

Landmarks Preservation Commission
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LP-0114

HALL OF LANGUAGES, New York University, University Heights, Hall of Fame Terrace at Sedgwick Avenue, The Bronx. 1894; architects Mc Kim, Mead & White.

Landmark Site: Borough of The Bronx. Tax Map Block 3222, Lot 62 in part, consisting of the land on which the described building is situated.

On January 11, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Hall of Languages and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 16). Two witnesses including the representative of New York University spoke in favor of designation. The Commission continued the public hearing until February 8, 1966 (Item No. 15). At that time no speakers appeared to testify. Both hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There were no speakers in opposition to designation at either meeting.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This well proportioned Classical building is located at one of the ends of the semicircular colonnade of the Hall of Fame. Symmetrical in plan, it forms a part of the campus ensemble and exemplifies the best qualities of the Classical Style in its coherence and monumentality. At the entrance to the building there is a handsome Ionic portico. The portico is preceded by a flight of steps with low risers and deep treads providing an impressive formal approach. Below a richly decorated cornice, which adorns the low roof, the third floor windows of this Roman brick structure are embellished with carved stone garlands.

The importance of this building lies in the simple symmetry of its plan, its stately dignity and good use of materials. With classical motifs employed in the decoration and many fine architectural details, the building is a distinguished representative of its period.

In a letter to the Commission, Dean J. W. Knedler, Jr. of the University College of Arts and Science at New York University endorsed the proposed designations of the four buildings on the University Heights Campus. "They constitute a monumental group which we regard as the heart of the campus..... Such a move would be a gratification not only to the present members of the College community but to its graduate body. More important, it would be a recognition of the superb work done by McKim, Mead and White in collegiate architecture."

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmark Preservation Commission finds that the Hall of Languages 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 Hall of Languages is a building of quality, that the plan is admirably suited to its use and to the site upon which it is placed, and that the building, with its exceptionally fine Classical detail, is one of the truly fine examples of the Eclectic Roman Style of architecture.

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 Hall of Languages, New York University, University Heights, Hall of Fame Terrace at Sedgwick Avenue, The Bronx and designates as its related Landmark Site that part of Borough of The Bronx Tax Map 3222, Lot 62 which contains the land on which the described building is situated.