

Landmarks Preservation Commission
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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 witnesses 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 horizontal 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 characteristics 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.