

SPANISH INSTITUTE (formerly Oliver D. Filley House), 684 Park Avenue, Manhattan. Built 1925-26; architect McKim, Mead & White.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1383, Lot 35.

On May 26, 1970, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Spanish Institute (formerly Oliver D. Filley House) and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 22). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. The representative of Community Board No. 8 and two other witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. The owner of the building has indicated to the Commission that it favors the proposed designation.

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This house is a part of that outstanding group of neo-Federal townhouses which extends along the west side of Park Avenue, between East 68th and 69th Streets, sometimes referred to as the "Pyne-Davison Blockfront" due to the uniform architectural quality of these houses.

The architectural design of the Oliver D. Filley house, just north of 68th Street on the west side of Park Avenue, is in every way compatible with the former Percy R. Pyne house it adjoins. The first floor rusticated base, the limestone belt course at the fourth floor window sill level, as well as the stone cornice and balustrade carry through similar designs at the same level, and the color and pattern of the brickwork are identical. This is entirely by intention since the same architects, McKim, Mead & White, designed both houses. Oliver D. Filley was Percy Pyne's son-in-law, and there was formerly a physical interior connection between the two houses.

Built in 1925-26, this handsome neo-Federal house is located on a much narrower lot than the corner house, a situation that has imposed a more elongated proportion on the window openings since the sill and head heights are maintained on the same level. The entrance at the left-hand side, consists of a single wood door with glass sidelights and transom above; two windows are located on the right-hand side of it. A well designed wrought iron railing approximately four feet high, extends along the sidewalk, outside the basement areaway.

The second story has three windows within limestone enframements capped by paneled stone lintels carved with swags. The central window is set in a shallow brick arch with a console keystone - a treatment similar to the second floor windows at No. 680 Park Avenue. The flanking windows have stone panels above them. The third floor windows have limestone enframements and paneled lintels. The low fourth floor windows, which make use of the horizontal limestone band course as sills, also have limestone enframements. A stone cornice topped by a parapet with balusters above the windows crowns the facade. Three dormers set in the gambrel slate roof above this supply light and air to the fifth floor, while three more dormers above these serve an attic.

#### 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 Spanish Institute (formerly Oliver D. Filley 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 Spanish Institute (formerly Oliver D. Filley House) is an excellent example of a small New York City townhouse of the 1920s designed in the neo-Federal style by a distinguished architectural firm, that although built fifteen years after the adjacent house to the south and seven years after its neighbor to the north, it is architecturally in harmony with them and that it continues to serve a useful purpose.

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 Spanish Institute (formerly Oliver D. Filley House), 684 Park Avenue, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1383, Lot 35, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.