

EDWARDS-BARTON HOUSE, 3742 Richmond Road (aka 3738-3742 Richmond Road, 4 Court Place), Borough of Staten Island. Built 1869; Bedell & Hill, builders.

Landmark Site: Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 4441, Lot 1 in part, consisting of the irregularly-shaped parcel of land formerly known as Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 4443, Lot 8, bounded by a line starting at the southwest corner of Richmond Road and Court Place and proceeding northwesterly along the northern lot line for 105.22 feet, then southwesterly for 207.51 feet along the former western lot line of former Lot 8, to the former southern lot line of former Lot 8, southeasterly for 66 feet along part of the former southern lot line of former Lot 8, northerly for 27 feet along part of the former eastern lot line of former Lot 8, southeasterly for 23 feet along part of the former southern lot line of former Lot 8, northerly for 66 feet along part of the former eastern lot line of former Lot 8, easterly for 100 feet along part of the former southern lot line of former Lot 8, and northerly for 110 feet along part of the former eastern lot line of former Lot 8, to the point of beginning.¹

On April 17, 2001, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Edwards-Barton House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 2). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. A representative of the Preservation League of Staten Island and the Executive Director of Historic Richmond Town, the owner of the building, spoke in favor of the designation. No one spoke in opposition.

Summary

This two-and-a-half story frame house with wood-clapboard siding is one of the most impressive mid-nineteenth-century houses in Richmondtown, the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century governmental center of Staten Island. Built in 1869 for Webley Edwards, a prosperous businessman and government official, the house is located at the intersection of Richmond Road and Court Place on one of the most prominent sites in the village. The house is a fine and well-preserved example of a popular mid-nineteenth-century rural house type which is well represented in many parts of the country but is now very unusual in New York City. A later example of this house type, the symmetrically-planned center-hall house with a side-gabled roof fronted by a prominent center cross gable, it is embellished with handsome Italianate and Second Empire detailing. Notable features include the heavy molded door and window surrounds, bracketed cornices and bay windows on the side elevations. Edwards became wealthy developing property in Port Richmond inherited by his wife Deborah Mersereau Edwards. He held various county offices in the 1850s and 1860s and was serving as county treasurer in 1869 when this house was erected. After Edwards died in 1870, the house passed to his widow and later to his daughters Lucretia Edwards and Ella Barton. Ella, her husband Willis Barton, a banker and broker who was also a descendant of a politically prominent Staten Island family, and their five children moved to the house in 1892. The Bartons were leading citizens of Richmondtown who contributed to its history and development. In 1921 the house was acquired by grocer Nicola Aquilino; family members occupied it until 1966. The house has been a part of Historic Richmond Town since the 1950s and underwent exterior restoration in the 1970s.



DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Development of Richmondtown²

Richmond County, encompassing all of Staten Island, was established in 1683 as one of the twelve original counties of New York, with Stony Brook, now Egbertville, its official county seat. Previously, the residents of Staten Island had relied on the Court of Sessions at Gravesend, Brooklyn, for the administration of laws, while the center of political activity on the island was at Oude Dorp, near the present South Beach. In 1711, the county government built a prison in the tiny village of Coccles Town.³ This was considered a superior place for conducting governmental business due to its location at the head of the navigable Fresh Kills and at the junction of several important roads. In 1729, Coccles Town was officially chosen to be the new county seat and was renamed Richmondtown. A new county courthouse was constructed there that year.

British troops occupied Richmondtown during the Revolutionary War, establishing quarters in many of the village's buildings, burning the court house and other buildings upon their departure. Little development occurred during the next thirty years; however, a second county courthouse was constructed on Arthur Kill Road in 1793. Richmondtown began to grow around 1800 and was incorporated as a village within the Town of Southfield in 1823. By 1828 the first County Clerk's and Surrogate's Offices were constructed to the east of the jail. The famous hotel, Richmond County Hall, was built around 1829 and soon became a popular gathering place for political and social events. The town's first public school opened about 1830.

Sensing the development potential of the town, Henry I. Seaman, a New York merchant who was secretary of the company that operated the plank road (later Richmond Avenue), purchased ninety acres of farmland to the east of the town center in 1836. Seaman had the land laid out into two new streets, Center Street and Court Place, and 25' by 100' building lots. A large plot on Center Street opposite Court Place was set aside for the construction of a new courthouse (the Third County Courthouse, now the Historic Richmond Town Visitors Center, built 1837, a designated New York City Landmark). Seaman also built several houses, known as "Seaman Cottages," and sold two corner lots to Austin Burke and Stephen D. Stephens, who constructed their own residences. Due to the financial panic of 1837, Seaman was forced to sell his Richmondtown property, which eventually passed to Harmon Cropsey in 1854.⁴ During the 1840s, the village continued to expand, in part because of the construction of a new stone bridge

over Fresh Kills Creek at the junction of Richmond Road and Arthur Kills Road. The Washington Hotel was also built around 1840. Around 1845, Isaac Marsh began construction of a carriage manufactory opposite the hotel. The County Clerk's and Surrogate's Office (now the Historical Museum, a designated New York City Landmark) and a jail were constructed in 1848 and 1860, respectively. St. Patrick's Church (RC) was erected between 1860 and 1862 and St. Andrew's Church (Episcopal) took its present form following a fire in 1872 (both churches are designated New York City Landmarks). By the mid-nineteenth century, Richmondtown's position as the political and social center of the island was secure. The Stephens-Prier House, the Parsonage (1855) (both designated New York City Landmarks) and the Edwards-Barton House (1869) are the most significant residential survivors of this expansive and prosperous period of the village's development.⁵

The Edwards and Barton Families and the Early History of the Edwards-Barton House⁶

Webley J. Edwards, the son of Webley Edwards and Mary Edwards, was born in 1816 in New Jersey. In 1835, his brother, John Simpson Edwards, purchased the Guyon store at 3752 Richmond Road (built c.1819).⁷ The building was remodeled and enlarged for use as a residence by the Edwards family.⁸ When Webley reached the age of twenty-one in 1837, he purchased a half interest in the house from his brother and sister-in-law.⁹ In April 1840 John S. Edwards and his wife sold their remaining interest in the former Guyon store to Webley Edwards. In 1844 Webley married Deborah Ann Britton Mersereau (1824-88).¹⁰ They had two daughters, Ella, born in August 1849, and Lucretia, born in September 1852. During this period Webley was earning his living as a tailor and their household also included an apprentice as well as Webley's sister Sarah.

