

ELIAS HUBBARD RYDER HOUSE, 1926 East 28th Street, Borough of Brooklyn.
Built 1834, alterations 1929.

Landmark Site: Tax Map Block 7306, Lot 14.

On January 27, 1976, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Elias Hubbard Ryder House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 5). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Nineteen witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Elias Hubbard Ryder House, a quaint early 19th century farm house, is a reminder of local heritage. It is situated in Gravesend, one of the six original townships of Kings County later included in the City of Brooklyn as incorporated on May 3, 1894. Gravesend is unique in being the only English settlement to receive a patent from the Dutch Director General and Council. Moreover, the patent listed Lady Deborah Moody, the first woman so included. The patent, first granted in 1643, was affirmed by Gov. Kieft in 1645. It also included a proviso permitting freedom of worship "without magisterial or ministerial interference", according to Henry R. Stiles in the History ... of the County of Kings ... (New York, 1884).

The town of Gravesend grew from what is believed to have been originally the land of forty patentees under the direction of Ladye Moodye, Nicholas Stillwell, and their associates. These independent spirits had chosen to set out and establish a free settlement on land which was part of the Indian Territory known as Keskachogue.

The village of Gravesend was laid out as a sixteen-acre square with two orthogonal roads cutting through it at right angles. The town founders each had a wedge-shaped "plantation lot" for farming radiating out from the center of the town. The original radial portion of the plan was altered as the town grew and expanded in size. On December 6, 1678, the common lands, in the extreme eastern part of Gravesend bordering Flatlands, were divided into fifteen-acre lots. In 1712 two of these lots became the property of Bernardus Ryder, who was an Elder in the Gravesend Church. His grandson Bernardus, son of Jacobus and Jannetie, inherited the property from his father Jacobus Ryder and in turn passed it on to his sons. In 1817 Bernardus was appointed one of the original five Trustees of the Town of Gravesend until the first formal election was held. Bernardus Ryder inherited lot number three from his father Jacobus Ryder, according to his father's will dated August 19, 1774, and passed it on to his son Elias Hubbard Ryder. In 1822 Elias H. Ryder married Ann Stillwell, a descendent of Nicholas Stillwell, one of the original patentees. According to Alfred H. Ryder, a direct descendent, old family records state: "Gravesend, March 25th in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Thirty Four Elias H. Ryder and his family took possession of his house."

This house is usually described as "Dutch Colonial" and indeed the reference is correct in describing the general style of this type of house; however, the stylistic elements of this so-called "Dutch Colonial" architecture were actually brought over to this country during the 1600s by Flemings and Walloons who had fled before the Spanish invasion of Flanders in the 1620s. They first arrived in densely populated Holland, only to subsequently emigrate to America where they lived under Dutch rule. This is probably the reason why houses built by the Flemish were referred to as Dutch. One of the distinctive features of the "Dutch Colonial" house is the projected roof eave which may have initially acted as an overhang to give protection to masonry walls from cascading rain water and snow. Many houses on Long Island made traditional use of this detail despite the fact that most of them were constructed of wood, a material which was plentiful on Long Island. This traditional projected eave also provided shelter for stoops and benches at the entrance doors. With repeated use the projected

eave was extended outward, and where posts were added to carry the weight of the overhang, the full-fledged porch came into being.

The Elias Hubbard Ryder House is a two-story wood frame structure of the 1830s which made use of "Dutch Colonial" elements in the vernacular tradition. It is very interesting that this style survived and continued to be used for nearly two centuries. The house was originally built on the edge of the farmland inherited by Elias H. Ryder. To the east of the farmhouse was Ryder's Lane which connected the majority of the Ryder family homesteads with Kings Highway to the north and later with Gravesend Neck Road to the south.

When surveys were made for city streets in this section of Brooklyn, the house was found to be located in the middle of the planned roadbed for East 29th Street just off of Avenue S, actually straddling the blockfronts on either side. In 1928 the City acquired title through condemnation to the property and sold back the house, but not the land, to the Ryder Family. The main body of the house was moved to No. 1926 East 28th Street after two rooms on the west and an end porch had been removed for structural reasons and in order to adjust the house to the dimensions of the new lot. To compensate for the rooms lost, the south porch was replaced with a room, and a bedroom and bath with dormer windows were added at the second floor. Also a rear second story wing was added to provide another bedroom. The slope of the dormer roof complements that of the main roof.

The front of the house has two simply enframed windows with six-over-six sash and paneled shutters to the right of the entrance. This main entrance has a particularly handsome leaded transom light designed in the Federal style with two ellipses separated and flanked on either side by four-pointed star-forms. The gable end of the house, facing onto the street, clearly displays the graceful sloping roof and the projected eaves. This end has two symmetrically placed six-over-six windows at each floor with shutters, those at the second floor being considerably smaller. The house has rough-hewn wood shingles, with over twelve inches to the weather.

The Elias Hubbard Ryder House, a representative of the rural past of Brooklyn and of a long standing architectural tradition, has preserved its original character and picturesque charm.

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 Elias Hubbard Ryder 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 Elias Hubbard Ryder House is a rare survival from the early 1800s, that it lends a remarkably attractive appearance to its present site, that it represents a distinctive type of farm house with specific and unique detail brought to this country by some of our earliest settlers, that the use of the projected eaves is highly distinctive, that the house remained in the possession of one family for over one hundred and thirty years, that it represents both architecturally and historically a valuable reminder of our heritage, and that the Elias Hubbard Ryder House, representative of the rural past of Brooklyn and of a long standing architectural tradition, has preserved its original character and picturesque charm.

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 Elias Hubbard Ryder House, 1926 East 28th Street, Borough of Brooklyn, and designates Tax Map Block 7306, Lot 14, Borough of Brooklyn, as its Landmark site.