Street
Architect: George L. Amoroux

Photo Credit: Gina Santucci

Built: 1903-04