

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 (balustrade) 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. Ornamental 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.