

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
November 20, 1973, Number 12  
LP-0755

302 STATE STREET HOUSE, Borough of Brooklyn. Built c.1848.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 176, Lot 11.

On June 23, 1970, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 302 State Street House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 68). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Twenty-six witnesses spoke in favor of historic preservation 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. 302 State Street is one of a pair of adjoining Italianate houses built for John W. Towt, a hardware merchant who acquired the property for Nos. 300 and 302, in November 1847, as well as the two adjoining lots, back to back, fronting on Atlantic Avenue. He moved into a new house built on one of the Atlantic Avenue lots in 1848. Presumably the two State Street houses were built at about the same time.

These 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 incorporate 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.

All the land in this block had originally been part of the Jacob Van Brunt farm. He willed it to his daughter Jane, wife of Samuel T. Gerritsen, in 1824. State Street was originally known as Gerritsen Street. The Gerritsens and the Van Brunts, both old Dutch families, had long been interconnected by marriage and had some of the largest landholdings in Kings County. Charles Hoyt and Russell Nevins, two Manhattan real estate developers with extensive interests in Brooklyn, acquired the properties on this block in 1833. Both Hoyt and Nevins had streets named after them to the east of this block. Development on this side of the street began about 1847; consequently, many of the houses exhibit certain stylistic similarities. Like several others from this period, Nos. 300 and 302 are characteristic of the new Italianate style. These two three-and-a-half story houses have brick fronts with brownstone trim. Well preserved, with many of their details intact, they add an important element to the block.

The brick front of No. 302 rises three stories above a stuccoed basement. A shallow pediment set above a frieze, supported on carved brackets, crowns the doorway. The paneled wooden double doors are set beneath a rectangular glass transom. Shallow pediments, similar to the one over the doorway, accent the full-height parlor floor windows which now have ornamental iron window guards. The roof cornice has angular console end brackets, one of which is shared with No. 300, while those in between are paired. The handsome iron yard railing, and the hand-railings at the stoop, display curvilinear forms, typical of the Italianate style. The use of railings with cast-iron ornament became popular in New York City in the 1850s when mass production made them readily available at reasonable prices.

#### 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 302 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 302 State Street House is a fine example of the Italianate style of architecture, that it is one of a handsome pair of houses, that it contributes to the dignity of the street and that this house adds significantly to the overall character of the Boerum Hill community.

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 302 State Street House, Borough of Brooklyn and designates Tax Map Block 176, Lot 11, Borough of Brooklyn, as its Landmark Site.