

Postcards Celebrate the City's 75th ^{5/8/73}

By ROBERTA B. GRATZ

This is National Historic Preservation Week. The Mayor has issued an appropriate proclamation, the city's Diamond Jubilee Committee has begun to plan a variety of programs that will bring attention to this city's landmarks during this year's 75th birthday celebration, and

preservation battles continue at a feverish pace in neighborhoods throughout the city.

Yet, every day the millions of people who either live or work here daily rush from one place to the next never noticing the landmark features that make so much of this city's architectural heritage so great.

"It's a matter of how you look at things, of looking without really seeing," says Mike Gladstone, a writer and editor who was formerly the director of the Museum of American Folk Art.

To spur people onto a new visual appreciation of the cityscape, Gladstone has produced on his own a series of

picture postcards, which are unusual for this city but common throughout the heritage-conscious cities of Europe. It is a 10-card series, in color and black and white, showing closeup details of unique architectural character.

Four black and white cards feature decorative surface patterns of buildings in the SoHo East Iron District, scheduled to be designated an historic district this summer by the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Color cards show a giant stone angel, a wrought iron lantern, a facade detail from the New-York Historical Society, a cast iron column. There is also an upward view of City Hall with the tower of the McKim, Mead & White Municipal Building behind it.

And there is a terra cotta panel in color from the only building in the city designed by Louis Sullivan, the Bayard-Condit Building, long ago proposed for landmark designation but not yet acted upon by the Landmarks Commission.

Gladstone got the idea for the postcards while working as a publications consultant for the State Council on the Arts, a position which took him to civic and preservation groups around the state.

"But while books were fine," Gladstone says, "I felt a more immediate, popular and less expensive way to get the message across might be issuing postcards."

He had also noticed how effective the Sierra Club's mass distribution of photographs had been in bringing awareness to the country's threatened natural heritage. "That's now part of everyone's environmental consciousness," says Gladstone, noting that everyone is now for protecting animals and trees. "Now we have to make the manmade object the focus of that concern," he adds.

Moreover, Gladstone says, "I wanted to find color photos that would do for New York City what Impressionist paintings did for Paris." For that he enlisted hard-edge painter Mark Feldstein who for several years has been photographing New York's unobserved architecture.

Three museums — the Brooklyn Museum, the Museum of the City of New York and the South Street Seaport — are currently carrying the cards. The \$3 packets of 20 cards (two of each subject) are also available by mail from Cranford Wood, 310 E. 75th St.