

THE CENTURY ASSOCIATION, 7 West 43rd Street, Borough of Manhattan. Begun 1889, completed 1891; architects McKim, Mead & White.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1259, Lot 29.

On May 10, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of The Century Association and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 10). Three witnesses spoke in favor of designation. The Commission continued the public hearing to June 14, 1966. (Item No. 3). At that time the representative of The Century Association spoke in favor of designation. Both hearings had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There were no speakers in opposition to designation at either hearing.

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Stately in its formal appearance, this four-story Italian Renaissance building, of granite, terra-cotta and brick, is extremely successful in its architectural treatment. McKim, Mead & White, architects for The Century Association, had a reputation for understanding the use of Renaissance elements, and Stanford White, the partner in charge of this project, was renowned for his talent as a designer and for his great ability in using materials, texture and detail in the creation of a building. Working in the true Renaissance spirit, achieving unity and balance, he reestablished the supremacy of form and detail. Nowhere in New York City is this concept expressed in a clearer statement than in the facade of this clubhouse.

The building expresses its Renaissance character, with its two-story rusticated masonry base, with its monumental arched entrance doorway, and with the beautiful centrally located Palladian window above. This window was originally designed as an open loggia. Other features of this striking facade include the four handsomely wreathed round windows which are located above the third floor rectangular windows and are skillfully joined to them. The elaborate cornice and balustrade, which crown the building, complete this imposing ensemble.

The Century Association was organized in 1847 "to promote the advancement of art and literature". It owes its name to the fact that the membership was originally limited to one hundred. Among the founders were William Cullen Bryant, Asher B. Durand, William Kemble and William H. Appleton. The roster of Centurions reads like the "Who's Who" of American Arts and Letters.

#### 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 Century Association 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 Century Association is a distinguished example of Italian Renaissance architecture, that it possesses a wealth of architectural detail, beautifully composed, utilizing many fine materials, that its scale, proportion and design are admirably related in the best tradition of Renaissance beauty, and that it is a restrained, dignified expression of the cultured membership which produced it.

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 Century Association, 7 West 43rd Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1259, Lot 29, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.