In 1847, Deborah's father, Joshua Mersereau, died leaving his estate to his six surviving children. In 1848 the heirs entered into a partition agreement to divide their father's farm in Port Richmond.¹¹ Over the next few years Webley Edwards and his brother John purchased portions of the Mersereau farm from the other heirs.¹² For about twenty-years the Edwards slowly sold off parcels from this property which was mapped into city lots.¹³ Webley Edwards also invested in house lots on Fort Hill and in the public inn at Vanderbilt's Landing, which was leased to innkeeper Samuel L. Lewis.¹⁴ Edwards became wealthy as a result of his

dealings in real estate.

Webley Edwards also played a prominent role in Richmond County civic affairs. He served as county treasurer in 1854 and from 1868 to 1870, justice of the peace during the mid-1860s, and county sealer of weights and measures in 1867.¹⁵ He was a vestryman at St. Andrew's Church from 1847 to 1858 and from 1866 to 1870. Around 1860 he seems to have given up tailoring, listing his profession as "gentleman" in the federal census of 1860 and as county treasurer in 1870. By 1868, his income was large enough for him to begin planning a new house. In April he purchased the vacant lot at the southwest corner of Richmond Road and Court Place which was combined with a parcel of land to the east of the Guyon Store lot that he had purchased in 1855 to create a quarter-acre site.¹⁶ In April 1869, he entered into contracts for the new house with local carpenter-builders Isaac Bedell and Randolph T. Hill.¹⁷ Construction was completed by mid-December 1869.

By the summer of 1870, when the census was taken, Webley Edwards was occupying the house with his family and Katie Kanna, an Irish-born domestic. He died in August 1870 at the age of fifty-eight. His property passed to his widow and daughters who continued to live in the new house. Deborah Edwards continued her husband's practice of buying and selling real estate aided by her brother Joshua Mersereau, who was appointed administrator of Webley Edwards's estate. In January 1876, Deborah Edwards sold a small portion of her house lot adjoining the County Clerk's and Surrogate's Office to Henry B. Metcalfe (18?-81), a prominent attorney and judge who was then serving as a congressman, representing Richmond County.¹⁸ Metcalfe also served as manager, secretary, and director of the Richmond County Mutual Insurance Company, which built a small frame office building on the site (demolished)

In 1878, Ella Edwards married Willis Barton (1844-?). He had grown up in the old stone farmhouse (the Lakeman-Cortelyou-Taylor House) opposite the Moravian Cemetery on Richmond Road and had attended Eastman Business College in Poughkeepsie. Willis Barton was descended from a prominent Staten Island family. His grandfather, Col. Samuel Barton (1785-1858), had been a congressman (1834-37) and agent for the Vanderbilt Steamship Lines. His father, Edward Perine Barton (1818-40), was a farmer and local politician, who served as the county treasurer in the 1860s and later headed the local police department. The young couple moved to a house on Harrison Street in Stapleton but Deborah Edwards and her daughter Lucretia continued to reside in this house until

Deborah's death in 1888. Deborah Edwards left her property to her daughters. Lucretia Edwards probably continued to reside in the house in the late 1880s and early 1890s and after 1892 Willis and Ella Barton and their five children also occupied the house. During this period Willis Barton was employed at various Wall Street brokerage houses and banks, working his way up from bookkeeper to commercial underwriter, broker, and banker. He also served for many years as a trustee for the Southfield and Northfield District Schools. While he lived in the house, the Barton's eldest son, Samuel E. Barton, was employed as a clerk at the banking firm of J.W. Davis & Company and later at the Leather Manufacturers National Bank in Manhattan. He married Helen C. Cole in 1907 and moved to Summit Avenue in New Dorp. Willis and Ella Barton's son, Willis E. Barton, was employed as a railroad clerk in 1900 and later worked as an accountant. Their son Leroy (Roy) was an electrical contractor and served for years as chief of the Richmondtown Volunteer Fire Company.¹⁹ Their son Frank was listed as a clerk in the census of 1910. He entered the army and served as a courier for General Pershing during World War I and later owned a gift shop. Their daughter Mary does not seem to have been employed while she was living in the house. She later married George R. Coleman. The Bartons and Lucretia Edwards continued to occupy this house until 1914. Lucretia Edwards died in 1947.

