Landmarks Preservation Commission
May 17, 1966, Number 6
LP-0230

JUDSON HALL (including the tower), 51-54 Washington Square South, Borough of
Manhattan. No. 51 completed 1877; architect John G. Prague. No. 52-54 begun
1890, completed 1895; architects McKim, Mead & White.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 541, Lot 18.

On April 12, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing
on the proposed designation as a Landmark of Judson Hall (including the tower) and
the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 12). Three
witnesses including the representative of the Washington Square Association spoke
in favor of designation. The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with
the provisions of law. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. The
Borough President's Community Planning Board No. 2. favored designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Standing on the south side of Washington Square, this Italian Renaissance
Eclectic building and ten story Tower (campanile) combine to form a striking
composition. The walls are warm yellow Roman Brick and represent the bricklayer's
art at his best. At the second, third, and fifth floors of the dormitory, rich
bands of terra-cotta add a masterful touch to the building. Brick arches
envelope the round-headed windows, while splayed brick lintels span the square-
headed windows of the lower three stories. Two-story brick pilasters alternate
with the third and fourth floor windows, while one-story pilasters divide the
paired windows of the fifth floor. Originally a five story structure, the
architects capped the building with an ornamental cornice and a railing (balu-
trade) thus adding a rich architectural feature.

The entrance to the ten story tower is ornately decorated with horizontal
bands of terra-cotta ornament, alternating with recessed brick courses. Orna-
mental metal grille work adorns the two windows flanking a pair of handsome
panelled wooden doors which are deeply recessed within the decorated doorway.
The impressive tower rising above the brick and ornate terra-cotta ground floor,
contains the same type of brick masonry work as the walls of the dormitory.
Variety in design is achieved by using pairs of rectangular windows on the second,
third and fourth floors while round-headed windows penetrate all five upper
floors. The tower terminates with two slender columns supporting the triple
arches of the belfry. The tower design culminates in a richly decorated cornice
at the roof line.

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
Judson Hall (including the tower) 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, Judson Hall
(including the tower) is an outstanding example of Italian Renaissance Eclectic
architecture, enriched with a wealth of architectural details, executed in costly
materials, that it has a distinctly individual quality, that it contributes to
the beauty of Washington Square, and that at the time it was built it brought a
new elegance and joy to a city of red brick and brownstone.

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 Judson Hall
(including the tower), 51-54 Washington Square South, Borough of Manhattan and
designates Tax Map Block 541, Lot 18, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.