
AUDUBON TERRACE
HISTORIC DISTRICT
DESIGNATION REPORT

1979

City of New York
Edward I. Koch, Mayor

Landmarks Preservation Commission
Kent L. Barwick, Chairman
Morris Ketchum, Jr., Vice Chairman

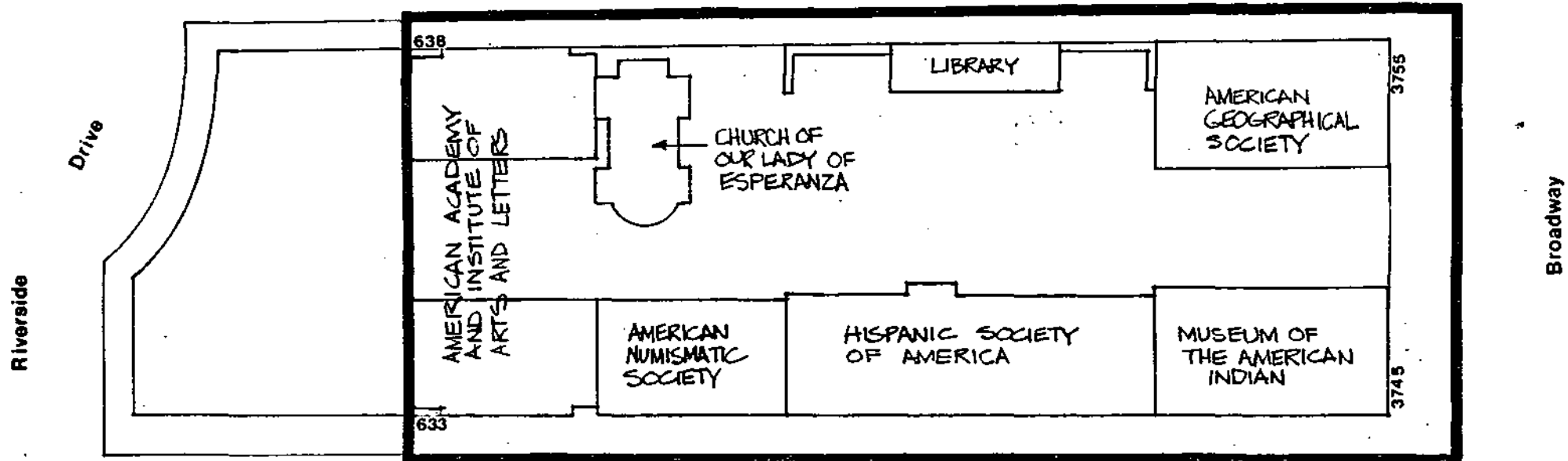
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AUDUBON TERRACE
HISTORIC DISTRICT

West 156th Street



West 155th Street

Designated January 9, 1979

Landmarks Preservation Commission

AUDUBON TERRACE HISTORIC DISTRICT, Borough of Manhattan

BOUNDARIES

The property bounded by the western curb line of Broadway, the northern curb line of West 155th Street, the western property line of 633 West 155th Street-- 632-638 West 156th Street, and the southern curb line of West 156th Street, Manhattan.

TESTIMONY AT THE PUBLIC HEARINGS

On July 11, 1978, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on this area which is now proposed as an Historic District (Item No. 5). The hearing was continued to September 12, 1978 (Item No.2) and again to November 14, 1978 (Item No.2). All hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A total of five persons, including the representative of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, spoke in favor of designation. Two representatives of the Hispanic Society of America spoke in opposition to designation. The American Numismatic Society has expressed its "firm support" for the designation, and the Museum of the American Indian stated it would not oppose the designation. A number of other letters have also been received in support of the designation.

