Landmarks Preservation Commission
March 15, 1966, Number 15
LP-0215

HOTEL CHELSEA, 222 West 23rd Street, Borough of Manhattan, 1883; architects
Hubert, Pirsson & Co.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 772, Lot 64.

On March 8, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public
hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Hotel Chelsea and the
proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 39). The hearing
had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Eight wit-
nesses spoke in favor of designation including one of the owners of the hotel.
There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Reminiscent of the great "Spanish-Flats" which once stood on 59th Street
at Central Park, this building was also designed by Hubert Pirsson & Co. It
is one of the few remaining of the great Victorian Gothic apartment houses which
once adorned the City. The building is now a famous hotel. The most notable
feature of this eleven-story building is the succession, tier on tier, of hori-
zontal iron balconies. These balconies, richly decorated with leaves and
flowers, lend an atmosphere of charm to this high brick facade, as do the French
doors opening on to them.

A central, towerlike section of the front has a high, pyramidal slate roof,
flanked on each side by enormous brick chimneys. Complementing this central
feature are projecting wings at each end of the building, adorned at their tops
by large pointed-arch windows set in brick gables. As a masonry bearing-wall
structure, this building has some of the first fireproofed wrought-iron beams.
They span the distance between walls, without intermediate columns. The building
also had some of the first duplex apartments in New York, one of the first
penthouses and was one of the early cooperatives.

The Hotel Chelsea has always been a favorite home of writers and artists,
and many of its residents have produced their finest work while under its roof.
Thomas Wolfe, Dylan Thomas, Edgar Lee Masters, John Sloan, Robert Flaherty,
Mark Twain, Eugene O'Neill are just a few of its more noted residents.

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 Hotel Chelsea has a special character, special historical and aesthetic
interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural character-
istics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the
Chelsea Hotel was one of the pioneer Victorian Gothic apartment houses, that its
unique array of balconies is an extremely attractive feature, and that it has
always been noted as the home of famous writers and artists such as Thomas Wolfe
and Dylan Thomas.

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
Hotel Chelsea, 222 West 23rd Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax
Map Block 772, Lot 64, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.

Commissioner J. Clarence Davies did not participate in the consideration of
this Calendar item.