

Landmarks Preservation Commission
December 21, 1965, Calendar No. 5
LP-0047

FEDERAL HALL NATIONAL MEMORIAL, 28 Wall Street, Manhattan. Begun 1834, completed 1842, architects Town & Davis and John Frazee.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 43, Lot 6.

On October 19, 1965, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Federal Hall National Memorial and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Calendar No. 19). 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

This handsome building of the Greek Revival period is a remarkably pure example of the Classical temple-form. It is unusual for this country because it has columned porticos at both ends of the building. The Greek Doric columns with their wide, shallow grooves (fluting) are extremely beautiful. The exterior is otherwise very simple, with an evenly spaced row of pilasters along the exposed western side which are interesting when seen in perspective. The vaulted masonry ceilings on the interior stand today as a notable example of the only known means of fire-proofing in that period.

In its splendid location dominating the head of Broad Street, the Federal Hall National Memorial is one of the few truly imposing temple-form structures in New York City. The elegance of its overall proportions and the simplicity and power of its Greek Doric architecture make it one of our finest monuments.

Historically, this building is notable as standing on the site of the old City Hall which became the famous Federal Hall where George Washington took the oath of office in 1789. The present building was erected as a U. S. Government Custom House and was used as such until 1862 when it became the U. S. Subtreasury Building. Today the building is a National Monument under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior.

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 Federal Hall National Memorial 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 Federal Hall National Memorial is the site of the first inauguration of George Washington as President, that it is an essential part of the conspicuous and impressive setting at the head of Broad Street and that it is an outstandingly handsome Classic building notable for its fine proportions and the refinement of its restrained detail.

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 Federal Hall National Memorial, 28 Wall Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 43, Lot 6, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.