The Design of the Edwards-Barton House

Located at the corner of Richmond Road, the main highway through town, and Court Place, the approach road to the County Courthouse, with frontage on Center Street, the most desirable residential street in the village, the Edwards-Barton House occupies one of the most prominent sites in Richmondtown.²⁰

Recalling Staten Island's rural past, the Edwards-Barton House is a fine and well-preserved example of a common mid-nineteenth-century rural house type, the symmetrically-planned center-hall house with a side-gabled roof fronted by a prominent center cross gable.²¹ This type is well represented in many parts of the country but is now very unusual in New York City. During the mid-nineteenth century American rural architecture underwent a revolution as nationally-circulated journals and architectural handbooks rapidly began to introduce new ideas about planning and design to a broad public that displaced traditional building forms that had evolved slowly combining Old World folk traditions, high-style Georgian design, and Anglo-American building practice. Much of the credit for this change belongs Andrew Jackson Downing, who through

a series of essays in *The Horticulturalist*, a “journal of rural art and rural taste,” which he edited, and in his influential architectural handbooks, including *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1841), *Cottage Residences* (1842), and *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850), introduced English ideas on rural landscape design and architecture to the American public.²² Downing published numerous designs for cottages, farmhouses, and villas, featuring the work of Alexander Jackson Davis, John Notman, Gervase Wheeler, Richard Upjohn, and Calvert Vaux (the last became his business partner). These designs were largely in the Gothic Revival and Italianate styles since Downing considered the picturesque qualities of these styles particularly suitable for country settings. In addition he outlined several elements that he believed were important in a country home regardless of its style – it should “spread out and extend itself on the ground,”²³ [its details] should be simple and bold, its ornaments ... rustic, strong, or picturesque, [rather] than delicate or highly finished.”²⁴ It was important he said that “the roof is boldly shown, and rendered ornamental, the windows suitably introduced and enriched, and the comfort and pleasure of climate and home understood.”²⁵ Chimney stacks were particularly important because they were expressive of “human habitation and domestic life ... in a northern climate”²⁶ and “verandas, piazzas, bay windows, and balconies were also valuable as they were chiefly used for domestic buildings and therefore conveyed “domestic habitation.”²⁷

One of the most popular of the designs published by Downing was the design for *An Ornamental Farm House* (Design IV) in *Cottage Residences*.²⁸ It represents a symmetrically-planned two-and-one-half-story stone farm house with a central entrance set off by a broad veranda and capped by a pitched side-gabled roof with a center cross gable that is trimmed with vergeboards and a decorative pinnacle.²⁹ This design served as inspiration to numerous architects, builders, and carpenters throughout the country since the overall form of the house remained relatively simple and traditional while the gable provided a concession to fashion and served as a focus for modish ornament. As architectural historian Michael Southern explained in his study of vernacular housing:

Once the center gable was accepted in the local building vocabulary, it took a life of its own unrelated to the Gothic or Tuscan models. The gables vary widely in proportion and steepness of pitch, and often were given all sorts of machine-made, sawn, turned and shingled

ornament as the nineteenth century wore on.³⁰

Variations on the triple gable farmhouse proliferated in the decade following the Civil War and remained popular until the end of the nineteenth century, reinforced by their continued appearance in architectural pattern books where the houses are often enriched with Second Empire or Queen Anne detailing. The Edwards-Barton House, an excellent example of this building type, reveals its close relation to Downing’s design in its use of paired windows and paired chimneys flanking the central gable, and in the framing of its front veranda. Built for a prosperous businessman and government official, the house is constructed of wood and is somewhat larger and more elaborate than Downing’s original prototype, incorporating bay windows on the side facades and a large kitchen wing at the rear. It reflects the taste of the post-Civil War period, in the high story heights, vertical proportions, large windows, and in its incorporation of Italianate and Second Empire style detailing, notably the segmental-headed windows and French doors at the parlor level.³¹ Noteworthy features include the heavy molded door and window surrounds and the elaborate turned brackets which decorate the cornices of the bay windows and the overhanging eaves of the gabled roof. The center-gabled house type seems to have been relatively unusual in New York City. However, the Gothic Revival cottage that is now the Garibaldi-Meucci Museum at 420 Tompkins Avenue (built c. 1845, a designated New York City Landmark) is an early example. There are also at least two later examples in the neighborhood of the Edwards-Barton House, one on Richmond Road in Richmondtown and one on Rockland Avenue in Egbertville; both frame houses that have been re clad with non-historic materials and stripped of ornament. In contrast, the handsomely proportioned Edwards-Barton House remains in good condition and retains its original form and most of its decorative detailing. As the farmhouses and village residences that once proliferated in New York City have fallen victim to developmental pressures it has become an increasingly rare reminder of the city’s rural past.

Subsequent History³²

After Staten Island became a borough of Greater New York in 1898, governmental activity on the island began to shift to St. George on the north shore and Richmondtown’s importance as the island’s governmental center started to decline. Its residential growth, however, continued. By 1907, a trolley line ran along Richmond Road and a residential community radiated from the core of the town. By 1919, the last

county offices located in Richmondtown were transferred to St. George, and the old county buildings were abandoned.

In the early 1930s, the Staten Island Historical Society, which had been founded in 1856, persuaded the city to fund the rehabilitation of the vacant County Clerk's Office and the County Court House for use as the society's library and historical museum. In 1939, the Society turned its attention to the acquisition and restoration of the Voorlezer's House, built c.1695, the oldest extant elementary school house in the United States.³³ In the following decades, the Historical Society purchased other historic buildings and land in the area and established Richmond Town Restoration as a living museum of Staten Island and metropolitan history. The Richmond Town Restoration became a joint endeavor between the Staten Island Historical Society and the City of New York in the 1950s. Subsequently, other historic properties in the area were acquired and restored. A number of threatened historic buildings from other parts of the island were moved to the Restoration's property and also restored. The greater Richmondtown area continued to develop as a residential community in the decades following World War II. The 1964 opening of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge, and the boom years of the 1980s and late 1990s has further encouraged development.

