

CITY HALL, Broadway at City Hall Park, Borough of Manhattan. Begun 1802, completed 1811; architects Mangin & McComb.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 122, Lot 1.

On October 19, 1965, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of City Hall and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 52). Two witnesses spoke in favor of designation. The Commission continued the public hearing until November 17, 1965 (Item No. 3). At that time no speakers appeared to testify. Both hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There were no speakers in opposition to designation at either meeting.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The New York City Hall is the most beautiful city hall in the United States. It was designed in competition in the Federal Style of architecture with considerable French influence. It is basically C-shaped in plan with two end wings projected forward at the front. This fine marble building consists of two stories above a high basement. At the center an attic story rises above the main roof level and is surmounted by a handsome domed cupola.

In front of the central section, of the building, an imposing porch with columns rises above a sweeping flight of stairs which approach it from three sides. The roof of the porch, with a railing (balustrade), forms an open deck in front of five large arched windows set between columns. The great size of these second floor windows relative to the masonry surrounding them is reminiscent of the famous French palace greenhouses (orangeries) and represents a radical piece of design for this country in Federal times.

Historically, City Hall is important as the building which, for over one hundred and fifty years, has been the seat of City government. Through its doors have passed all the great personages most intimately connected with the development of this City. Many portraits of these notables adorn its walls today. In addition it has done honor to the dead. The bodies of Lincoln and Grant have lain in state within its walls.

The architectural importance of this building is to be found in its superb proportions and in the beautiful French detail of its exterior and central rotunda. This part of the design may be attributed to the French architect Joseph F. Mangin, who worked with John McComb, Jr. in producing this masterpiece. The more strictly Federal detail of the handsome interior rooms has been attributed to McComb and is typical of the Federal work being designed in this country at that time.

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 City Hall 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 New York City Hall is beautifully proportioned, that it displays unusual architectural detail throughout representing both Federal and French influences, that it is a marble building executed in the best tradition of fine craftsmanship, that it is a building which - for over one hundred and fifty years - has provided the dignified setting in which the most important events in the history of the City have taken place and that architecturally it is the finest treasure of our City.

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 City Hall, Broadway and City Hall Park, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 122, Lot 1, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.