

Landmarks Preservation Commission
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LP-0069

91 SOUTH STREET BUILDING, Borough of Manhattan. Begun 1811, completed 1812 for Peter Schermerhorn; architect unknown.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 74, Lot 3.

On October 19, 1965 the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 91 South Street Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 41). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Forming a part of Schermerhorn Row, this Federal style building was remodeled in the eighteen-sixties when it was increased to five stories in height. Today it has lost the heavy bracketed cornice which was added when the building was remodeled, but it does retain its fire escapes. These fire escapes constructed the full width of the building at each floor, and with their diagonal bracing, appear much more like balconies than they do like fire escapes and are an interesting and attractive addition to this otherwise severe front. A store front has been added at street level. It should be noted that the fourth and fifth floors have three instead of two windows.

Built in 1811, No. 91 was assessed to Peter Schermerhorn at \$5,000. In 1810 this land was vacant, and the empty lots on which Nos. 91, 92 and 93 were built was assessed to Schermerhorn at \$4,000.

No. 91 South Street was increased in height from its original four stories with attic to five stories in 1897 for William F. Milton by Kurtzer and Rohl, architects, at an estimated cost of \$1,200. This increasing of a building's height by adding one or more floors at the top was frequently done in New York. By 1897, No. 91 was a hotel with the usual ground floor store. In 1890 it had been a warehouse and saloon; in 1888 the store in the building sold wholesale liquor.

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 91 South 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, 91 South Street is a fine Federal building, representative of the best commercial architecture of the period, that Schermerhorn Row, of which it forms a part, is an admirable example of a row of well-built and well-proportioned commercial buildings designed initially in the Federal style and retaining original architectural features, that taken together they are unique, and that they represent the last complete row of early Nineteenth Century commercial buildings remaining in New York City today.

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 91 South Street Building, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 74, Lot 3, Borough of Manhattan as its Landmark Site.