

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
June 21, 1966, Number 1  
LP-0131

WAVE HILL HOUSE, 675 West 252nd Street, Borough of The Bronx. Center section built between 1820 and 1830, North wing 1910, South wing 1932.

Landmark Site: Borough of The Bronx Tax Map Block 5937, Lot 440.

On January 11, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Wave Hill House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 33). One witness spoke in favor of designation. The Commission continued the public hearing until February 8, 1966 (Item No. 32). At that time two speakers spoke in favor of designation, including a Director of the Wave Hill Inc. which conducts programs at this City-owned property. Both hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. There were no speakers in opposition to designation at either meeting. In a letter, Park Commissioner Thomas Hoving recommended designation.

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This elegant stone mansion, situated on twenty acres of land on the Hudson, commands a sweeping view of the Palisades. It is a superb example of an American manor house. The original central portion, in the Federal Style, blends harmoniously with the two wings, which were added later. The entrance doorway with its heavy columns and broken pediment is Georgian in style and was added in the Twentieth Century remodelling. The north wing, designed for a museum collection, is generally Gothic in character. These diverse architectural styles were masterfully combined and skillfully blended in this two and one half story building to produce a manor house of outstanding distinction. The white painted wood trim lends a contrasting touch of lightness and gayety to this pleasant field-stone house.

Over the years, Wave Hill House has had a number of distinguished residents. Included among them were Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain, and Arturo Toscanini. George W. Perkins, a successful financier who owned the estate from 1903-32, was a prominent conservationist. His daughter, Mrs. Edward U. Freeman, and her husband, were the owners until 1960, when they gave the estate to the Parks Department of the City of New York. In 1965, the Parks Department signed an agreement with Wave Hill Inc., a non-profit organization which provides that they will operate the estate as a Cultural and Scientific Center to be known as "Perkins Gardens". A second house on the estate known as "Glyndor", is to be converted into an environmental science center, which will share the grounds at the northern end of "Perkins Gardens", for nature studies.

#### 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 Wave Hill 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, Wave Hill House is an outstanding example of a manor house, that it combines Georgian and Gothic Eclectic styles with the best of the Federal Style, that the handsome architectural details were executed by superior craftsmen and that this fine House and estate will serve the people of New York as a cultural and scientific center to be known as "Perkins Gardens".

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 the Wave Hill House, 675 West 252nd Street, Borough of The Bronx and designates Tax Map Block 5937, Lot 440, Borough of The Bronx, as its Landmark Site.