

REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH OF NEWTOWN AND FELLOWSHIP HALL, 85-15 Broadway, Elmhurst, Borough of Queens. Church built 1831; Hall built 1860.

Landmark Site: Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 1836, Lot 112.

On January 11, 1966, The Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Reformed Dutch Church of Newtown and Fellowship Hall and the proposed designation of the related landmark site. (Item No. 40). No witnesses appeared at the hearing. The Commission continued the public hearing until February 8, 1966 (Item No. 39). At that time three speakers spoke in favor of designation, including the Rev. A. Nelson Doak, Minister of the Church, who said the Church was happy to co-operate. Both hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There were no speakers in opposition to designation at either meeting.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This Church, one of the oldest wood churches in the City, can be seen and enjoyed by pedestrians and motorists from three directions. The gable end faces west towards Broadway. The handsome little Church is one story high with a pitched roof. A flat roofed porch provides shelter for the congregation and is supported by seven fine wooden columns with a simple cornice. Three semicircular headed windows, which were originally square headed, are located above the porch, one above each of the doorways. At the sides, five windows of the same type begin at pew height. A beautiful octagonal bell tower with copper roof is supported on a square base which straddles the ridge of the roof at the west end. From the Corona Avenue side, the cemetery, with its many remaining headstones, has the appearance of a small colonial village churchyard.

Fellowship Hall, also approached from Broadway, has a portico of fine wooden columns, crowned by an entablature and a pedimented gable with the traditional circular window. It too has a cupola, but it is much smaller than the one on the Church. Built originally as a chapel, the Hall was located to the south and apart from the Church. In 1906, it was moved back from the street and was aligned with the main Church. The alignment of this addition, with its delicate pilasters, is perfectly designed to tie together the colonaded porches of the two main buildings. This Twentieth Century improvement, now a Wayside Chapel, is an exemplary piece of work. Considered as a group, these buildings make an admirable architectural composition.

The first church built on the site was completed by the congregation in 1735 employing volunteer labor. It was also built of wood and had an octagonal plan with roof pitched to a peak above which was a small lantern. This church was replaced by the present Church in 1831, using the original cornerstone as part of the new foundation. The framing of the buildings is entirely of wood, but in 1965 random width aluminum shingles were applied over the original wood shingles for protection.

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 the Reformed Dutch Church of Newtown and Fellowship Hall 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, the Reformed Church of Newtown and Fellowship Hall, considered as a group, is one of the few all wood church groups remaining in the City, that these two buildings with their porches, gable ends and towers, though built at different times, are good examples of the Greek Revival style of architecture successfully and attractively combined and that they represent an important part of the history of the neighborhood of which they are the outstanding architectural monument.

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 Reformed Dutch Church of Newtown and Fellowship Hall, 85-15 Broadway, Elmhurst, Borough of Queens and designates Tax Map Block 1836, Lot 112, Borough of Queens, as its Landmark Site.