

Landmarks Preservation Commission
May 25, 1967, Number 7
LP-0579

152 EAST 38TH STREET HOUSE, Borough of Manhattan, Completed 1858. Altered in 1934-35.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 893, Lot 57.

On December 27, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 152 East 38th Street House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 69). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Two witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. In a letter to the Commission, the owner indicated that he is in favor of the proposed designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Elegance and charm are abundantly evident in the architectural quality of this three-story Federal style brick house. Separated from the street by a spacious forecourt and an inner landscaped garden, this outstanding town house is partly shielded from view by a one story brick wall dividing the forecourt from the garden. The wall and six slender columns with modified Ionic capitals support a covered walkway intended to provide shelter for those about to pass through the two entrance gates in the arched openings of the wall.

In the forecourt the east and west walls are each decorated with a blind arch flanked by paired pilasters in low relief supporting a plain frieze and simple cornice. Above each arch Greek ante-fixae motifs decorate the corners of a low pitched pediment. At the sidewalk the landscaped area is enclosed by a low railing having paired gates flanked by posts bearing handsome lanterns. In the inner garden, rose ramblers climb trellises and ivy provides ground cover for a large, central plot. A life size bronze nude graces the brick wall, facing the house.

In a setting such as this, the house has an aura of charm. The first floor, raised four steps from the flagstone court, has a superb doorway. The door with glass side lights is framed by delicate pilasters supporting a molded entablature and a handsomely designed transom. Delicate iron trellises, in lieu of columns, support the graceful, scalloped bronze canopy covering the stoop. The line of the top step is continued as a wide horizontal stone band course, forming the sill of the floor-to-ceiling windows on the entrance floor. The upper two stories are three windows wide, with double-hung sash and attractive black exterior blinds. This brick house is painted gray with judicious use of white, or on occasion, black trim. It has a frieze decorated with rosettes and a simple cornice crowned by a low brick parapet.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

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 152 East 38th Street House 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 152 East 38th Street House is an outstanding example of a Federal Style townhouse belonging to the Eclectic Period with modified Greek architectural details, that it is located in a particularly attractive garden setting which has been artistically landscaped, and that it lends itself to gracious living in a secluded spot in the heart of New York 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 the 152 East 38th Street House, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 893, Lot 57, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.