Introduction

Audubon Terrace in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan is one of the foremost cultural centers in New York City and among the first of its kind in the country. Established on the former estate of the noted American artist and ornithologist, John James Audubon, Audubon Terrace was conceived as a center for specialized research by its founder Archer M. Huntington. As a first step towards this goal, he founded the Hispanic Society of America in 1904 and commissioned his cousin, Charles Pratt Huntington, to design a home for it. With Archer M. Huntington's persuasion and funding, buildings for the American Numismatic Society, the American Geographical Society, the Museum of the American Indian, and the Church of Our Lady of Esperanza were also built at Audubon Terrace. All were designed by Charles P. Huntington in a unified neo-Italian Renaissance style and grouped around a central courtyard. Two buildings at the western end of the terrace for the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the National Institute of Arts and Letters were designed after Charles P. Huntington's death by William Mitchell Kendall of the firm of McKim, Mead & White, and by Cass Gilbert. These two buildings also employ the neo-Italian Renaissance style. The terrace is also enhanced with sculpture designed by Anna Vaughn Hyatt Huntington.

The Audubon Terrace Historic District occupies a site west of Broadway between West 155th and West 156th Streets. Originally farmland, the site was acquired by John James Audubon in 1841, just after the last portion of Birds of America was published. Audubon built his frame house and stable at 156th Street near the edge of the Hudson River. The house, which was where his friend Samuel F.B. Morse transmitted the first long distance telegraph message, was demolished in 1931. Audubon's two sons built houses on the portion of the Audubon estate which is now Audubon Terrace. Washington Heights at that time was entirely farms and woodlands; and the secluded nature of the area enabled Audubon to keep the birds and animals which he had brought back from an expedition to the Far West in 1843. After Audubon's death in 1851, his wife began to sell off portions of the estate.

By the 1870s the estate had become a residential area known as Audubon Park with large homes surrounded by gardens, lawns, and trees. However, in the early 1900s with the construction of Riverside Drive and a subway line along Broadway, builders and developers began to buy up this property. Audubon Park was cut in two by Riverside Drive, which soon became lined with tall apartment houses. Below the level of the Drive, a portion of the park still exists. In 1904 Archer M. Huntington began buying up the section of Audubon Park east of Riverside Drive for his cultural center which became known as Audubon Terrace.

Archer M. Huntington (1870-1955), multimillionaire, philanthropist, and scholar, acquired an interest in Spanish culture from his stepfather, Collis P. Huntington, the railroad magnate. The senior Huntington had become familiar with Hispanic culture while building the Central and Southern Pacific Railroads in California and Mexico. He was an art connoisseur, patron of art museums and libraries, and a member of the American Geographical Society, and Archer followed in his steps. Studies at Yale, Harvard, Columbia, and the University of Madrid furthered Archer's interests in Hispanic culture. His most important publication was a translation of the "Poem of the Cid," and he wrote several books of poetry and edited works on Spanish culture and history. While traveling extensively in the Iberian Peninsula, he carried on archeological excavations. His library represented one of the most comprehensive collections on Spanish culture and history outside of Spain.

His numismatic collection, which covered the entire coinage of the Iberian Peninsula beginning with the Greek colonies, also included the independent republics in Latin America. These collections were eventually given to the Hispanic Society.

Devoted to aiding Hispanic scholarship, Archer M. Huntington reproduced unique and rare Spanish books in facsimile, set up a fund at the Library of Congress for the purchase of Spanish books, and founded the Hispanic Society of America. He paid for the construction of the Hispanic Society buildings, provided an endowment for the Society, and donated land for the other buildings at Audubon Terrace. He also provided funds to build Our Lady of Esperanza Church, the second Spanish church in New York City. He aided preservation projects outside of America, presenting the home of Miguel de Cervantes to the Spanish nation in 1921. He received honorary degrees from Spanish and American universities, was elected to membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters in recognition of his literary works, and was decorated by the Spanish government. On his eightieth birthday he was paid homage for his life-long work in the study, preservation, and dissemination of things Hispanic. The City of New York honored him during its silver jubilee (1923) as having done more than any other individual for the city and its people during the previous 25 years.

The establishment of Audubon Terrace marked a significant example of civic planning. The centralization of educational and cultural institutions at Audubon Terrace outside of a university context was unique in America.¹ A private donor had established scholarly facilities available without charge to the general public. Huntington also hoped that geographical closeness would promote cooperation among the various societies in their research fields. As a symbol of this cooperation and unity, he specified that all the buildings be designed in a uniform architectural style,² and chose his cousin as architect.

