

Landmarks Preservation Commission
April 19, 1966, Number 4
LP-0129

DUFF HOUSE, Riverdale Presbyterian Church, 4765 Henry Hudson Parkway West,
Borough of The Bronx. 1863, architect James Renwick.

Landmark Site: Borough of The Bronx Tax Map Block 5912, Lot 55.

On January 11, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of Duff House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 31). One witness spoke in favor of designation. The Commission continued the public hearing until February 8, 1966 (Item No. 30). At that time no speakers appeared to testify. Both hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There were no speakers in opposition to designation at either meeting. In a letter to the Commission, the Board of Trustees of the Riverdale Presbyterian Church, owners of Duff House, said that they are pleased to have this building designated.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This handsome little stone manse was originally designed as the rectory for the Riverdale Presbyterian Church. It was built at the same time as the church, in the late Gothic Revival style, by the same noted architect. Although the church is executed in a more nearly pure Gothic style, the architect could not resist, in designing the manse, the introduction of the currently fashionable Mansard roof, tucked away behind Gothic gables and dormers. This is a most interesting transitional building and is a clear example of how practical considerations would eventually force the modification of a style. Here it was the consideration of adequate headroom for the second floor, as solved so beautifully by the Mansard roof, which caused it to be introduced in a building which belonged stylistically to an earlier period.

The charming picturesque profiles seen in the church are, nonetheless, retained here and this little rectory or manse complements the church to great advantage, producing a handsome pair of buildings executed in the same general style of architecture.

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 Duff House 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, Duff House, the former rectory of the Riverdale Presbyterian Church, is a most attractive small residence-type structure of the late Gothic Revival period of architecture displaying transitional elements, that it is both charming and picturesque and that it makes a fine contribution to the good appearance of the neighborhood.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 8-A 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, Duff House, Riverdale Presbyterian Church, 4765 Henry Hudson Parkway West, Borough of The Bronx and designates Tax Map Block 5912, Lot 55, Borough of The Bronx, as its Landmark Site.