

69 EAST 93RD STREET BUILDING, Borough of Manhattan. Begun 1928, completed 1929; architects Delano & Aldrich.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1505, Lot 31.

On November 10, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 69 East 93rd Street Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 58). 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. The owner of the house has informed the Commission that she is in favor of the proposed designation.

DESCRIPTION & ANALYSIS

This unusual residence was part of the George F. Baker, Jr. Mansion, an outstanding example of the modified Federal Style, as applied to an early Twentieth Century town house of the first rank. The dignified two-story brick dwelling with stone trim has, as its principal elevation, an elegant facade of superb architectural design facing an open courtyard. This facade, the finest in the complex, is dominated by an Ionic colonnade impressive in size and distinguished in quality. It is consistent with the modified Federal style expressed in the other component elements of the original ensemble, once one of the most extensive town houses in New York City.

When George F. Baker, Jr. bought the Francis F. Palmer House in 1928, he added a large L-shaped wing to the mansion. The northern addition to the house, a three-story structure, extending west beyond the main block of the original house contained the ballroom in the long arm of the "L". This building, to the west of the ballroom wing, consists of a garage with a private apartment above and is known as Number 69 East 93rd Street. A spacious open court created by this new wing became a formal flagstone garden enclosed on the south side by a wall. These buildings were skilfully incorporated into the revised overall scheme by their style, scale, materials and details.

The front, or street, elevation is dignified and restrained in character. Dominating the ground floor is a wide round-arched opening with deep reveals surrounded by an expanse of plain red brick set up in English bond pattern following that used in the other buildings. Recessed within the opening are paneled double garage doors with arched transom. The entrance to the upstairs apartment is in the vestibule at the side. Two tall double-hung windows rest on the second floor molded band course encircling the house, and directly above the windows, carved stone panels decorate the wall with a stone band course above.

In contrast to the simplicity of the street elevation the east, or garden, facade is truly monumental in appearance. The balustraded second floor porch, with its four coupled Ionic columns supporting a large entablature, is impressive in character. In the recessed wall of the porch are four tall double-hung windows. An important feature of the first floor, and centered in the wide expanse of brick wall, is a large stone pedimented window with console brackets.

George F. Baker, Jr. (1878-1937) had a reputation for reticence and a dislike of publicity. After graduating from Harvard in 1899, he began his banking career with J. P. Morgan, a close friend of his father, George F. Baker, known as the dean of American banking. In the First National Bank of the City of New York he rose from clerk to Vice-Chairman and at the death of his father in 1931, succeeded him as Chairman of the Board. He inherited \$60,000,000.00, much of which he helped to accumulate as Vice-Chairman of the bank. He was a director of many corporations and, like his father, a generous philanthropist. He was a trustee of the Frick Collection, the New York Public Library and the American Museum of Natural History. In 1931 he received an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from New York University. In his will he provided for the George F. Baker Trust, to be used for charitable, religious and educational purposes.

69 EAST 93RD STREET BUILDING

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 69 East 93rd Street Building 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 69 East 93rd Street Building is an outstanding example of a modified Federal style, that it is dignified in character and spacious in conception, that it was part of what was once one of New York's most extensive town houses, that it is one of the finest works in New York City by the architects, Delano and Aldrich, whose highly personal style and elegant manner are evident in this group of houses, and that it adds to an imposing and distinguished architectural ensemble of our 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 69 East 93rd Street Building, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1505, Lot 31, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.

Chairman Harmon H. Goldstone did not participate in the consideration of this Calendar item.