

SALMAGUNDI CLUB, 47 Fifth Avenue, Borough of Manhattan. Completed 1853; built for Irad Hawley, architect unknown.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 569, Lot 4.

On September 21, 1965, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Salmagundi Club and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 9). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Four witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. In a letter to the Commission, the Deputy Borough President of Manhattan supported the proposed designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Of all the mansions which once lined Fifth Avenue, from Washington Square to Central Park, only this one remains to display its original character; it is now the home of the Salmagundi Club.

It is an outstanding example of a very grand mansion in the early Italianate style and was one of the first to have a facade entirely of brownstone, the forerunner of an architectural fad which swept the City in later decades. Its imposing entrance, richly framed in stone ornament, is entirely original and is reached by a very high, very wide sweep of steps rising over and above a full story rusticated basement. Heavily molded frames surround the French doors which open out from the parlor floor onto handsome balconies of cast iron.

This mansion was built in 1852-53 for Irad Hawley, the president of the Pennsylvania Coal Company - which had its big yards near the Hudson River in the West Village. The rooms of the first floor are among the few lavish examples of the Italianate style left in New York - with their original carved marble chimney pieces, rose wood doors and arcaded Corinthian screen separating the front and back parlors. The former dining room, now a part of the art gallery, was designed in the Gothic style and is one of the few interiors left to us of this once-popular Revival.

The Salmagundi Club, long known for its association with fine arts, purchased this house in 1917. The care with which the old mansion has been preserved, although in constant use, reflects the taste and knowledge of the membership. The Club is composed of artists and was originally organized, in 1871, for "the promotion of social intercourse among artists and the advancement of art". The name recalls the interest in the "Salmagundi Papers" published by Washington Irving. The gallery, just behind the spacious hall, exhibits work by the members. The Club's roster contains the names of some of America's most distinguished citizens, including Edwin H. Abbey, William M. Chase, John LaFarge, Howard Pyle, Louis C. Tiffany and Stanford White, among many others who have notably contributed to the arts.

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 Salmagundi Club 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 Salmagundi Club is the last remaining example of a mid-nineteenth century Anglo-Italianate style Fifth Avenue brownstone mansion, retaining its original stoop and doorway, that it displays many fine architectural details, executed in the best tradition of craftsmanship and that it is the dignified home of a distinguished Club long associated with the advancement of the arts in this 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 Salmagundi Club, 47 Fifth Avenue, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 569, Lot 4, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.