Charles Pratt Huntington (1874-1919) was born in Indiana, graduated from Harvard in 1893, and received his architectural training at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1901. His most significant work was the design of the buildings at Audubon Terrace for which he was made a Knight of the Order of Isabel the Catholic in 1916. Working in the Beaux-Arts tradition, Charles designed a unified, urbane, neo-Italian Renaissance group of buildings organized around a central terrace courtyard.

Flanking the Broadway entrance to the courtyard are the buildings of the American Geographical Society on the north and the Museum of the American Indian on the south. Balustraded staircases lead up past an iron gate to the main level of the terrace. At this level are the buildings of the Hispanic Society and the Numismatic Society on the south and the library of the Hispanic Society and the Church of Our Lady of Esperanza on the north. On the third level of the terrace at its western end are the two buildings of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. While Charles P. Huntington had designed the original scheme for the terraced courtyard in conjunction with his designs for the buildings, additions to all of these buildings and the construction of the first building for the American Academy of Arts and Letters necessitated a new courtyard design and landscape scheme. Since Huntington had died in 1919, this was carried out in 1922 by the firm of McKim, Mead & White. The firm was also involved in the design of the Academy building and the redesign of the Church of Our Lady of Esperanza at the same time. The terraces are paved in red brick and enclosed by stone balustrades.

Sculpture is an important element in the Audubon Terrace design which is in keeping with Beaux-Arts principles. Archer M. Huntington, as an avid supporter of the National Sculpture Society, had a special interest in it. His wife, Anna Hyatt Huntington (1876-1973), designed a number of works for the complex following their marriage in 1923. These works were executed between 1927 and 1944, and most are placed in the courtyard between the main Hispanic Society building and the library. Originally from Massachusetts, Anna Hyatt Huntington came to New York City to study at the Art Students League. Today her works are in over 200 museums and art galleries in Europe and America. She received decorations from the French and Spanish governments for her statues of Joan of Arc--erected in 1915 on Riverside Drive--and El Cid--erected in 1927 at Sevilla. Among her other awards were the medal of honor from the National Sculpture Society, the gold medal from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and an officership in the Legion of Honor.

THE INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR BUILDINGS

The Hispanic Society of America

Archer M. Huntington founded the Hispanic Society of America in 1904 so that Americans could gain direct knowledge of the contributions of Spanish culture to their heritage. Primarily a research organization, it is devoted to the study of Spanish and Portuguese history and culture, both on the Iberian Peninsula and in North and South America. The Society's library is considered one of the most important collections of its kind in the world and is particularly noted for its manuscripts, early books, and maps. As Archer Huntington did not want to deplete Spain of its cultural resources, the majority of the collection was acquired outside of Spain as private collections were being dispersed. In addition to its extensive library, the Society has established a museum exhibiting the arts of Spain from antiquity to the present. The collection includes polychrome wood sculpture, ivories, gold and silverwork, varqueños, 15th and 16th-century retablos, paintings by such artists as Velasquez, Goya and El Greco, prints, and photographs. A portion of the collection is devoted specifically to Moslem art in Spain which is represented by silk brocades, Hispano-Moresque pottery, and Arabic gravestones.

The main building of the Hispanic Society, which houses the museum, was designed by Charles P. Huntington in 1904, and it was opened to the public in 1908. This neo-Renaissance building established the mode for the others at Audubon Terrace. The original courtyard facade, seven bays wide including a projecting pedimented entrance bay, is articulated by a monumental Ionic order and terminated at roof level by a massive ornamental entablature. Each bay contains a tall arched window with scrolled keystone and paneled spandrels. Paired vertical windows rise above the arched windows. The projecting entrance bay with its own flanking monumental Ionic columns has a rectangular doorway which is surmounted by an arched pediment. Over the pediment are three narrow vertical windows. Flanking the entrance steps are sculptured limestone lions executed in 1930 in the heraldic mode by Anna Hyatt Huntington. A continuous frieze inscribed with the names of Spanish historical figures spans the facade below the dentiled and modillioned cornice. A paneled parapet above the cornice is terminated by copper cresting. In 1915 a new wing designed by Charles P. Huntington added five bays at the west side of the original structure. It provided room for offices, book stacks, and a large octagonal room to exhibit eight paintings by Sorolla that were commissioned for the Society. Another five-bay wing was added at the east side of the building under the supervision of Erik Strindberg, visually balancing the wing on the west side of the building. This addition provided space for a reading room and storage for the photographic and stamp collections. While the overall design of the wings is quite similar to that of the original structure, there are some differences. Instead of monumental Ionic columns there are shallow Ionic pilasters, and the wall surface is entirely closed with no openings for windows or doors. The treatment of the entablature is similar to the original.