It is not known when Willis and Ella Barton died but their half of the Edwards-Barton House had passed to their children by 1921 when the house was sold to Nicola Aquilino, an Italian-born grocer who had previously resided in Manhattan.³⁴ According to the 1925 New York State census, the Nicola and Antoinetta Aquilino occupied the former Edwards-Barton House with their three children, leasing a portion of the house to another family headed by John Dunn, a shoe salesman. Around 1925, Nicola erected a one-story commercial building at the corner of Court Place and Richmond Road where he ran a grocery store and delicatessen. In 1931 he divided the building in two, sub-leasing the grocery and opening a billiard parlor/restaurant-tavern in the other half. Around 1937 the Aquilinos' son John took over the commercial building where he operated as a pizzeria and restaurant. Nicola Aquilino died in 1949 and the house passed to Antoinetta who continued to reside in one of the two apartments. In the 1950s this property was acquired by the City as part of the condemnation actions that created Historic Richmond Town. The Aquilino family continued to operate the restaurant and a family member continued to occupy an apartment in the house until 1965/66 when the occupants were evicted. The

restaurant was torn down in May 1966.

The exterior of the house was restored by Historic Richmond Town between 1971 and 1974. At that time a one-story late-nineteenth-early-twentieth-century enclosed porch between the east arm and the rear wing and a two-story c. 1911 bathroom addition on the west side of the rear wing were removed. The front porch columns and balustrade which had been replaced prior to 1925 were reconstructed based on a c. 1900 photograph of the house. The rear porch was added and doors and window openings were created where the wings had been removed. An early twentieth-century garage on the western edge of the site was demolished between 1979 and 1981. Several small structures -- sheds, privies, and perhaps a cistern which appear on early twentieth-century atlases were demolished prior to Historic Richmond Town's taking control of the property. The present privy located to the southeast of the house dates from the mid-nineteenth century but was moved to this site in the late twentieth century from the original Crocheron House site in Greenridge.³⁵ The Edward-Barton House is currently being used as a storage building by the Staten Island Historical Society.

Description

The Edward-Barton House occupies an irregular through-the-block corner site (former Block 4443, Lot 8) which has frontages on Richmond Road, Court Place, and Center Street and extends around the Historical Museum (originally the Richmond County Clerks and Surrogate's Office) and former Richmond County Mutual Insurance Company Office sites. (Only the foundations of the insurance company building survive.) The ground level slopes upward from Richmond Road to Center Street and has been terraced behind fieldstone retaining walls along Richmond Road and on the west side of Former Lot 8. The low wall along Richmond Road was rebuilt in 2000. Set back slightly from the wall along Richmond Road and extending along Court Place is a non-historic wood picket fence which is modeled after the fence in a c. 1900 photo of the house. Square wood posts with molded caps flank the low non-historic concrete stair on Richmond Road. The path that led from the steps to the porch has been removed. The privy to the southwest of the house dates from the mid-nineteenth century but was moved to this site in the 1990s.

Restored between 1971 and 1974, the Edwards-Barton House is a gable-roofed mid-nineteenth-century clapboard residence incorporating Italianate and Second Empire elements. It has a modified T-plan with the rear wing projecting from the western part of main building.

The two-and-one-half-story front portion of the house is about thirty-seven feet wide and twenty-seven feet deep and has a side-gabled roof with a centered front gable set off by paired brick chimneys. The two-story rear wing is about seventeen feet deep and fourteen feet wide and is capped by a gable roof with a brick chimney near the south wall. The building rests on a stone foundation and has a low brick basement pierced by horizontal windows containing historic two-light wood casement windows. The walls are clad with lapped-clapboard pine siding. The window and door openings are framed by molded wood surrounds and angled bays project from the sides of the main block. The spandrel panels beneath the bays were originally decorated with raised moldings to create a paneled motif. They may survive beneath the present clapboard siding. Most of the windows have historic wood sashes but the house's original louvered shutters have been removed. The front veranda dates from the 1970s but its design is based on a c. 1900 photograph. During the 1970s two additions were removed from the rear of the building: an one-story enclosed porch to the east of the rear wing and a two-story bathroom wing to the west side of the rear wing. Although doors had been cut through to connect the additions to the main house the old clapboard siding and windows remained. The gabled roofs have deep overhanging eaves which are set off by wide friezes decorated with curvilinear brackets. The roofs are covered with fish-scale wood shingles which were installed in 1989. The porches and bay windows have lead-coated copper roofs.

The Main Block The house's north facade facing Richmond Road has a symmetrical design with three bays of paired windows. The first-story [reproduction] porch has square posts with molded caps, turned balusters, molded railings, ornamental bracing, curved brackets, and a flat overhanging roof with a molded cornice. The central entrance is set off by a heavy molded Second Empire arched surround which contains original paneled wood doors and an original wood framed elliptical arched glass transom resting on a molded wood transom bar. Flanking the entrance are molded window surrounds with paired floor-length segmental arched openings and bracketed cornices. The windows retain their original wood two-light French doors and segmental arched transoms. At the second story the paired segmental-arched windows also have molded surrounds with bracketed cornices. The windows retain their original one-over-one wood sash. The attic cross gable is lit by paired round arched windows framed by a molded surround with a decorative drip molding. The windows have their original one-over-one

wood sashes with arched top lights.

The east side of the main block has a symmetrical design with a polygonal wood bay projecting from the center of the first story. The bay rests on a brick foundation and is faced with clapboard at its base. Its upper part is lit by four tall segmental arched windows which retain their original one-over-one wood sashes. The bay is capped by a tall frieze enriched with vertical brackets and a projecting cornice. At the second story the segmental arched window openings have molded surrounds that are capped with bracketed cornices. The window openings have historic two-over-two wood sash. The double window at the center of the attic gable matches the window on the front gable. It has one-over-one wood sash.

