

Rape of the Brokaw Mansion

In weekend stealth the vulture-like work of destroying another New York landmark has begun. Wrecking crews are busy tearing down the Brokaw Mansion at Fifth Avenue and Seventy-ninth Street, and lovers of beauty can indulge once again in the macabre pleasure of attending a demolition-watching. The despoilers were so eager to get this lovely building down that they were delighted to pay premium rates to the workmen for their weekend toil. After all, what better time to make off with a municipal jewel? Nobody can be reached to do anything about stopping you, and the extra pay won't raise the rates very much on luxury apartments to be put up on the site.

So vanishes a particularly urbane and beautiful piece of New York. The mansion was one of a group of gracious and distinguished structures of superior quality in a setting of rare elegance. "We ain't breaking no laws," said an anonymous spokesman for the anonymous wreckers. There are no laws to break, and—at the rate the city is moving on passage of its pending landmarks legislation—there will be no landmarks to save. Just new monuments to ugliness.