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Children's Mansion

Landmarks Preservation Commission
March 19, 1974, Number 6
LP-0344

SCHINASI RESIDENCE, 351 Riverside Drive, Borough of Manhattan.
Built 1907-09; architect William B. Tuthill.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1892, Lot 33.

On November 27, 1973, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Schinasi Residence and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 16). 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.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The imposing marble residence at the northeast corner of Riverside Drive and 107th Street was built for Morris Schinasi between 1907 and 1909. Designed by William B. Tuthill in the manner of a French chateau, the residence is a fine example of the neo-French Renaissance style of architecture. Schinasi was a member of the well-known tobacco-processing family and a partner in the firm of Schinasi Bros., Inc. which manufactured "Natural" brand cigarettes. Schinasi desired to live in a house befitting his wealth and this wish was realized upon the completion of his new free-standing mansion. William Tuthill, who had received a large portion of his training in the office of Richard Morris Hunt, is best known as the architect of Carnegie Hall.

This two and a half story building is basically rectangular in plan, accented by an interplay of projected and recessed wall sections. The flush entrance facade, facing Riverside Drive, is pierced by windows on each floor. The main doorway, located to the right, is approached by steps flanked by wing-walls. These wing walls terminate in high, square, newel posts that, in turn, connect with the balustraded yard railing.

High French windows, which open onto elaborate stone balconies, appear at the second floor on either side of the main entrance. These balconies are tied in with a broad band course which separates the two principal stories on all four sides. The long 107th Street facade is composed of end sections and a recessed central section. The one, nearest Riverside Drive, contains a two-story bay surmounted by an ornamented parapet. The rear facade has a three-sided copper oriel at the second story.

The north facade of the house, which faces the neighboring building on Riverside Drive, has the most elaborate treatment. At the rear, there is a two-story oriel set above basement level. A broad first-story bay occupies the central portion of the facade. The steeply pitched tile roof rises from the left hand side of this bay, while a vertical wall with windows is set slightly back from the right hand side. The rest of the north facade accords with the front of the building.

The dominant feature of this handsome design is to be found in the use of boldly projecting dormer windows set above the modillioned roof cornice and its panelled frieze. These dormers, which appear on all four sides, are composed of ornate pilasters with stone panels in the upper half, crowned by high curvilinear pediments. The picturesque quality of these dormers is complemented by a pitched roof of green terra-cotta tile, which is surmounted, at the front of the building, by a cresting and two spiked finials.

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 Schinasi Residence 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 Schinasi Residence is a fine example of the neo-French Renaissance style, that it was designed by a noted architect, and that it is representative of the development of Riverside Drive as one of the most attractive locations in the City.

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 Schinasi Residence, 351 Riverside Drive, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1892, Lot 33, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.