The 155th Street Facade of the original building is an unbroken colonnade of nine bays containing reliefs of heroic figures symbolizing the peoples who have inhabited Spain. Berthold Nebel, a member of the Academy of Arts and Letters, carved the reliefs in 1939. The 155th Street facades of the wings have the names of Spanish historical figures inscribed on the wall surfaces.

In 1923, H. Brooks Price designed a library building for the Society on the north side of the courtyard facing the museum. It was opened to the public in 1930. The courtyard facade of the building is of limestone and dominated by a large projecting center section with a paneled wall surface. The corners of this section are flanked by large volutes. Two paneled recessed sections flank the center section. Wing walls with large volutes like those on the center section come forward from the recessed sections. Adorning the facade of the recessed portions are large equestrian reliefs of Don Quixote (1942) and Boabdil (1944), executed by Anna Hyatt Huntington. Also by Huntington are sculptured groups of wild animals (1935-36), placed by the volutes. A continuous entablature with inscribed frieze following the pattern of that on the museum building spans all sections of the library building. Stairways leading down from the main level of the terrace to a depressed courtyard section in front of the library are adorned with groups of deer (1929 and 1934), also by Anna Hyatt Huntington. Within the depressed courtyard section is a replica of Huntington's equestrian statue of the Cid Campeador (El Cid), which she presented to the Hispanic Society in 1927. The monumental bronze statue sits on a high stone base with four heroic statues at the corners. Two flagpoles (1928) flank the statue. The base of each flagpole, which is cast in bronze, contains complex groups of figures, heraldic motifs, and ornamental flora.

The north side of the building facing 156th Street, which is of exposed cream-colored brick, is pierced by small rectangular windows and a square-headed bronze door. The building contains two rooms devoted to the arts and crafts of modern Spain and a stack room for the library. The library facilities are reflected visually on the exterior by the many levels of small windows on the 156th Street facade and by the windowless facade on the courtyard.

The American Numismatic Society

Neighboring the museum building of the Hispanic Society is the Building of the American Numismatic Society. Founded in 1858, the name of the Numismatic Society was changed in 1864 to the American Numismatic and Archaeology Society, and it was incorporated as such in 1865. In 1907 the name was changed back to the American Numismatic Society. The election of Archer M. Huntington to the presidency of the Society in 1906 marked a turning point in its history. He donated the land at Audubon Terrace and \$25,000 to provide a permanent home for the Society, and offered storage space for its collection at the Hispanic Society while the building was under construction. After moving into its own building in 1907, the society's activities expanded greatly and a paid staff was hired for the first time.³

The American Numismatic Society is the second oldest in the country, and the building houses the only museum in the world devoted entirely to numismatics. In addition to the largest library devoted to numismatics, it has the largest collection of coins, medals, decorations, and paper money in the nation. The Society conducts research and publishes papers on numismatics as it relates to archeology, history, classical studies, art history, and economics.

In his neo-Italian Renaissance design for the Numismatic Society building, Charles P. Huntington sought to create a harmonious effect with the neighboring Hispanic Society building. The use of a monumental Ionic order and of a base, entablature, and roof line which are continuous with those on the Hispanic Society building are devices aiding this effect. The building is technologically significant as one of the early (1907) reinforced concrete structures in the United States. ⁴ The interior supports are reinforced concrete columns with floors, beams, walls, and footings of cement. As a result the structure is completely fireproof.

