Landmarks Preservation Commission
January 11, 1967, Number 10
LP-671

AMERICA-ISRAEL CULTURAL FOUNDATION (formerly the William H. Moore House),
4 East 54th Street, Borough of Manhattan. Begun 1898, completed 1900; architects
McKim, Mead & White.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1289, Lot 67.

On May 10, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing
on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the America-Israel Cultural
Foundation and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No.
26). Two witnesses spoke in favor of designation. This hearing was continued to
subsequent hearings of the Commission. The public hearing on the building was
closed on September 13, 1966. (Item No. 5). The hearings had been duly advertised
in accordance with the provisions of law. There were no speakers in opposition
to the designation at any hearing.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This former residence of William H. Moore is a fine example of a turn of the
century stone townhouse. Its strong Italian Renaissance facade, rich carving and
simple window arrangement (fenestration) give the building stability and order,
and unite to make the structure a worthy architectural achievement. Designed by
McKim, Mead & White, the house is an example of their skillful adaptation of a
Renaissance facade to the requirements of a New York townhouse in which the sober
and the elegant are successfully combined.

The first story is rusticated. Volute keystones adorn the flat arches of
the windows, while the door in the center carries a carved cartouche represent-
ing molded decoration. The principle feature of the second story is a richly carved
balcony resting on large consoles or brackets. Over the second story windows the
cornice rests on handsome ancon brackets. The central window head supports a
small rectangular balcony with ornately designed wrought iron work. A horizontal
dentilled band course separates the fourth and fifth floors. Above the fifth
floor windows the elaborate entablature with scallop-shell frieze contains dentils;
and the voluted brackets support the main cornice and balustrade. This decorated
area of the facade contrasts beautifully with the simplicity of the symmetrically
arranged windows. The heavy moldings around each window are reduced in size on
each successive floor adding a feeling of vertical perspective to the building.
The corner stones (quoin) and overhanging cornice frame the structure and give
it a feeling of perfect unity.

The house was built in 1900 for William H. Moore, (1868-1923), Chicago indus-
trialist and a founder of the United States Steel Corporation, the American
Can Company and the National Biscuit Company.

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 America-Israel Cultural Foundation has a special character, special histori-
cal 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
America-Israel Cultural Foundation was built as a large, dignified townhouse,
that it displays much refined detail with almost perfect symmetry and that as the
former home of a noted New Yorker it is representative of the best of its type to
be found in the City.

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 America-
Israel Cultural Foundation, 4 East 54th Street, Borough of Manhattan and design-
nates Tax Map Block 1289, Lot 67, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.