The west wall of the main block has single segmental arched window openings with bracketed surrounds at the first and second story near the north corner of the facade and a two story angled bay near the south corner of its facade. The single bays contain historic two-over-two wood sashes. The bay rests on a brick base, has clapboard siding on the spandrels beneath the windows and molded wood surrounds for the windows which are capped with bracketed cornices at both the first and second story. There are three narrow segmental-arched window openings per story containing historic one-over-one wood sash windows. The attic gable is articulated by a double round arched window framed by a molded surround which matches the windows on the front and east gables. The windows retain historic one-over-one wood sashes with arched top lights.

To the east of the rear wing, the south wall of the main block is articulated into a single bay and a eastern double bay. The facade is approached by a non-historic wood veranda, installed in the 1970s, which employs the same elements as the front porch. The dimensions of this porch are based on the remains of old footings and "ghosts" on the clapboards from the original back porch which were discovered when the addition was removed. The narrow entrance at the center of the facade contains a non-historic paneled wood door. The paired windows at the first story on the east side of the facade match the windows on the front of the building and contain French doors topped by transoms. At the second story, the single segmental-arched window near the center of the facade has a molded surround with a bracketed cornice and contains historic two-over-two wood sashes. The east bay has paired segmental windows which match the second story windows on the north facade. They retain historic one-over-one wood sashes.

To the west of the rear wing, the narrow section of

the south wall is articulated by a single line of segmental arch windows with molded surrounds and two-over-two wood sashes. The wood hatch sheltering a basement entrance at the base of the wall is non-historic.

The Rear Wing The east wall of the rear wing has centrally placed paired segmental windows in molded surrounds with bracketed cornices at both the first and second story.

The south (rear) wall of the rear wing is unarticulated save for a round arch blind window with a molded surround near the apex of the gable. Around 1974 a small window at the east corner of the first story that was thought to be the result of an alteration was sealed and covered with replacement clapboard siding. The louvered shutter covering the blind attic was installed. In 1975 the small horizontal window at the west corner of the basement was restored

The west wall of the rear wing was largely

concealed by a two-story bathroom addition prior to the 1970s restoration. At the south corner of the facade the historic clapboards and windows remained visible. The segmental arched second-story window retained its original appearance but the first story window had a later trabeated surround. In the 1970s the first story south window was modified to match the second story window and a matching second story window was created at the north corner of the facade. A doorway and small open porch was created at the center of the first story. The specifications for the house (donated to the Staten Island Historical Society subsequent to the restoration) indicate that this porch would have originally been enclosed.

Report prepared by
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Research Department

NOTES

1. This description is based on the former tax map for Block 4443 Lot 8 in the Department of Taxes and Assessments, *Maps of the Borough of Richmond* (Jan. 1925), sec. 20, v. 1, in NYC Dept. of Finance, Office of the Surveyor, 350 St. Marks Place, 4th Flr, Staten Island.
2. This section is adapted from Landmarks Preservation Commission, *(Former) Public School 28 Designation Report*, prepared by Donald Presa, (LP-2021), (New York, City of New York, 1998); Mesick-Cohen-Waite-Architects, "Historical Survey," in "Richmondtown Restoration Comprehensive Site Restoration and Development Plan: Project Report, Vol. II." prepared for NYC Department of General Services, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Staten Island Historical Society, 1990, pp 2.4-2.19 [Copies available in the LPC "Richmondtown" Research File and at the Staten Island Historical Society]; New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, "An Archaeological Planning Model of Richmondtown Restoration, Staten Island, New York," prepared for the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, NYC Department of General Services, and the National Endowment for the Arts, 1989 [Copies available in the LPC Environmental Review File and at the Staten Island Historical Society]; Charles W. Leng and William T. Davis, *Staten Island and Its People: A History, 1609-1929* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1930), vol. 1: 227, 271, 337, 348, 423, vol. 2: 536, 544, 711, 712-715; Harlow McMillen, "Richmondtown: The First 160 Years," *Staten Island Historian*, v.22, n.1 (January-March 1961), 3-5; v. 22, n.2 (April-June 1961), 13-14; v.22, n.3 (July-September 1961), 20-22; Dorothy Valentine Smith, *Staten Island, Gateway to New York* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Co., 1970), 40-44, 211-215; Henry G. Steinmeyer, *Staten Island, 1524-1898*, revised edition (Staten Island: Staten Island Historical Society, 1987), 109.
3. The name "Coccles Town" originated from the abundant oyster and clam shells, called coccle shells, which were found in the waters of the nearby Fresh Kills.
4. Richmond County Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 34, p. 100.
5. Staten Island Historical Society, Stephens-Prier House National Register Nomination Form, prepared by Barnett Shepherd, 1997. [Copies available in the LPC "Stephens-Prier House Research File" and at the Staten

Island Historical Society].

