

Landmarks Preservation Commission
March 15, 1966, Number 16
LP-0218

THEODORE ROOSEVELT HOUSE, 28 East 20th Street, Borough of Manhattan. 1848;
remodeled 1923 by architect Theodate Pope Riddle.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 848, Lot 55.

On March 8, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Theodore Roosevelt House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 42). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Four witnesses spoke in favor of designation including a representative of the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

A handsome row house in the Gothic Revival Style at 28 East 20th Street was the birthplace of President Theodore Roosevelt in 1858. He lived there until his fourteenth year, and the house has been preserved and restored as a memorial to him.

The house has the usual high stoop and paired doors at the entry. An unusual note of elegance is shown in the drawing room windows at first floor level which are full length and open upon a handsome cast iron balcony. All windows and the front door have those special drip mouldings above them which were the hallmark of the Gothic Revival house. All the windows, with the exception of those in the basement, are shuttered and the whole house has a quiet air of restrained dignity. The cornice at the top of the front wall is carried on a continuous series of small arches, a concession to its having been designed in the Gothic Style.

The building was restored and remodeled and now includes the house of Robert Roosevelt adjoining it to the west. Theodate Pope Riddle, a noted woman architect, did the alteration and subordinated the features of the Robert Roosevelt house in order to enhance the importance of Theodore Roosevelt's birthplace. Wing-walls were added at each end where the adjoining buildings project forward, thus helping to retain the brownstone character of the two houses which were preserved.

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 Theodore Roosevelt House 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 Theodore Roosevelt house is a fine example of a brownstone town house, that it displays much fine detail of the Gothic Revival period and that it is memorable as the birthplace of Theodore Roosevelt, a great New Yorker and one of the most famous Presidents of the United States.

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 Theodore Roosevelt House, 28 East 20th Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 848, Lot 55, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.