

Landmarks Preservation Commission
June 21, 1966, Number 2
LP-0152

LEFFERTS HOMESTEAD, Prospect Park, Flatbush Avenue at Empire Boulevard, Borough of Brooklyn. Built between 1777 and 1783; architect unknown.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 1117, Lot I in part, consisting of the land on which the described building is situated.

On February 8, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Lefferts Homestead and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 53). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Five witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This charming Eighteenth Century Dutch Colonial farmhouse replaced the earlier Lefferts Homestead burned by the Americans, while they were engaging the British in the battle of Flatbush in 1776. Built of wood, some of it salvaged from the Seventeenth Century house, it is a good example of post-Revolutionary war construction. The long rear wall is covered with shingles while the other outside walls are covered with clapboard. A gambrel roof with short high shoulders covers the main part of the house; then in a long slope, the shingle-covered roof flares out, bell-like, and rests on six slender columns. This creates a gracious porch running the length of the main part of the house. An attractive feature of this small house, although of a later period, is the beautiful entrance where delicate colonnettes and exquisite reeding set off leaded lights and a fine Dutch door. This Federal door is attributed to the architect Major L'Enfant.

Built by Lieutenant Peter Lefferts between 1777 and 1783, the house was presented by his descendants to the City in 1918, when it was moved to Prospect Park from its original location at 563 Flatbush Avenue. Peter Lefferts' son, John Lefferts, who also lived in this house, was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from New York in the Thirteenth Congress (1813-15) and a delegate to the New York State Constitutional Convention in 1821. The main part of the house is cared for by the D.A.R., and the Homestead is a house museum open to the public.

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 Lefferts Homestead 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, Lefferts Homestead is an excellent example of a charming Eighteenth Century Dutch Colonial farmhouse, that it has a number of beautiful architectural details in an excellent state of preservation, that it serves the people of New York City as a house museum expressing the taste and architectural beauty of its period, and that it is a dignified reminder of one part of our cultural past.

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 Lefferts Homestead, Prospect Park, Flatbush Avenue at Empire Boulevard, Borough of Brooklyn, and designates as its related Landmark Site that part of Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map 1117, Lot I which contains the land on which the described building is situated.