6. This section on the Edwards and Barton families and the early history of the Edwards-Barton House is based on Staten Island Historical Society/Richmondton Restoration "Historic Structure Fact Sheet" and research notes by Stephen Barto, 1982, in the Edwards-Barton House file, Staten Island Historical Society; Edwards-Barton Family Papers, Staten Island Historical Society, Box 90-10; LPC, "Archaeological Planning Model of Richmondton Restoration," 119-25, 246-47, 260-71, 280-90; Leng and Davis vol. 2 858, 894, vol. 3, 316-317; "Samuel E. Barton, Retired Auditor," *New York Herald Tribune*, Nov. 19, 1947; New York City Directories, 1890-1914; Staten Island Directories, 1892-1914.
7. Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber X, p. 274.
8. According to the New York State census of 1835, the household consisted of four males and three females probably John S. Edwards, his wife Mary Ann, brother Webley, sister Sarah, Mary Edwards, (their mother or grandmother) and another male.
9. Conveyances, Liber 4, p. 296. For the Guyon Store see LPC, "Archaeological Planning Model," 244, 281-285; Guyon Store file, Staten Island Historical Society.
10. Dates from Henry Lawrence Mersereau, "Mersereau Family Genealogy," in the Edward-Barton Family Papers, Staten Island Historical Society. For the Mersereaus see also Ira K. Morris, *Memorial History of Staten Island* (New York: Memorial Publish Company, 1898-1900), vol.2, 106; J. J. Clute, *Annals of Staten Island from its Discovery to the Present* (New York: Charles Vogt, 1915), 408-411.
11. Conveyances, Liber 17, 353-386.
12. Conveyances, Liber 30, 528, 529.
13. See for example Conveyances, Liber 21, 585; Liber 32, 506; Liber 37, 599; Liber 40, 454, 456; Liber 42, 707, Liber 43, 301, Liber 56, 446; Liber 61, 158; Liber 65, 220; Liber 68, 403, 489.
14. Conveyances, Liber 199, 90; Liber 112, 206, 209.
15. Richmond County Board of Supervisors, *Proceedings*, 1862-70.
16. Conveyances, Liber 36, 306; Liber 75, 629.
17. The specifications for the house are in the Edwards-Barton Papers, Staten Island Historical Society. Builder Isaac Bedell (1816-1909) was born in Tottenville where he established a carpentry business. Like many carpenters of the period a portion of his business involved coffin-making. This grew into an undertaking business which was continued by his son and grandson. See Leng and Davis, vol. 3, 300.
18. For the insurance office lot see Conveyances, Liber 113, 430; LPC, "Archaeological Planning Model," 269-270, 295-296. For Judge Metcalfe see Leng and Davis, vol. 3, 40.
19. The Commission is grateful to Gladys Barton for sharing her recollections regarding her father-in-law Frank Barton and the Barton family.
20. In the eighteenth century the Swame House (before 1767) and possibly the Prall House (c. 1723) occupied this parcel. According to William McMillen, Director of Restoration at Historic Richmond Town, (telephone interview, May 25, 2001), recent digging around the front porch of the Edwards-Barton house has revealed brickwork from an eighteenth-century structure, probably the Swame house which may have served as an inn for a time and was demolished by the early nineteenth century. For the early history of this site see LPC, "Archaeological Model," 236-247, 263-266; Sherene Baugher-Perlin, *The Prall Site: A Case Study In Historical Archaeology* (PhD Dissertation: State University of New York at Stony Brook; Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI, 1978); Harlow McMillen, Richmondton Prior to 1837, Innkeepers and Merchants," *Staten Island Historian*, v. 24 n. 2 (1963), 12-15, v. 25, n. 3 (1963), 20-23 .

21. This discussion of the influence of architectural handbooks on rural architecture and of the evolution of the symmetrically-planned center-hall house with a side-gabled roof fronted by a prominent center cross gable is based on Sally Ann McMurry, *Families and Farmhouses in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Dell Upton, "Pattern Books and Professionalism: Aspects of the Transformation of Domestic Architecture in America, 1800-1860," *Winterthur Portfolio* 19 n. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn 1984), 128-150; Carl Lounsbury, "The Development of Domestic Architecture in the Albemarle Region," Michael Southern, "The I-House as a Carrier of Style in Three Counties of the Northeastern Piedmont," in *Carolina Dwelling* ed. Doug Swaim (Raleigh, NC: The Student Publication of the School of Design, 1978), 58-61, 79-83; Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975), 158-160.
22. For an overview of Downing's career and achievements see George B. Tatum, "A.J. Downing," in *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects* (New York: Free Press, 1982). For the impact of his ideas on rural design see McMurry, 39-47.
23. A.J. Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850: rpt. New York: Dover, 1869), 33.
24. Ibid, 141.
25. Downing, *Architecture of Country Houses*, 275.
26. Ibid, 32.
27. Ibid.
28. A.J. Downing, *Cottage Residences* (New York: Wiley & Putnam, 1842), 88-93. See also the center-gabled design for *A Cottage-villa in the Bracketed mode* (Design V), 98-109.
29. The model for this design was probably an 1836 project by architect A. J. Davis for the gatehouse of Robert Donaldson's estate Blithewood in Barrytown, New York which architectural historian Jane Davies characterized as the "prototype of the American Gothic cottage." Davis illustrated this cottage in his *Rural Residences* in 1838. Between 1838 and 1842 he created variants of this design with boldly emphasized center gables and verandas for a number of houses including Millbrook, the house of Henry Sheldon in Tarrytown, New York (1838-40) and the house of William J. Rotch, in New Bedford, Massachusetts (1845).
30. Southern, "The I-House as a Carrier of Style," in *Carolina Dwelling*, 81.
31. For some of the many post-Civil War examples of this building type see: Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Knopf, 1997), 202-203, 221; Bernard Herman, *Architecture and Rural Life in Central Delaware 1700-1900* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987, 163; Catherine Bisher, "Jacob W. Holt: An American Builder," in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture* (Athens, Georgia: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1986), 461-465.
32. Material in this section on the twentieth-century development of Richmondtown is adapted from LPC, *(Former) Public School 28 Report*, 2.
33. The Voorlezer was the lay reader and school teacher for the Dutch families in the area. His house also served as a church and school.
34. This discussion the Aquilinos' ownership of the house is based on "Historic Structure Fact Sheet," 2-3; LPC, "Archaeological Planning Model," 265-66, 286-89; Conveyances, Liber 545, p. 72; Liber 729, p. 23; Liber 1066, p. 228.
35. McMillen interview.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

