

DEMOLISHED

Landmarks Preservation Commission
November 23, 1965, Calendar No. 2
LP-0015

LEONARD JEROME HOUSE (Manhattan Club), 32 East 26th Street at Madison Square, Borough of Manhattan. 1859, architect Thomas R. Jackson.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 855, Lot 37.

On September 21, 1965, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Leonard Jerome House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Calendar No. 15). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Five witnesses spoke in favor of designation. The lawyer for the building's present owner and the attorney for the contract purchaser of the property opposed designation. In a letter to the Commission, the Deputy Borough President of Manhattan supported the proposed designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This handsome residence is one of New York City's finest town houses. It is six stories high with the first two floors of stone, the two floors above of brick trimmed with stone and an imposing two-story Mansard roof. This building is important as one of the first and most distinguished of the French Second Empire Style buildings which were built in large numbers in the United States after the Civil War. The Jerome House is an outstanding example for its time of a great American mansion designed for lavish entertaining. The quality of this building is shown in the fact that the University Club and the Union League Club both used it for a number of years as their headquarters. The Metropolitan Museum of Art was established following a meeting in 1869 in this building.

This impressive building has lasting historic significance because it was built by Winston Churchill's grandfather, Leonard W. Jerome, the American millionaire sportsman. Jerome's daughter, Jennie, who married Randolph Churchill, spent a part of her childhood in this building and returned there on her honeymoon. She inherited the building and owned it until 1903.

At the public hearing, the representative of the Municipal Art Society said that this building "represented one of the finest manifestations of that care-free architecture which transcended the miles of timid brick and correct but gloomy 'brownstones', with a new gayety." He added that the building reminds New Yorkers of "the elegance of the court of Napoleon III and of the Empress Eugenie."

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 Leonard Jerome 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 Leonard Jerome House was the first of New York City's "private palaces" and is one of the relatively few remaining today in the City, that it is a distinguished and attractive example of the French Second Empire Style of architecture, that - as the house built by Winston Churchill's American grandfather and lived in and later owned by Churchill's mother - the Jerome Mansion is a priceless link for New York City to one of the great men of this century and that the building should be preserved so that New Yorkers will always have this physical reminder of Winston Churchill.

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 Leonard Jerome House (Manhattan Club), 32 East 26th Street at Madison Square, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 855, Lot 37, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.