On the courtyard facade of the building, engaged Ionic columns separate tall arched windows set below narrow paired windows. The arched windows are ornamented with scrolled keystones and paneled spandrels. At the roof line an inscribed frieze bears the names of numismatists, while the modillioned and dentiled cornice supports a paneled parapet. The asymmetrically-placed entrance is approached by shallow steps flanked by ornate bronze lamp standards. The rectangular double door is surmounted by a pediment comprised of foliate ornament and a medallion, representing a coin, crowning its entablature. The building incorporates a later addition of 1929 designed by H. Brooks Price, which effectively doubled its size. The main feature which marks the difference between the two sections is the use of Ionic pilasters instead of Ionic columns. The 155th Street facade echoes the design of the courtyard facade except that the windows are all square-headed.

The American Geographical Society

The American Geographical Society was the third institution to make Audubon Terrace its home. It is the oldest institution of its kind in the country and was founded in 1851 and incorporated in 1854 as the American Geographical and Statistical Society. The name was changed to the present form by amended charter in 1871. The Society opened its first building on West 81st Street in New York City in 1901. In 1911 when the new building at Audubon Terrace was completed, the Society had begun to function as a national institution.

The Society, which is dedicated to the advancement of geography as a science, is primarily a research organization, studying both physical geography, which covers such topics as glaciology, oceanography, and cartography, and descriptive geography, which includes human geography with its biological, social, political, historical, and economic aspects. The Society aids original investigations, edits and publishes results, and

as of 1895 has given honors. It has played an important role in mapping, including the development of new techniques and instruments. The Society's findings are used by government, business, and the academic community. The geographic library and map collection comprised the largest private geographical collection in the western hemisphere. Because of financial difficulties, the Society sold its collection in 1978 to the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, but the offices of the organization are still maintained in New York.

The building of the American Geographical Society adjoins the library of the Hispanic Society on West 156th Street and also fronts on Broadway and the central courtyard. Designed by Charles P. Huntington in neo-Italian Renaissance style the three-story limestone building with basement and attic was originally seven bays wide. The rusticated base is punctuated by rectangular windows. At the first and second stories double-height engaged Ionic columns flank tall arched windows with paired narrow vertical windows above. A frieze above the third story is inscribed with the names of explorers and geographers. The modillioned and dentiled cornice supports a paneled parapet punctuated by attic windows. Copper cresting surmounts the parapet. At ground level on both the Broadway and courtyard sides are similarly-designed entrances. Each has a rectangular bronze double door flanked by console brackets. The doorways are crowned by ornamental flora surrounding a globe, in keeping with the theme of geography. A four-bay addition, similar in style to the original structure, provided needed space for offices, exhibition and map rooms, reference, reading, and stack rooms for the library, and working areas for draftsmen and map compilers.

The Church of Our Lady of Esperanza

The Church of Our Lady of Esperanza, the only religious building at Audubon Terrace, was opened in 1912. Funds for its construction were provided by Archer M. Huntington, at the suggestion of Doña Manuela de Laverrerie de Barril, wife of the Spanish Consul-General in New York. When founded, it was the second Spanish Roman Catholic Church in New York.⁵ The first pastor was Father Adrian Buisson, who had been pastor of the chapel of Our Lady of Guadalupe on West 14th Street, and he remained in the post for 40 years. Services are still conducted in Spanish.

This is the only building at Audubon Terrace which is oriented to the street instead of the courtyard. Charles P. Huntington's original design for the church was a neo-Italian Renaissance temple. Lawrence G. White, of the firm of McKim, Mead & White, designed an addition in 1924 and remodelled the 156th Street facade. Originally, the church, which is set on a hill, was approached from the street by a flight of brick steps with terra-cotta balustrades.⁶ Today the church is entered at the level of 156th Street, and an inside staircase leads to the vestibule which opens into the sanctuary on the piano nobile. The sanctuary with high round arches is crowned by a dome with a flat stained-glass skylight.

The pedimented exterior facade is three and a half stories high.

