

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
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LP-0748

299 STATE STREET HOUSE, Borough of Brooklyn, Built c. 1874.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 170, Lot 43.

On June 23, 1970, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 299 State Street House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 61). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Twenty-six witnesses spoke in favor of historic preservation in the Boerum Hill neighborhood and for the creation of the Boerum Hill Historic District. There were no speakers in opposition to designation of the houses on State Street.

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

No. 299 State Street was erected as part of a row of six houses (Nos. 289-299), by Michael Murray, a local builder who lived at 240 DeKalb Avenue. John C. Herman Frost (or Trost) purchased the house in 1876 from the executors of Murray's estate.

These handsome residences were part of the Boerum Hill Community which had formed the original Town of Breuckelen founded in 1646 by Dutch colonists. It was incorporated into the larger City of Brooklyn in 1834. The development of Boerum Hill as an urban community began in the 1840s and continued into the 1870s. Many of the houses which remain from this period incorporated Greek Revival and Italianate elements in the row house design. These houses were built for merchants and professional people, many of whom worked in the Wall Street area or in the vicinity of the Fulton Street ferry.

Murray, the builder, acquired the land for Nos. 289-295 in 1872, and the land for the pair, Nos. 297 and 299, in 1874 from William Schermerhorn. The Schermerhorns were one of Brooklyn's old, wealthy Dutch families; Peter Schermerhorn, William's father, was, with his brother Abraham, one of Brooklyn's largest landholders. Schermerhorn Street, one block north of State Street, was named after them.

The north side of State Street was largely undeveloped when Murray began erecting Nos. 289-295 in 1872. (No. 289 has been demolished). Nos. 291-299 are five, almost identical, brownstone houses built in a late version of the popular Italianate style. They have undergone only minor alterations in the past one hundred years and the row retains an integrity and a unity which enhance the entire block.

Its rusticated basement provides a solid visual base for the three-story brownstone front rising above it. Similar to the other houses in the row, the basement contains two segmental-arched windows with beveled keystones and iron grilles. The doorway, like that on No. 297, is flanked by grooved pilasters terminating in grooved console brackets with foliate pendants, supporting a segmental-arched pediment. A round arch with beveled spandrel panels and foliate keystone accentuates the doorway. The doorway also contains wooden engaged colonnettes with Corinthian capitals. The double doors with glazed panels, like those on Nos. 295 and 297, have two panels at the top curved to complement the arch. Cornice slabs supported on brackets crown the full-height parlor windows, while the windows on the

upper floors have lintels with cap moldings and sills supported on corbel blocks. The roof cornice at No. 299 like that of No. 297, is ornate and more typically Italianate. It is supported on four heavy foliate brackets interspersed with modillions and dentils; panels enrich the frieze.

#### 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 299 State Street House 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 299 State Street House, is a fine example of the late Italianate style of architecture, that it forms part of a handsome row of five houses, that this house contributes to the dignity of the street and that this house and its row add significantly to the overall character of the Boerum Hill neighborhood.

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 Landmark the 299 State Street House, Borough of Brooklyn and designates Tax Map Block 170, Lot 43, Borough of Brooklyn, as its Landmark Site.