

JUMEL TERRACE HISTORIC DISTRICT, Borough of Manhattan.

The property bounded by West 160th Street, the eastern property line of 418 West 160th Street, the rear lot lines of 418 through 430 West 160th Street, the western property line of 430 West 160th Street, West 160th Street, the rear lot line of 2 Jumel Terrace, part of the rear lot line of 12 Sylvan Terrace, the rear lot lines of 10 through 2 Sylvan Terrace, the western property line of 2 Sylvan Terrace, Sylvan Terrace, the western property line of 1 Sylvan Terrace, the rear lot lines of 1 through 9 Sylvan Terrace, part of the rear lot line of 11 Sylvan Terrace, the rear lot lines of 10 through 18 Jumel Terrace, part of the rear lot line of 438 West 162nd Street, the rear lot lines of 440 through 444 West 162nd Street, the western property line of 444 West 162nd Street, West 162nd Street, the western property line of 451 West 162nd Street, the rear lot lines of 451 through 425 West 162nd Street, the eastern property line of 425 West 162nd Street, West 162nd Street, Edgecombe Avenue to West 160th Street.

On February 3, 1970 the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Jumel Terrace Historic District (Item No. 1). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Seventeen persons spoke in favor of the proposed designation; there were no speakers in opposition to designation. The Commission has also received a petition from residents in the proposed Historic District as well as a number of other communications all of which are strongly in favor of the proposal.

INTRODUCTION

The Jumel Terrace Historic District includes almost fifty row houses and one apartment house. It is located between St. Nicholas Avenue and Edgecombe Avenue and extends from the south side of West 160th Street to the north side of West 162nd Street. The District is important in that it provides a dignified and largely homogeneous setting for one of the City's most historic buildings, the Roger-Morris Jumel Mansion, which was officially designated a Landmark on July 12, 1967. The District includes the Mansion and the surrounding Roger Morris Park within its confines.

The District is also significant in that the existing buildings represent, without exception, the original and only construction that has taken place on these sites since they were part of a large country estate.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of this estate starts with the ownership of Jan Kiersen, a Dutchman, who in 1696 and 1700 obtained releases from Harlem residents and a deed from the officers of the Town of Harlem, as the property lay within the bounds of the Town patent. Kiersen had his farm here. He continued to enlarge his holding and eventually gave it, reputedly as a wedding present, to his son-in-law Jacob Dyckman. In 1763, Jacob Dyckman and his family sold the property to James Carrol, a butcher, for 1,000 pounds. Carrol raised vegetables and fruits on the farm, and in 1765 put an advertisement in the New York Mercury of May 13th: "To be sold: Farm on the Road leading to Kings Bridge in the township of Harlem, of about 100 acres, the land runs from River to River Enquire of James Carrol." Colonel Roger Morris bought the estate and built the present Mansion as his summer home.

The subsequent history of the house and grounds, its use by George Washington as his headquarters, the British occupation by General Sir Henry Clinton, the subsequent purchase by Stephen Jumel and the marriage of his widow to Aaron Burr are all described in designation report LP-0308.

After Madame Jumel's death in the house in 1865, the estate was tied up in litigation for the next sixteen years. Altogether, there were some twenty cases at law during this period before ownership was confirmed in one Nelson Chase. Seth Milliken bought the Mansion in 1887 and what remained of the estate was auctioned off. In 1894 the Mansion, together with what is now Roger Morris Park was sold to General F. P. Earle, who made his home here until his death. His widow sold it to the City of New York in 1903.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

The long standing rural nature of the surroundings began changing in 1882 when the two rows of wooden houses were constructed that still face each other across Sylvan Terrace. This short, once private street, roughly follows the line of the carriage drive that formerly led from the Mansion to Kings Bridge Road, now St. Nicholas Avenue.

Subsequently, in 1890-91 handsome brick houses showing the asymmetrical influence of the Queen Anne style were built along West 160th Street, to be followed in turn by the Romanesque Revival 1895-96 stone houses along Jumel Terrace and 162nd Street and the Classical Revival houses of 1902 also on 162nd Street. The latest building in the District, and its only apartment house, is the 1909 brick and limestone structure at the corner of Jumel Terrace and 160th Street. Thus the entire development of the District, surrounding the Morris-Jumel Mansion, took place within less than thirty years, and except for the early vernacular rows of wooden houses on Sylvan Terrace, is remarkably homogeneous in material and character.

