

MAIN BROOKLYN POST OFFICE, 271-301 Washington Street, Borough of Brooklyn. Begun 1885, completed 1891; supervising architect Mifflin E. Bell. Extension completed in 1933.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 127, Lot 1.

On February 8, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Main Brooklyn Post Office and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 47). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Three witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This handsome Romanesque Revival Post Office building is admirably located. It may be seen from the Parkes-Cadman Plaza which extends from the east end of Brooklyn Bridge to Borough Hall. The original portion of the building, facing Johnson Street, is only one-third the size of this imposing structure which now covers an entire block. Although the new part is an exceptionally well designed seven story addition and adheres faithfully to the design of the original, it is the old portion, dating from 1885, which is architecturally the most interesting. This old structure is four stories high and has a steep, sloping roof with a high, square tower on the southwest corner.

The basement and first floors display both handsome rock-faced and polished cut granite. The remainder of the building is faced with smooth surfaced cut stone, although the principal windows are framed with attractive rock-faced granite. A steep, sloping slate roof, punctuated by heavily ornamented dormer windows, rises above a corbelled cornice. Each floor is marked by strong horizontal moldings. The Johnson Street facade is the most impressive, particularly its central motif, which consists of a strong central grouping of windows above the great arched entrance doorway. It terminates in a large ornamental gable. This central portion is flanked on either side by striking, semicircular towers which are seated on carved, stone corbels.

This Post Office displays a wealth of detail with its doors and windows handsomely enframed in stone. The small towers, flanking the entrance, are richly decorated with Romanesque detail, as is the large corner tower which is terminated, at its top, by a series of balconies and a high pyramidal roof.

The Post Office is an excellent example of the Romanesque Revival Style and, interestingly, it also combines some French and German Renaissance detail in its design. It takes its place with Borough Hall and some of the newer public buildings in embellishing Brooklyn's new Municipal Center.

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 Main Brooklyn Post Office 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 Main Brooklyn Post Office is an outstanding example of Romanesque Revival architecture, that its picturesque profile and dignified mass contribute to the interesting skyline of the area, and that it is a fine example of a building erected by the United States Government to serve a Civic function.

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 Main Brooklyn Post Office, 271-301 Washington Street, Borough of Brooklyn and designates Tax Map Block 127, Lot 1, Borough of Brooklyn, as its Landmark Site.