

KING MANSION, King Park, 150th Street and Jamaica Avenue, Jamaica, Borough of Queens. Rear section built 1730, Left section 1755, Right section about 1806; architects unknown.

Landmark Site: Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 9682, Lot 1.

On January 11, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the King Mansion and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 47). At that time no speakers appeared to testify. The Commission continued the public hearing until February 8, 1966 (Item No. 46). At that time five speakers spoke in favor of designation, including the President and other representatives of the King Manor Association. 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, Park Commissioner Thomas Hoving recommended designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

King Mansion, the "country seat" of Rufus King, is a distinguished Mid-Eighteenth Century Colonial mansion with some early Federal details. This two and a half story white, frame shingle house with gambrel roof has great dignity. It is rectangular in plan with a long, low el (extension) in the rear, placed at right angles to the main house. The small original cottage, the portion at the rear, dates from 1730 and contains the original kitchen. The remaining portion of the house was built about 1750.

When Rufus King purchased the farm in 1805, he added the newer portion of the house in 1806. There is a handsome entrance porch with Doric columns, above which is a fine Palladian window. The main entrance has a Dutch door with side lights and transom and it leads into a central hall, with rooms on either side. Rufus King eventually enlarged the house to contain seventeen rooms.

Historically, the house is important because of its association with the King family. Rufus King, a Federalist statesman, was a member of the Continental Congress, a framer of the Constitution, delegate to the Constitutional Convention and Minister to Great Britain. His son, John Alsop King, who also lived in the house, was in turn a member of the State Assembly, a State Senator, a U. S. Congressman and was elected Governor of New York in 1856. The house remained in the possession of the King family until 1896. In 1897, the King property was acquired from the estate by the Village of Jamaica. When the village was absorbed into the City of New York, the house and its environs came under the jurisdiction of the Park Department.

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 King Mansion 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 King Mansion is one of the few fine Eighteenth Century American Colonial manor houses remaining in Queens, that it is historically outstanding through its connection with Rufus King, statesman, friend of Washington, member of the Constitutional Convention and an early Minister to Great Britain, and that it is further distinguished as the home of his son, a Governor of the State of New York, John Alsop King.

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 King Mansion, King Park, 150th Street and Jamaica Avenue, Jamaica, Borough of Queens, and designates Tax Map Block 9682, Lot 1, Borough of Queens, as its Landmark Site.