MORRIS-JUMEL MANSION in Roger Morris Park, betw. Edgecombe Avenue, West 160th Street, Jumel Terrace and West 162nd Street.

For a description and analysis of this designated Landmark and related site see the Landmarks Preservation Commission Report of July 12, 1967.

JUMEL TERRACE (Betw. West 162nd St. and West 160th St.)

Jumel Terrace is a pleasant cobblestone street which actually has only five houses, Nos. 10-18, facing it. The sides of a number of other buildings along Jumel Terrace are described on the streets which they face.

JUMEL TERRACE (Nos. 10-18) Betw. West 162nd St. & Sylvan Terrace.

WEST SIDE

This short residential block consists of five charming three-story Romanesque Revival houses, designed by Henry Fouchaux in 1896 for William W. Watkins. Stoops, flared at the bottom, ascend over high basements to the first floor where there are handsome paired windows alongside the entrance doors.

No. 10 has a three sided masonry bay, extending full height, and some of the houses retain their original doors. All the first stories are of rough-cut brownstone while the upper two stories are constructed of smooth ashlar. The architectural treatment of the third story alternates, one house having round headed windows, the next an egg and dart molding serving as a band course over square headed windows. All five houses have interesting three quarter engaged colonnettes surmounted by Romanesque capitals flanking the second story windows. Handsome entablatures have bracketed cornices which are stepped down gradually, house by house, to conform with the hill on which the row is built.

SYLVAN TERRACE (Nos. 2-20 and 1-19 Betw. Jumel Terrace & St. Nicholas Avenue.

Sylvan Terrace has rows of ten little two-story wooden houses on each side. Their high narrow stoops, set parallel to and tight against the house fronts, rise up to the entrances over the basement doors.

Looking up this street one obtains a fine view of the Jumel Mansion at its eastern end. At the westerly end is a fence with steps leading down to St. Nicholas Avenue.

These houses, designed by G. Robinson, Jr. for James E. Ray, represent the first investment development of the area, in 1882. No. 20 retains over the doorway the original molded, dentiled canopy supported by scrollwork brackets. Several other houses retain their original, boldly paneled double doors, No. 5 having an excellent example. Most of the houses are now covered with stucco, metal siding or imitation brick. The cornices are supported on small, uniformly spaced brackets and are stepped down house by house as they approach St. Nicholas Avenue.

WEST 160TH STREET (Nos. 418-430 & 425) Betw. Edgecombe & St. Nicholas Avenues.

The portion of this street within the Historic District is relatively homogeneous. The seven brick and stone houses on the south side, complement the six story brick and stone apartment building on the north side.

SOUTH SIDE

This short row of three story houses (Nos. 418-430) displays an unusual silhouette against the sky, as here the roof cornices alternate high and low. The houses also alternate in their main features and are generally transitional from the Romanesque Revival to the Queen Anne style.

The first house erected was No. 418, built in 1890 and designed by the architects Walgrove and Israels for Mrs. Justine S. Evans. A high masonry stoop leads to the first floor where the front door is surrounded by stone quoins as is the adjacent window. A polygonal oriel with engaged columns flanking its windows is the principal feature of the second story. Enhancing the top story is a vertical bas relief of terra cotta between the two windows. Above this, corbeled bricks support a decorative fascia, surmounted by a row of dentils and a roof cornice, supported by evenly spaced console brackets.

Nos. 420 and 422 were designed by Richard R. Davis for Anna T. Dale in 1891. No. 420 has its masonry stoop set parallel to the street. The doorway and window of the rough-cut stone first floor are surrounded by brownstone trim with decorative keystones in the lintels. The second floor windows are supported on well proportioned basket-like corbel of stone. The two upper floors are combined to form a handsome two-story bay window above this stone corbel. The upper floors are of brick, decorated by terra cotta panels and flanked by brick piers which also rest on stone corbels. Above the third floor, tiers of corbeled brick are surmounted by a molded cornice. For No. 422, Davis followed the design of Walgrove and Israels at No. 418.

Nos. 424-430 were designed by the same architect, Richard R. Davis, and were built in 1891 for Edward Lewis. No. 424 is similar to No. 420. The keystones at the first story are carved in the likeness of a man's head above the window and of a leaf above the doorway. Two double rows of corbeled bricks may be seen below the cornice.

No. 426 follows the design of Nos. 418 and 422 while No. 428 follows that of Nos. 420 and 424. The last house (No. 430) shares a paired doorway and stoop with No. 428 and effectively terminates the row by breaking forward with a bay which extends its entire height at the outer end of the row.

