

Culte Sets ^{WS} Hearing on POST JUN 21 1973 Landmarks

By ROBERTA B. GRATZ

The City Council next month will take up legislation to increase protection of New York City landmarks. Majority Leader Thomas J. Culte said this week.

Culte has been under pressure from preservationist groups to move on legislation, introduced in October by Councilman Burden (D-Man.), that would toughen the 1965 Landmarks Preservation Law.

When the bill was first introduced, Culte, a key figure in establishing legislative priorities for the Council, indicated his support in principle. But until now he has gone no further.

Deputy Mayor Edward Morrison indicated this week the Administration had reviewed the legislation, "ironed out minor problems" and was now "strongly pushing it."

"Whatever type of hearing seems necessary will be held in early July," Culte said.

That would mean either private meetings with interested parties, such as representatives of the Landmarks Commission, or public hearings if there was a demand.

The bill would extend Landmarks Commission jurisdiction to designation of "interior spaces" (such as Grand Central) and "scenic landmarks" (such as Central or Prospect Parks)—specifically omitted from the 1965 law. It would also eliminate the crippling clause that only allows the commission to consider new designations for six-month periods every three years.

The 1965 law makes it illegal to demolish or externally alter a landmark designated by the commission. The commission may not designate without public hearings and they are limited to the six-month periods. The commission is scheduled to begin a new round of hearings next month.

In January, a series of articles in The Post focused on the weaknesses of the 1965 law and on the widespread criticism of the commission's apparent reluctance in the face of real estate resistance—to make full use of the limited powers it has.