

ROSE HILL (Fordham University Administration Building), Fordham University, Rose Hill Campus, East Fordham Road and East 191st Street, Borough of The Bronx. Center section built 1836-38.

Landmark Site: Borough of The Bronx Tax Map Block 3273, Lot 1 in part consisting of the land on which the described building is situated.

On March 3, 1970 the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of Rose Hill (Fordham University Administration Building) and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 10). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Five witnesses spoke in favor of designation, including Professor Irma B. Jaffe, Chairman of the Department of Fine Arts, who represented the University. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. The Commission also received a letter from Joseph R. Cammarosano, Executive Vice President of the University. Writing on behalf of Rev. Michael P. Walsh, S. J., President of Fordham, Mr. Cammarosano said; "We are delighted to learn that the City's Landmarks Preservation Commission is moving forward with its recommendation to have three of our buildings on the Rose Hill Campus officially designated as Landmarks. We are grateful to you for bringing this good news to our attention, and we shall, of course, be pleased to cooperate with the Commission in any way we can."

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Superbly sited on a semi-circular tree-lined driveway of the Fordham University campus, this 19th century country house is dignified in appearance and impressive in size. Now known as the Rose Hill Administration Building, it is an outstanding example of the Greek Revival period. The two and one-half story random ashlar structure with low basement has one of the finest entrance porches in New York City.

The west facade, which remains basically unaltered, reveals the original classic character of this house of the late 1830s. Standing on a raised platform with wide steps, the notable entrance porch has fluted Ionic columns and square corner posts supporting a superbly proportioned full entablature. Centrally located in the second floor wall above the porch is a tripartite window which has Greek "ears" in the enframing and is crowned by a pedimented lintel.

Another striking motif which appears on this front facade is the richly carved palmetto design on the marble lintels over the windows of the first and second floors. Dominating and crowning the house is a full wooden entablature. Dentils enrich its cornice, and attic windows pierce the frieze. An octagonal cupola surmounts the roof.

Fordham University takes its name from the Manor of Fordham, granted in 1671 to John Archer (Jan Arcer) by the Royal Governor, Francis Lovelace. The manor was a very large tract, later divided into many farms. The site of this campus was known, for almost a century, as the Corser Farm. Benjamin Fletcher Corser, born on the farm about 1692, was the grandfather of Andrew Corsa (1762-1853) who, as a member of the Westchester Guides, served as a scout for the American and French commands during the Revolution.

Robert Watts (1743-1814) acquired the property in 1787 and named his country estate after "Rose Hill", the former residence of his father, the Hon. John Watts, Sr., on Manhattan. Ultimately, the name goes back to the 16th century Watts estate near Edinburgh. Robert Watts married Lady Mary Alexander, daughter of Lord Stirling, one of Washington's generals. "Rose Hill" remained in the possession of Robert Watts, Jr., their son, until 1824.

The "Rose Hill" estate was bought in 1836 by Horatio Shephard Moat, a Brooklyn merchant, who built the splendid Greek Revival residence that is the subject of this report. In 1839, the property was purchased by Bishop Hughes, for a seminary for his diocese. The arrangements for a college began at the same time. The University began as St. John's College, Fordham, on June 24, 1841. On that date it was formally opened by the Right Reverend John Hughes, D. D.,

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then Coadjutor-Bishop of New York, and later its first Archbishop. The Reverend John McClosky, subsequently Bishop of Albany, Archbishop of New York and the first American Cardinal, was appointed President. The college opened in September with six students. In 1905, the Charter of St. John's College was amended, and the institution received the corporate and academic name of Fordham University. With two wings, added at a later date, the house is now a part of the Administration Building of Fordham University.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that Rose Hill (Fordham University Administration Building) has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, Rose Hill (Fordham University Administration Building) is an outstanding example of Greek Revival domestic architecture, superbly sited, that it has handsome classic details, that it is historically associated with St. John's College, "Rose Hill Farm" and the Manor of Fordham, and that it enhances the campus by its distinctive architectural quality.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 63 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark Rose Hill, (Fordham University Administration Building) Fordham University, Rose Hill Campus, East Fordham Road and East 191st Street, Borough of The Bronx and designates as its Landmark Site that part of the Borough of The Bronx Tax Map Block 3273, Lot 1 which contains the land on which the described building is situated.