

JOHN B. TREVOR HOUSE, 11 East 91st Street, Borough of Manhattan. Built 1909-11; architects Trowbridge & Livingston.
Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1503, Lot 12.

On June 25, 1974, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the John B. Trevor House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 10). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Seven witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. In 1970 a public hearing was also held on the proposed designation of this building.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The restrained elegance of this distinguished house, built in 1909-11, is a simplified expression of French Beaux-Arts Classicism. The architects, S. B. Parkman Trowbridge and Goodhue Livingston, were the senior members of the popular New York City architectural firm of Trowbridge & Livingston early in the 20th century.

The area in which the house is located acquired the name "Carnegie Hill" soon after Andrew Carnegie erected his mansion at Fifth Avenue and 91st Street at the turn of the century. Although middle-class residences had been built in the area in the 1880s and 1890s, Carnegie's move uptown inspired other well-to-do business and professional people to also build here. Trevor purchased the property for his house from Carnegie in February 1909. In June of that year he married Caroline M. Wilmerding. The newlyweds lived with Trevor's mother and sister Emily at 21 East 37th Street until their own house was completed in 1911. Emily moved into a house at 15 East 90th Street some twenty years later. Mrs. Trevor still lives at 11 East 91st Street, and her son, John B. Trevor, Jr., lives at 15 East 90th Street, also a designated Landmark.

Smoothly finished limestone faces the handsome five-story house which is crowned by a mansard roof. The rusticated ground story acts as a base to set off the upper stories. A cornice slab supported on brackets crowns the entranceway with its dignified carved door. When open it reveals an elegant vestibule with classical details and a glass and wrought-iron inner door. Three deeply recessed high round-arched windows set with radial voussoirs and keystones emphasize the second floor and add to the elegance of the facade. The French casement windows open onto a ledge protected by delicate wrought-iron grilles.

A string course sets off the fourth floor, and wide panels separate the fourth story windows. A carefully executed modillioned cornice surmounted by a balustrade crowns the facade and sets off the slate mansard roof with its three copper-clad dormer windows. A handsome wrought-iron fence composed of simplified classical forms with urn-topped newel posts encloses an areaway and leads to the entrance.

The finely crafted detail and the careful scale of the house were skillfully combined by the architects to create a residence which is a fine example of the architecture in Carnegie Hill in the early 20th century. Its elegant appearance adds an important element to this outstanding block, complementing the distinguished Landmarks to the west, and it enhances the entire Carnegie Hill area.

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 John B. Trevor 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 John B. Trevor House is an elegant residence designed by the prominent architectural firm of Trowbridge & Livingston in the French Beaux-Arts tradition, that it is enhanced by restrained and finely crafted architectural detail, that it is a fine example of Carnegie Hill residential architecture of the early 20th century, and that it adds to the distinction of this outstanding block and enhances the entire Carnegie Hill area.

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 John B. Trevor House, 11 East 91st Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1503, Lot 12, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.