Behind the pediment, the drum of the dome supports a pitched roof covered with red Spanish tiles on top of which is a bell and cross. Horizontal string courses divide the facade into three sections. At ground floor level are three square-headed doors, a central wooden double door with knockers and a small wooden door to each side. The central entrance doorway is flanked by fluted Ionic columns. Above is a French door flanked by fluted Corinthian pilasters and surmounted by an arched pediment with cherubim and insignia. Statues of the Virgin Mary as Our Lady of Esperanza flank the French door. Large medallions adorn the wall of this story. The third story is marked by an arcade of windows with balustrades at their bases, while the crowning pediment is adorned with a crown and shield motif. As it was not economically feasible to face the brick walls with limestone, the front facade is stuccoed and the other sides are exposed buff brick. On the courtyard elevation may be seen the original curved rear wall of the church.

The Museum of the American Indian

The last building to be designed by Charles P. Huntington at Audubon Terrace was for the Museum of the American Indian founded by George G. Heye in 1903. The collection, originally known as the Heye Museum, quickly outgrew its first building. In 1915, Archer M. Huntington became interested in the collection and offered land for the present building. Dr. Heye accepted the offer and donated his entire collection with an endowment for the establishment of a public museum. The building, erected with funds from the trustees, was opened in 1922. The museum is concerned with native American archeology, ethnology, and art from prehistoric to contemporary times, and has the world's largest collection of material objects made by the indigenous cultures of the western hemisphere, including Eskimos, Indians of North, South, and Central America, and the West Indies. It exhibits such items as ceramics, textiles, costumes, ceremonial masks, funeral urns and domestic implements. In addition to the preservation and display of the collection, the institution is also responsible for research and publications.

The collection grew so rapidly that in 1925 Archer M. Huntington presented the foundation with a six-acre tract of land on Bruckner Boulevard in the Bronx for a storage annex. Only about ten percent of the collection is on display at the museum itself. Since 1930 the library collection has been deposited with the Huntington Free Library and Reading Room in the Bronx, established by Archer M. Huntington.

Charles P. Huntington designed the Museum of the American Indian building to mirror that of the American Geographical Society located directly across the courtyard. It fronts on Broadway and 155th Street as well as on the courtyard. A three-story neo-Italian Renaissance limestone building with basement and attic, it was originally seven bays wide but now also has a four-bay addition. The rusticated base is punctuated by windows on three sides and a doorway on the terrace side. At the second and third stories engaged Ionic columns flank tall arched windows with scrolled keystones and paired vertical windows above. Many of the window openings on the

terrace and 155th Street sides have been filled in. Inscribed in the frieze extending around three sides of the building are the names of indigenous peoples of America. The modillioned and bracketed cornice is surmounted by a paneled parapet punctuated by attic windows with a copper cresting at the edge of the roof. The courtyard entrance is flanked by scrolled acanthus leaf brackets and is crowned by a pediment of foliate ornament with a buffalo emblem.

The American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters

The complex is terminated on the west by the two buildings housing the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. The American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters was formed in 1976 when the National Institute of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Letters merged. The National Institute of Arts and Letters was founded in 1898 as a national organization devoted to the humanities. Its purpose is to foster interest in literature, music, and the fine arts by singling out and encouraging individual artists and their work through awards and exhibitions. Membership is the highest formal recognition of artistic merit in this country. In 1904 the American Academy of Arts and Letters was founded as an inner body of the National Institute. Membership was limited to fifty individuals chosen from the National Institute. Both the Institute and the Academy received charters by acts of Congress for the protection and advancement of the arts in the United States. In 1923 joint headquarters were established at Audubon Terrace after Archer M. Huntington provided funds for the two buildings and endowments for the two institutions.

The two buildings of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters face each other across the central courtyard. The south building on 155th Street was designed by William Mitchell Kendall (a member of the Academy) of the firm of McKim, Mead & White in 1921 and opened to the public in 1923. The north building, designed by Cass Gilbert, also a member of the Academy, was opened to the public in 1930. The style of the building is based on Italian Renaissance sources from the period of Palladio and is in harmony with the Huntington-designed buildings at Audubon Terrace.