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 Edward-Barton House has a special character and a 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 Edwards-Barton House, a two-and-one-half-story three-bay-wide clapboard-covered house, built by Bedell & Hill for Webley Edwards in 1869, is a fine and well-preserved example of a popular mid-nineteenth-century rural house type, the symmetrically-planned center-hall house with a side-gabled roof fronted by a prominent center cross gable, which is well represented in many parts of the country but is now very unusual in New York City; that this house is embellished with handsome Italianate and Second Empire detailing and is enriched with heavy molded door and window surrounds, bracketed cornices and bay windows on the side elevations; that it is one of the most impressive mid-nineteenth residences occupying one of the most prominent sites in Richmondtown, the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century governmental center of Staten Island and is indicative of the wealth and status of Webley Edwards, a prosperous businessman and government official who was then serving as county treasurer; that after Edwards died in 1870, the house passed to his widow Deborah Mersereau Edwards and later to their daughters Lucretia and Ella Barton and that the Edwards and Bartons who continued to occupy the house until 1914 were leading citizens of Richmondtown who contributed to its history and development; that the house was acquired by grocer Nicola Aquilino and was occupied by members of the Aquilino family until 1966; that the house has been a part of Historic Richmond Town since the 1950s and underwent exterior restoration in the 1970s; and that as the farmhouses and village residences that once proliferated in New York City have fallen victim to developmental pressures it has become an increasingly rare reminder of the city's rural past

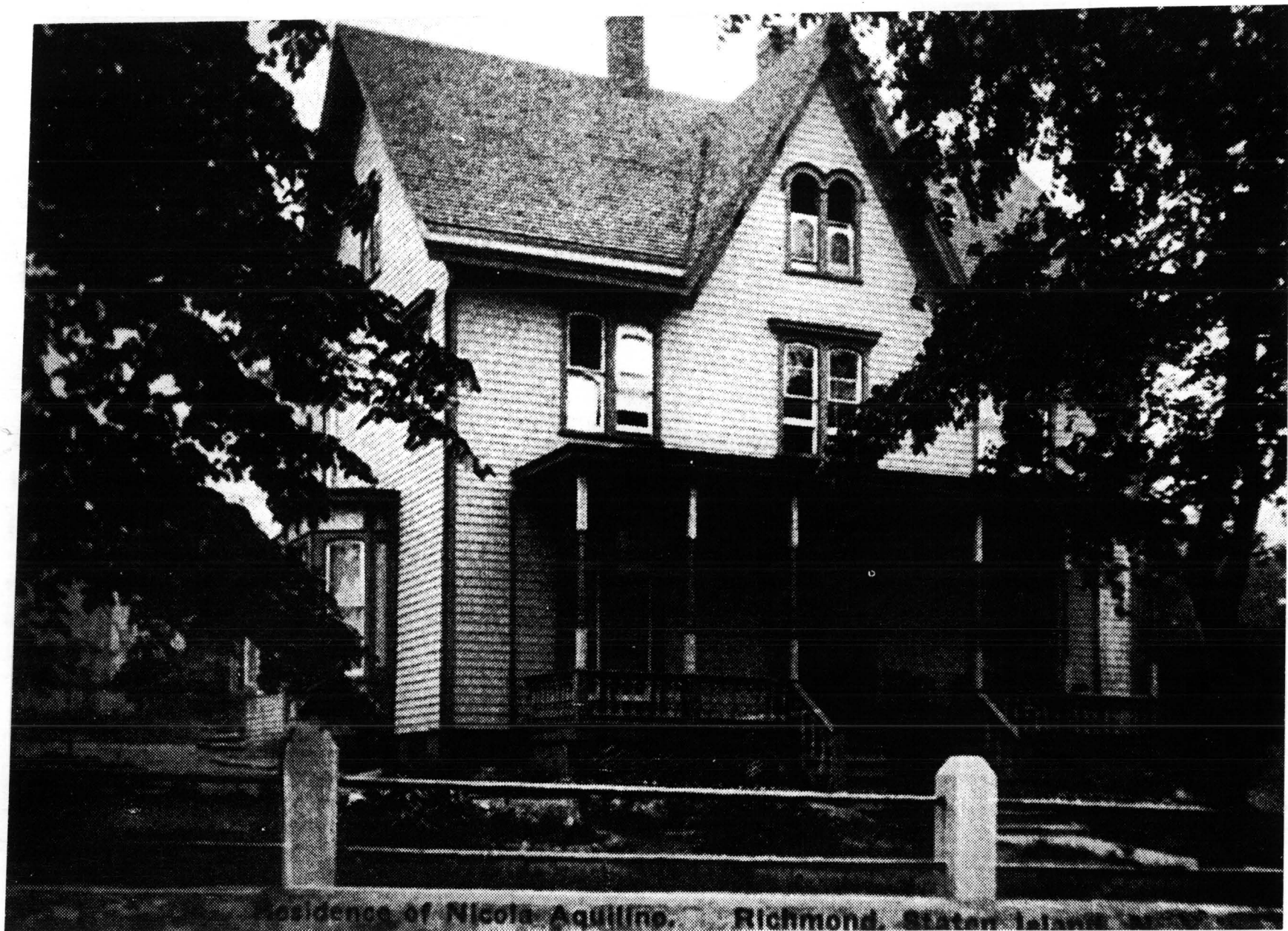
Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Edwards-Barton House, 3742 Richmond Road (aka 3738-3742 Richmond Road, 4 Court Place), Borough of Staten Island, and designates Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 4441, Lot 1 in part, consisting of the irregularly-shaped parcel of land formerly known as Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 4443, Lot 8, bounded by a line starting at the southwest corner of Richmond Road and Court Place and proceeding northwesterly along the northern lot line for 105.22 feet, then southwesterly for 207.51 feet along the former western lot line of former Lot 8, to the former southern lot line of former Lot 8, southeasterly for 66 feet along part of the former southern lot line of former Lot 8, northerly for 27 feet along part of the former eastern lot line of former Lot 8, southeasterly for 23 feet along part of the former southern lot line of former Lot 8, northerly for 66 feet along part of the former eastern lot line of former Lot 8, easterly for 100 feet along part of the former southern lot line of former Lot 8, and northerly for 110 feet along part of the former eastern lot line of former Lot 8, to the point of beginning as its Landmark Site.