It is interesting to note in the development of this row that No. 418 was designed in 1890 by Walgrove and Israels, and the architect Richard R. Davis adopted the same design in 1891 to the fronts of Nos. 422 and 426 while the intervening houses which Davis designed at 420, 424 and 428 represent pleasant variations on the same theme.

WEST 160TH STREET Betw. Jumel Terrace & St. Nicholas Avenue

NORTH SIDE

On the corner of Jumel Terrace is a 1909 Neo-Federal apartment house consisting of six stories and basement. It is the only apartment house in the Historic District but, fortunately in both materials and details, is much in character with the facing row of houses. Designed and owned by architect Thomas P. Neville, it houses twenty-five families.

The full basement and first story are of smooth limestone ashlar. The upper five stories are faced with red brick in Flemish bond with deeply raked joints. Above each window is a splayed limestone lintel with a double keystone. A limestone band course carved with a Greek fret design runs across the building between the fifth and sixth stories. The roof cornice is crowned by a brick parapet with openings which align with the windows below. Wide, even quoins of limestone contrast with the brick and visually tie the building together.

The monumental carved entrance has a French Renaissance character. Pilasters support an entablature embellished with a Greek fret design along the frieze. The arched doorway is handsomely set off by a carved keystone flanked by decorated spandrels.

WEST 162ND STREET (Nos. 430-444 & 425-451) Betw. St. Nicholas & Edgecombe Avenues.

This pleasant residential street displays an interesting variety of row houses. Jumel Terrace terminates at West 162nd Street, with large tree-lined Roger Morris Park on the east corner. The park lends openness to the row of houses. Both front houses on both the south and the north side of the street provide visual unity to the block.

SOUTH SIDE

This row continues the character of the houses around the corner on the west side of Jumel Terrace. In height, material, and detail they are quite similar and particularly in the contrast of rough-cut brownstone for the basement and first stories with the smooth ashlar above. Both rows of houses were designed by the same architect for the same owner.

The first five houses (Nos. 430-438) are transitional in feeling, displaying both Romanesque Revival and Classical features. They were designed by Henry Fouchaux for William W. Watkins and built in 1896, at the same time as those on Jumel Terrace. Of special interest is the side of the corner house, No. 430, which has a bas relief set in an arch between windows. Masonry stoops lead up the first floors which, like the basements, are of rough-cut stone. The upper two stories extend outward in a curved bow supported on a broad stone corbel of basket-like form. The curved fronts are reflected in the decorated friezes below and the multi-bracketed roof cornices producing a scalloped effect against the sky. A bas relief panel appears below each window of these houses.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this area, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Jumel Terrace Historic District contains buildings and other improvements which have a special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value and which represent one or more periods or styles of architecture typical of one or more eras in the history of New York City and which cause this area, by reason of these factors, to constitute a distinct section of the City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Jumel Terrace Historic District provides a dignified and largely homogeneous setting for one of the City's most historic buildings, the Roger Morris-Jumel Mansion, that it is significant because the existing buildings represent the original and only construction that has taken place on these sites, that it contains the early vernacular rows of wooden houses on Sylvan Terrace, that it has handsome brick houses showing the asymmetrical influence of the Queen Anne style of architecture, charming Romanesque Revival stone houses and interesting Classical Revival houses and that it is a distinguished neighborhood offering pleasant urban living for its residents.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 63 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 Historic District the Jumel Terrace Historic District, Borough of Manhattan, containing the property bounded by West 160th Street, the eastern property line of 418 West 160th Street, the rear lot lines of 418 through 430 West 160th Street, the western property line of 430 West 160th Street, West 160th Street, the rear lot line of 2 Jumel Terrace, part of the rear lot line of 12 Sylvan Terrace, the rear lot lines of 10 through 2 Sylvan Terrace, the western property line of 2 Sylvan Terrace, Sylvan Terrace, the western property line of 1 Sylvan Terrace, the rear lot lines of 1 through 9 Sylvan Terrace, part of the rear lot line of 11 Sylvan Terrace, the rear lot lines of 10 through 18 Jumel Terrace, part of the rear lot line of 438 West 162nd Street, the rear lot lines of 440 through 444 West 162nd Street, the western property line of 444 West 162nd Street, West 162nd Street, the western property line of 451 West 162nd Street, the rear lot lines of 451 through 425 West 162nd Street, the eastern property line of 425 West 162nd Street, West 162nd Street, Edgecombe Avenue to West 160th Street.