

17 EAST 90TH STREET HOUSE, Borough of Manhattan. Built 1917-19; architect F. Burrall Hoffman, Jr.
Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1502, Lot 12.

On June 25, 1974, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 17 East 90th Street House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 7). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Seven witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There was one speaker in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This dignified residence, built between 1917 and 1919 and designed by F. Burrall Hoffman, Jr., combines a modified neo-Georgian style with an arcaded loggia in the continental tradition.

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 inspired other well-to-do business and professional people to also build here. The property was purchased in 1916 by Charlotte Winthrop Fowler, wife of Robert Fowler, Jr., in 1916 under the terms of a restrictive fifteen-year covenant, which stipulated that any building erected could not be used for any other purpose than a private dwelling. Mrs. Fowler then commissioned the house, but she sold it in August 1919 to Harriet S. Clark.

The imposing four-story house displays a monumentality that belies its scale. A rusticated arcaded loggia at street level, with rusticated entrance wall set back about six feet from the arches, provides a substantial base for the house. The keystones of the arches are embellished by decorative human masks, one male and one female. Especially handsome carved and paneled double doors accent the entranceway. A modillioned stone cornice, surmounted by a graceful wrought-iron balcony rail, separates the first floor from the English bond brick facade above. The French windows of the upper three stories are crowned by Georgian-style, flat keyed stone arches; those above the high parlor floor windows are accented by swagged keystones. A low parapet pierced by two balustrades crowns the facade, concealing a setback attic story.

The unique arcaded loggia and the fine neo-Georgian details of the house are combined to create a residence which is an interesting example of the architecture in Carnegie Hill in the early 20th century. Its imposing and dignified appearance adds an important element to the block, 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 17 East 90th 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 17 East 90th Street House is a handsome residence built in a modified neo-Georgian style, that it is enhanced by such architectural features as the ground floor arcaded loggia, that it is an interesting example of Carnegie Hill residential architecture of the early 20th century, and that it adds to the dignity of the block and enhances the 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 17 East 90th Street House, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1502, Lot 12, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.