The south building serves as an administration building and houses offices, reception rooms, the Academy members' room with a chair for each member, a library, and an exhibition room known as the south gallery. The rusticated limestone facade on the courtyard which is five bays wide, is articulated by Ionic pilasters flanking full-length windows with alternating triangular and arched pediments. Projecting in front of each of these windows is a low balustrade. Scrolled panels above contain small windows. The center bay contains a square-headed doorway surmounted by a triangular pediment. The sculptured bronze doors, which were designed by Academy member Herbert Adams (1858-1945), are adorned with figures depicting "Arts," "Letters," "Poetry," and "Music." A modillioned and dentiled cornice supports a roof balustrade.

The 155th Street facade of the south building rises three stories and is also of rusticated limestone. At street level the entrance is framed by

a carved molding and surmounted by a triangular pediment. Academy member Adolph A. Weinman (1870-1902) designed the bronze entrance doors which are dedicated to the memory of Mary E. Wilkins Freeman and the women writers of America. Full-length arched windows with balustrades punctuate the story above. The treatment of the upper story is similar to the treatment of the courtyard facade with Ionic columns flanking full-length windows with alternating triangular and arched pediments. Two friezes spanning the facade contain the inscription: "Hold high the flaming torch from age to age, all arts are one, all branches on one tree." The roof cornice is surmounted by a balustrade.

The north building contains a 730-seat auditorium which is considered by experts to have excellent acoustics.⁷ Above the auditorium is an art gallery. The courtyard facade mirrors the courtyard facade of the south building with only slight differences. It has an inscribed frieze, and the scrolled panels above the full-length windows contain marble insets instead of windows. The sculptured bronze entrance doors, also by Herbert Adams, have figures representing "Painting," "Sculpture," "Inspiration," and "Drama." The treatment of the 156th Street facade is similar to the 155th Street facade of the south building.

FOOTNOTES

1. L.R. McCabe, "Our Lady of Hope Spanish Church, In New York City," Architectural Record, 33 (1913), 14.
2. American Geographical Society of New York, American Geographical Society, (New York, 1940), p. 23.
3. W.R. Weeks, The American Numismatic Society, October 20, 1910.
4. Evidence that the structure of reinforced concrete is available at the Plans Desk, Manhattan Buildings Department, Municipal Building, New York.
5. The Rev. Crescent Armanet, Church of Our Lady of Esperanza, (New York, 1921), p. 23; and Our Lady of Esperanza, New York, Fiftieth Anniversary, (New York: Custombook, Inc. 1963), p. 10.
6. For a view of the original church structure see: "Church of our Lady of Guadalupe, Audubon Park," American Architect and Building News, 96 (October 20, 1909), 160 and plate.
7. American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, The Buildings of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, unpublished typescript, 1978.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and the other features of this area, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Audubon Terrace Historic District contains buildings and other improvements which have a special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value and which represent one or more periods or styles of architecture typical of one or more eras in the history of New York City and which cause this area, by reason of these factors, to constitute a distinct section of the city.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Audubon Terrace Historic District is one of the foremost cultural centers in New York City and among the first of its kind in the country; that it was founded by Archer M. Huntington as a center for specialized research with the creation of the Hispanic Society of America in 1904; that most of the buildings were designed by Charles P. Huntington following the prototype of the Hispanic Society building in neo-Italian Renaissance style according to the principles of Beaux-Arts planning; that the buildings designed after Huntington's death were also in the neo-Italian Renaissance style; that the erection of these buildings for the institutions at Audubon Terrace with the encouragement and funding of Archer M. Huntington served as a stimulus to the growth of the organizations; that collections of national significance are located in the buildings at Audubon Terrace; that the American Numismatic Society building is of technological interest as one of the earliest concrete buildings in the country; that the Church of Our Lady of Esperanza was the second Spanish church in New York City; that Audubon Terrace is enhanced with sculptural works by Anna Hyatt Huntington, Berthold Nebel, Herbert Adams, and Adolph Weinman; and that because of the unity of design and the prestige of the institutions Audubon Terrace remains a vital architectural and cultural asset to New York City.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 21 (formerly 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 an Historic District the Audubon Terrace Historic District containing the property bounded by the western curb line of Broadway, the northern curb line of West 155th Street, the western property line of 633 West 155th Street--632-638 West 156th Street, and the southern curb line of West 156th Street, Borough of Manhattan.

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