

CARNEGIE HALL, 57th Street at Seventh Avenue, Borough of Manhattan. Begun 1889, completed 1891; architect William B. Tuthill.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1009, Lot 1.

On May 10, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of Carnegie Hall and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 31). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Three witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. The Carnegie Hall Corporation indicated to the Commission that it approved the proposed designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Treated in an architecturally restrained manner, this building with its 15 story tower has an intrinsic character and an integrity of design which evoke considerable praise. Music lovers consider no building in the City with more reverence. Modified Italian Renaissance in style, its facades include a veritable vocabulary of Renaissance detail. The details for this building were selected with great taste and discrimination, producing an overall design that is truly fascinating. The reddish brown Roman brick, which is used for the largest areas of the walls, combines with bandcourses, arches, pilasters and other terra cotta decorations, to produce a beautiful color, which has mellowed with age.

Within the walls of Carnegie Hall, musical history has been in the making ever since its doors were opened to the public in the nineties. The Hall, completed in 1891, was opened as the new home for the Oratorio Society, with a five day musical festival at which Tchaikovsky conducted several of his own works. In 1892 the Philharmonic Orchestra began its concerts here and remained until 1962. Throughout the years the building has been used not only by musicians, many of whom teach and live in their tower studios, but by various cultural groups requiring an auditorium seating 2800. Saving Carnegie Hall for posterity was one of the great achievements of preservation in New York.

At a gathering on November 6, 1964, when Carnegie Hall was designated a National Landmark by the United States Department of the Interior, Mayor Robert F. Wagner said: "Carnegie Hall has a unique role in that special part of life in our City which can never be charted or mapped. It is one of the places in our City where dreams live". In his closing remarks he said: "There is much, much more which could be said of this magnificent edifice. Perhaps the rest can best be said by the artists who perform here, by the public figures who speak here, and by the millions who will have their lives enriched by its existence".

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 Carnegie 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, Carnegie Hall is an excellent example of the Italian Renaissance Style, that it adds to the architectural beauty of the City, that it has played and continues to play a significant part in the musical history not only of New York but the entire country, and that its place as a world forum of the arts is now happily secure.

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 Carnegie Hall, 57th Street at Seventh Avenue, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1009, Lot 1, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.