

Landmarks Preservation Commission
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LP-0256

THE ASSOCIATION OF THE BAR OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, 42 West 44th Street, Borough of Manhattan. 1895; architect Cyrus L. W. Eidlitz.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1259, Lot 14.

On May 10, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of The Association of the Bar of the City of New York and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 9). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Four witnesses spoke in favor of designation, including the representative of the executive committee of the Bar Association, who said, "The Association welcomes designation of the building." There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Although severe in its Classic Eclectic design, the limestone facade of this building has great strength and dignity as befits a structure housing distinguished members of the legal profession. With two entrances, one on 43rd Street and the other on 44th Street, the latter is the most important. This consists of a recessed porch with two magnificent fluted Doric columns. A strong horizontal stone band separates the base from the second floor and extends the entire width of the building. Rising above and extending through the third and fourth stories are four pairs of well proportioned Corinthian pilasters forming three distinct bays of which the center one is wider than those on either side. The windows of the third floor are small, but those on the fourth are wide with small Ionic columns at each window. A Corinthian cornice boasting beautifully detailed brackets (modillions) crowns the building and gives it a fitting termination. The detail is in excellent taste and in good scale, producing a most distinguished structure.

The Association of the Bar of the City of New York was founded in 1870 "for the purpose of maintaining the honor and dignity of the profession of the Law, of cultivating social relations among its members and increasing its usefulness in promoting the due administration of justice". The club has numbered among its past presidents such famous lawyers and jurists as: John W. Davis, Charles Evans Hughes and Henry L. Stimson, to name just a few of the illustrious members, who have helped to shape the opinions and policies of the Bar Association and the practices of the legal profession in New York City and the entire country. There is within the building one of the largest law libraries in the country, a collection of over 320,000 volumes.

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 Association of the Bar of the City of New York 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 Association of the Bar of the City of New York is a fine building with dignity and strength in its imposing facade, worthy of the distinguished legal body that uses it, that the detail is in excellent taste and good scale, and that its severe Classic Eclectic design contributes to the architectural legacy of our 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 Association of the Bar of the City of New York, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1259, Lot 14, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.