

Landmarks Preservation Commission
May 17, 1966, Number 4
LP-0193

376-380 LAFAYETTE STREET BUILDING, Borough of Manhattan. 1888; architect Henry Janeway Hardenbergh.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 531, Lot 12.

On March 8, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 376-380 Lafayette Street Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 17). At that time two speakers spoke in favor of designation. The Commission continued the public hearing until April 12, 1966 (Item No. 4). At that time one person spoke in favor of designation. The owner of the building also testified at this public hearing. Both hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This six-story building standing resolutely on its site is unusually imposing in its mass. It was completed in 1888 when buildings of this size were still considered high. Handsome dark brown brick piers form five bays for windows on the Great Jones Street side and four on Lafayette Street. These tiers of windows are four stories high and terminate in segmental arches, also of brick. The piers, supported at the first floor by interesting dwarf columns of sandstone, rest on polished gray granite bases. Handsome ornamental sandstone blocks are a conspicuous feature of the piers at the third story and may also be seen at the intersection of the arches with the piers. Solid sections of light colored brick wall terminate the succession of arched bays at both ends of the building signaling the location of entrances, stairs and elevators. The upper two floors, also executed in light brown brick, have a repetitive pattern of square headed windows evenly spaced, with two in an opening on the third floor, and single windows with rounded arched heads on the fourth floor. A richly decorated metal cornice crowns the entire composition most effectively.

In this building the architect proved that a utilitarian structure need not be devoid of ornament but may have attributes of real artistic merit and make a lasting contribution to the beauty of its neighborhood. It was designed by Henry Janeway Hardenbergh, architect of such elegant structures as the old Waldorf-Astoria, the Hotel Plaza, the Dakota Apartments and the American Fine Arts Society Building in New York, and the Copley-Plaza in Boston.

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 376-380 Lafayette 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 376-380 Lafayette Street Building is one of the truly outstanding manufacturing buildings of the late 19th century in the City, that particular artistry is evident in its careful massing and in the color of its ornamental brick and sandstone detail, that these qualities of design were unusual for a building of this type at this time, that it has a distinctive arrangement of windows and that it is one of the outstanding loft buildings in the City and was designed by Henry J. Hardenbergh, one of New York's great architects.

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 376-380 Lafayette Street Building, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 531, Lot 12, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.