

THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS (formerly R. Livingston Beekman House), 854 Fifth Avenue, Borough of Manhattan. Begun 1903, completed 1905; architects Warren & Wetmore.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1381, Lot 72.

On December 27, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of The Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 77). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Two witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. In a letter to the Commission, the Ambassador of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, His Excellency Dr. Anton Vratusa, said, "We are very honoured to have the building of our Mission designated," and "we shall be happy to cooperate with the Landmarks Commission at all times whenever such a need may arise in the years ahead."

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Although this small town house is sandwiched between two large apartment buildings, their overpowering size cannot diminish the palatial scale nor the elegant grandeur of its architecture. Designed by an architect educated in the finest tradition of the French Beaux Arts School, this house, in its character, reflects the influence of the Eighteenth Century classic period of Louis XV. Two windows wide, the three-story masonry facade, with steep mansard roof containing two floors with dormers, has an impressive dignity and restraint. In its noble scale this house, if multiplied, could form a palace. The design has a purity of style which was executed with such finesse and authority that it sets this French style residence apart as one of the finest small town houses extant on Fifth Avenue. Completed in 1905, and once the home of R. Livingston Beekman, it now serves the Mission of Yugoslavia to the U.N. most admirably.

On the left side of the house, at street level, is a short flight of steps leading to a platform. It is flanked by stone planting boxes and low parapet walls, one of which also encloses the forecourt at the right. The base of the house has two graceful round-arched openings with molded frames. The one at the left serves as the front door, that at the right as a window. They have elliptical shields serving as keystones. Set in the deep reveal of the entrance arch, behind the stoop, are richly paneled entrance doors.

The second floor windows are of great height and nobility. Pedimented at the top and with balustraded balconies, they are very impressive. The balconies, with pedestals at either end, are joined to a broad flat belt-course separating the base of the house from the floors above. Supporting the ends of the balconies are shallow console brackets from which swags in high relief are extended to the central keystones of the arches below. The transition from the deep reveals of the windows to the facade is made by a three-quarter-round molding of foliage design. The side frames of the windows are paneled and extend up to the voluted console brackets which support the entablature and the pediment above. The frieze is also richly ornamented.

The windows of the third floor are joined to the pediments below them by panels in low relief. These windows have delicate sills and simple molded enframements, the heads of which abut the architrave of a superb Doric entablature with widely overhanging cornice. The metopes are elaborately carved representing military trophies in bas relief.

A low parapet rises above the cornice and is left open with only a railing in front of the two fourth floor dormers. These dormers have arched roofs with short horizontal extensions at the sides carried on brackets. Small oval dormers at the fifth floor are surmounted by shells. The roof, a high mansard, is covered in copper and has a richly molded cresting which crowns the house.

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 Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations 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 small and elegantly distinguished town house occupied by The Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations is a superb example of the French Classic Style of Louis XV executed with vigor and authority, that it contains superior, ornamental details and that its excellent quality of design sets this mansion apart as one of the finest extant small town houses on Fifth Avenue.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 63 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 Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations, 854 Fifth Avenue, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1381, Lot 72, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.