

178 EAST 73RD STREET BUILDING, Borough of Manhattan.
Built 1902; architect John H. Friend.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1407, Lot 43.

On June 19, 1979, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 178 East 73rd Street Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 14). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. One witness spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The 178 East 73rd Street Building is a fine example of the type of private carriage house built during the late 19th and early 20th centuries in this area of Manhattan. Constructed in 1902 for John Connors, the carriage house was designed by architect John H. Friend in the fashionable Beaux-Arts style but with the unusual feature of neo-Georgian brickwork.

The carriage house at No. 178 is a component of the rare surviving group of carriage houses, stables, and garages built on East 73rd Street between Lexington and Third Avenues to serve the wealthy families who lived on or near Fifth Avenue. Stables were a necessity during the period when private urban transportation was limited to horses and carriages. Only the very wealthy, however, could afford to build and maintain a private carriage house such as most of those found on this street. Others boarded their horses in large commercial stables such as that at 182 East 73rd Street.

The private carriage houses tended to be two- or three-story structures often designed in the most stylish architectural modes of the period. On the interior were two major ground-floor spaces--a front room for the carriages and a rear room with stalls for the horses. At the upper stories were one or two apartments for the coachman, groom, or related employees. Some of the larger carriage houses had interior ramps on the ground floor that led to additional horse stalls on the second floor. Early in the 20th century, as automobiles began to replace carriages as the primary means of transportation for the wealthy, these stables were converted to garages and chauffeur's residences. Later in the 20th century, when private garages became too expensive to maintain, most of the buildings were converted to stylish residences.

The carriage houses were built on streets that were convenient to the East Side mansions, but were not so close that their noises and smells would mar the exclusive character of the residential streets. A few carriage houses were erected between Madison and Park Avenues, but most were constructed on the less elegant streets east of Park Avenue. Like many streets on the Upper East Side, East 73rd Street between Lexington and Third Avenues was initially developed in the 1860s with modest Italianate style residences. Most of these houses were replaced as the block became a prime site for carriage houses; only two of the original row-houses (Nos. 171 and 175) survive.

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The building at No. 178 is designed in a form characteristic of contemporary carriage houses. A three-story structure, it has a smooth limestone base and upper stories faced with brick laid in Flemish bond with neo-Georgian style random burned headers. The ground floor is articulated by three crisply cut rectangular openings: a chamfered central vehicular entrance capped by a keystone in the form of a stylized cartouche; a pedestrian entrance to the right that is capped by a stone transom bar and transom light; and a window that is set to the left. A modest stone cornice separates the utilitarian ground floor from the residential stories above. The focal point of the upper stories is the central window bay. The central window on each of the upper stories is set within a classical limestone enframingent--crosssetted on the second floor and round-arched on the third floor. The flanking double-hung windows are capped by stone drip lintels with splayed keystones. The building is crowned by a galvanized-iron cornice with garlands hanging from the console brackets. A bold cartouche at cornice level gives added emphasis to the central bay.

Prior to its completion in 1904 John Connors sold the carriage house to Charles I. Hudson (1852-1921) who lived at 1 East 76th Street. Hudson was the head of the brokerage firm of C.I. Hudson & Co., established in 1874. In addition, he bred Jersey cattle and was the director of the American Jersey Cattle Club. Hudson retained ownership of the building until his death.

Now offices and a private residence, the carriage house remains in excellent condition and is one of the finest of the buildings that gives East 73rd Street between Lexington and Third Avenues its unusual ambiance.

Report prepared by
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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 178 East 73rd Street Building 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 178 East 73rd Street Building is a fine example of an early 20th-century carriage house; that it is a beautifully massed Beaux-Arts style structure; that the building, a rare survivor, is a reminder of an elegant lifestyle that has passed; that it was owned by important New Yorkers including broker Charles I. Hudson; and that the carriage house is a vital component of the unusual group of buildings on East 73rd Street between Lexington and Third Avenues.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 21 (formerly 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 178 East 73rd Street Building Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1407, Lot 43, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

New York City. Department of Buildings, Manhattan. Plans, Permits and Dockets

New York County. Office of the Register. Liber Deeds and Mortgages.

New York Times, Nov. 16, 1921, p. 19.



178 East 73rd Street
Architect: John Friend

Photo Credit: Gina Santucci

Built: 1902