

Still the Wrecker's Ball

At the corner of Seventy-ninth Street and Fifth Avenue a small Rose of Sharon tree is budding, half buried in dusty stone rubble. Old boards lean brutally against its branches. It is all that is left to mark the site of the Brokaw mansion.

At the corner of Twenty-sixth Street and Madison Avenue the Manhattan Club is scheduled for demolition. Nothing will bloom there except another office building. Nothing else could, in view of the \$600,000 just paid for the property by an investment builder.

The Manhattan Club is one of New York's more notable historic buildings. Originally the Jerome House, it was the last word in architectural elegance when it was built in the "French taste" in the eighteenth-fifties by Leonard Jerome, who for a decade was part-owner of The New-York Times. He was also a dashing Victorian with a flair for driving four-in-hands and a family of beautiful daughters. He left the mansion to one of them, who married Lord Randolph Churchill; their son was Winston Churchill. The building, therefore, is not only one of the city's better architectural links with its past but also its most tangible connection with one of the great figures of our time. The Jerome house has history, tradition and style. Unfortunately, these are not words in the investment builder's lexicon.

No official designation of buildings and areas to be protected can be made until the permanent Landmarks Commission is appointed. The Mayor must do this—by confirming or changing the commission's temporary membership. Until he does, the wheels of bureaucracy grind and the wrecker's ball swings.