

# National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York Headquarters Interiors

215 East 71<sup>th</sup> Street (aka 215-217 East 71<sup>st</sup> Street), Manhattan  
Tax Map Block 1426 Lot 10

**Built:** 1929-30

**Architect:** Richard Henry Dana, Jr.

**Style:** Georgian Revival

**Proposed Action:** Calendared December 12, 2017

Public Hearing May 21, 2019



**Members' Room, Second Floor**  
**National Society of Colonial Dames**  
**State of New York 2018 (LPC)**

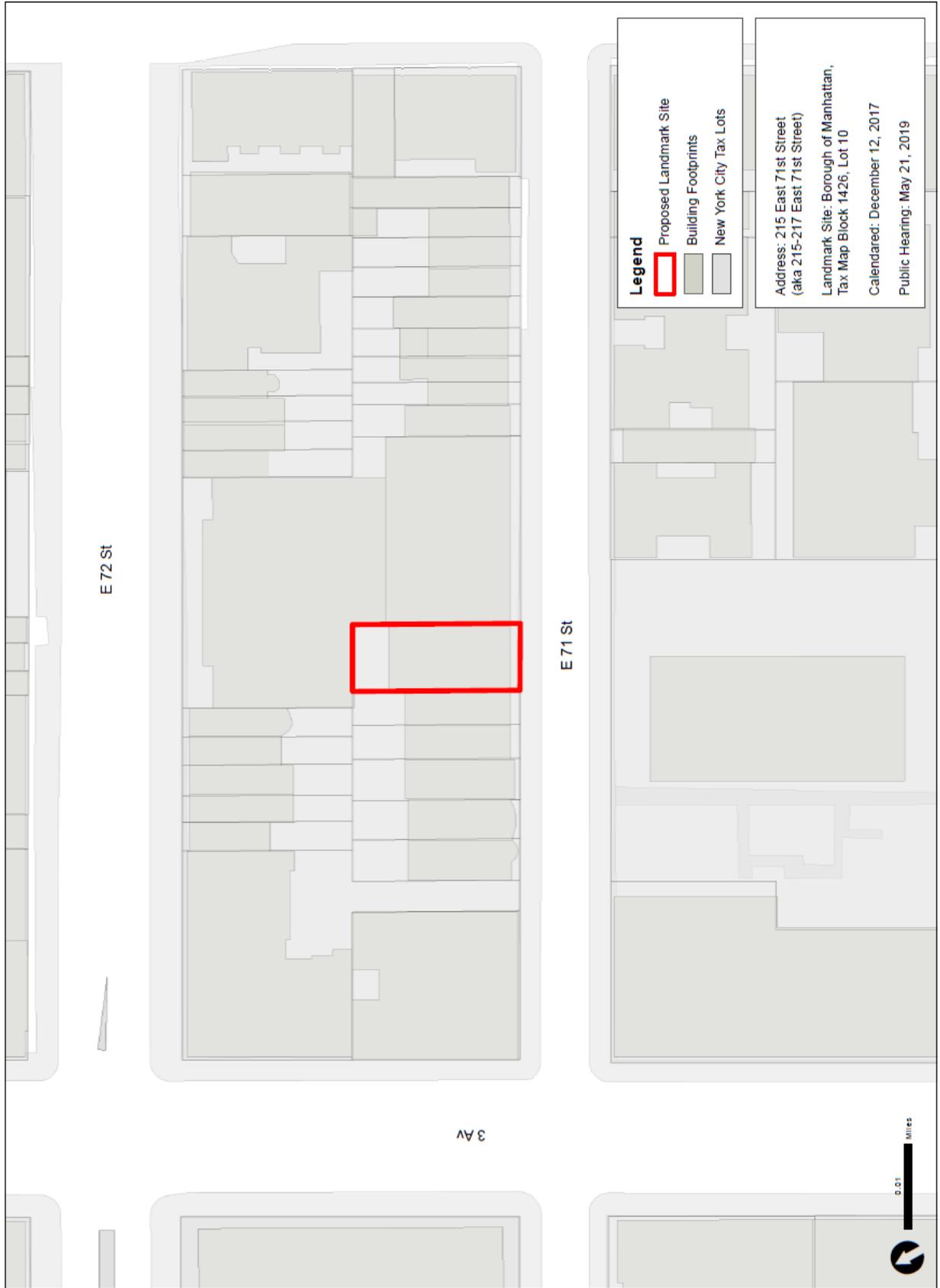
The public rooms of the National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York Headquarters represent an outstanding example of domestic Georgian Revival interior design for educational and institutional use. Designed by New York City architect Richard Henry Dana, Jr., and built in 1930, the Headquarters building at 215 East 71st Street incorporates a modified Georgian plan and a variety of colonial finishes based on mid-18th-century houses that belonged to well-to-do citizens along the Eastern Seaboard. There are also several salvaged installations from 18th-century English buildings, illustrating the inspiration for elegant Georgian interiors that were fashionable before the American Revolution.

The public rooms addressed in this designation include the first floor's Entry Foyer, the Stair hall (on all three floors), the Members' Dressing Room, and Dining Room; the second floor's Members' Lounge and Members' Room; and the third floor's Exhibition Hall. These spaces freely combine common elements of 18th-century interior design such as low paneled wainscots with molded chair rails, multi-light sash windows with deep paneled reveals, paneled doors, and crown moldings with more elaborate decorative elements of the period. Particularly notable are the variety of fireplace mantles and doorway pediments. Although each room is finished slightly differently, the result is a cohesive design reflective of the taste and styles of the 18th century as skillfully adapted by Richard Henry Dana, Jr. (1879-1933), a specialist in Colonial Revival architecture.

The National Society of Colonial Dames of America was founded in Philadelphia in 1891 as a federation of Corporate Societies whose members are descendants of significant people during the colonial period. As part of their mission, the Society has been in the forefront of historic preservation since its founding. As such, the National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York, established 1896, has been responsible for the Van Cortlandt Mansion in the Bronx. It was built 1748-49 and is a designated New York City Landmark.

The Society is also dedicated to the promotion and appreciation of the history of the American colonial period through their collections and educational programs that are available to the public. The decision by the Colonial Dames to install interiors based on actual houses of the period supported the educational mission of the Society. These sophisticated and refined interiors of the Headquarters Building remain much as they were in 1930 and continue to illustrate the re-creation of historic Georgian interiors of pre-Revolutionary America.

(Proposed) National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York Headquarters Interiors | LP-2606 **NYC** Landmarks Preservation Commission



**Legend**

- Proposed Landmark Site
- Building Footprints
- New York City Tax Lots

Address: 215 East 71st Street  
(aka 215-217 East 71st Street)  
Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan,  
Tax Map Block 1426, Lot 10  
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