

1321 MADISON AVENUE HOUSE, Borough of Manhattan. Built 1890-91; architect James E. Ware. Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1505, Lot 22.

On June 25, 1974, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 1321 Madison Avenue House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 11). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Eight witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were three speakers in opposition to designation, including the representative of the owner.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

1321 Madison Avenue, at the northeast corner of 93rd Street, is a most striking Queen Anne style rowhouse, one of an original row of five, built in 1890-91. Real estate developer James V. S. Woolley commissioned the original row and another row of five houses at 91st Street and Madison Avenue in the same years from the architect James E. Ware. Ware, a versatile designer, worked in two of the most popular styles for domestic architecture during this period--the Queen Anne and the Romanesque Revival. 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. The population of the area had already begun to grow in the 1880s and 1890s as middle-class residences were built. Woolley had many clients for his rowhouses of which 1321 Madison Avenue is such a fine example.

This handsome four-story building enhances its conspicuous corner site, and it is highlighted by its prominent tower-like roof. The brownstone front on Madison Avenue is accented by such Queen Anne features as a three-sided bay with paneled parapet at the third floor and three round-arched windows with engaged colonnettes at the fourth floor. A similar window is placed on the 93rd Street side. Foliate capitals on the colonnettes and scallop shells above the round-arched window enframements are additional decorative accents. The two lower stories have been altered for commercial use.

The impressive entranceway is the most striking element of the red brick facade facing 93rd Street. It rises above a brownstone stoop with curved balusters and carved newel posts with foliate detail. Elaborately carved foliate pilasters with foliate capitals flank the round-arched recessed doorway. The pilasters support a curved hood which shelters the doorway and is surmounted by a balustrade like that lining the stoop. A round-arched window with stained-glass transom adjoining the doorway is flanked by foliate pilasters set on a corbeled sill. Other windows on this side are accented by molded brownstone enframements with corner blocks and corbeled sills. A continuous string course ties the two facades together below the fourth floor.

The pyramidal roof--which has the appearance of a tower--over the front section of the building contains a dormer which breaks the line of the roof cornice. The cornice itself is of sheetmetal with brackets set above a deep elaborate frieze containing swags and scallops. The rear section is crowned by a similar cornice, although the frieze decoration is varied with wreaths and scallops.

Decorative motifs derived from classical sources and such picturesque elements as the tower-like roof and the entranceway are characteristic of the Queen Anne, or Free Classic, style. They are used to fine advantage in this outstanding house.

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 1321 Madison Avenue 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 1321 Madison Avenue House is a striking and handsome Queen Anne style house most appropriate to its corner site, that the tower-like pyramidal roof, impressive entranceway and other architectural details which are characteristic of the style are used to advantage in this house, that it is a prime example of Carnegie Hill residential architecture of the late 19th century, and that it adds distinction to its 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 1321 Madison Avenue House, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1505, Lot 22, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.