Edward-Barton House, 3742 Richmond Road (aka 3738-3742 Richmond Road, 4 Court Place), Staten Island
View from the north showing the Richmond Road facade
Photo: Carl Forster



Historic view of the Edwards-Barton House c. 1900
Source: Staten Island Historical Society



Residence of Nicola Aquilino. Richmond, Staten Island, N.Y.

Historic postcard of the Edwards-Barton House taken c. 1925 when the house was the residence of the Aquilino family
Source: Staten Island Historical Society

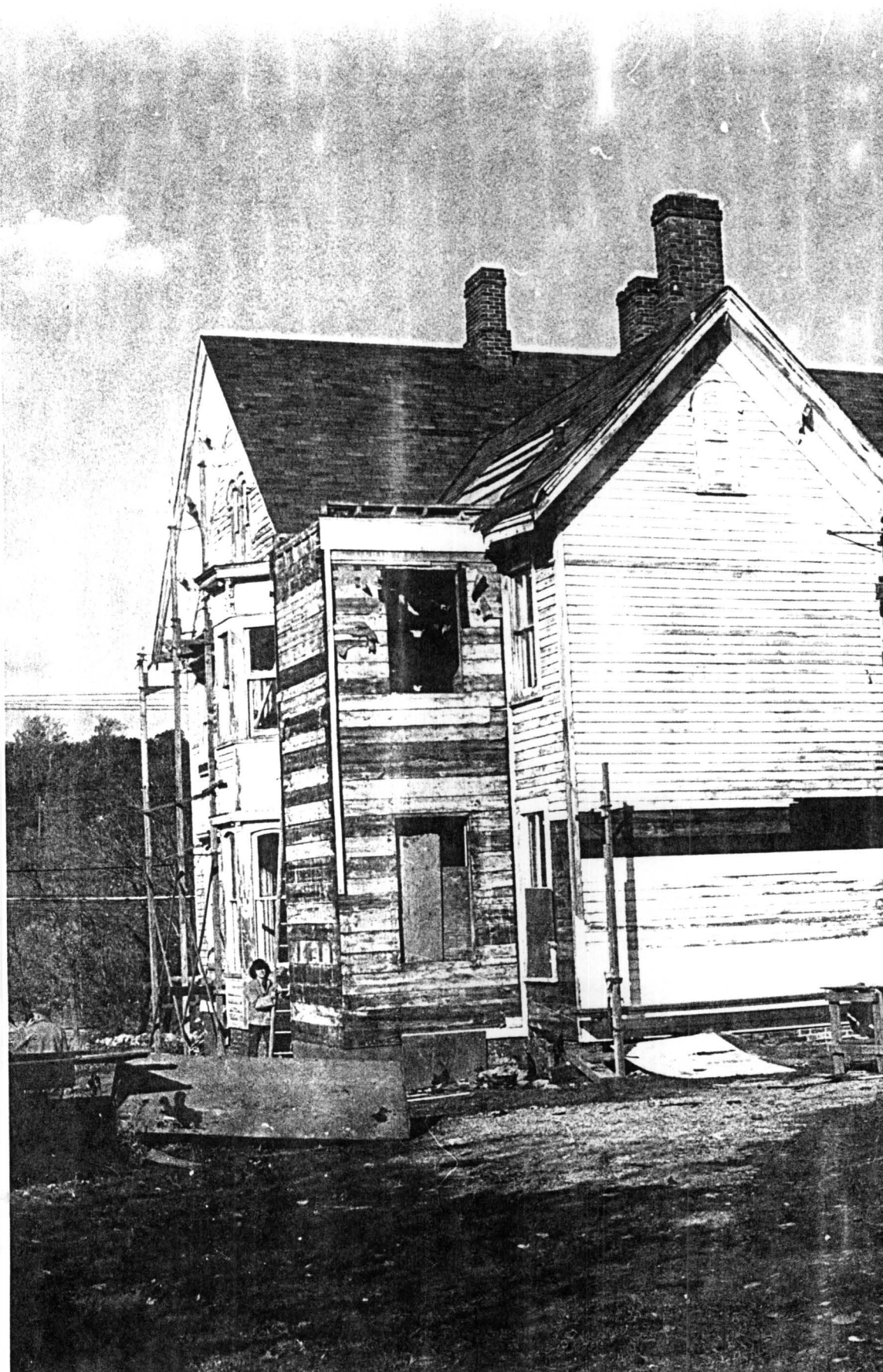


Top: Francis Barton ice-skating c. 1905

Right: Roy Barton in the early 1900s while serving with the Richmondtown Volunteer Fire Company

Left: Photo of a Barton family member c. 1900, identified as Willis [E.] Barton but possibly Samuel E. Barton

Sources: Gladys Barton; Edwards-Barton Family Papers, Staten Island Historical Society



The Edwards-Barton House during restoration, March 1972
View from the southwest showing the two-story bathroom addition shortly before its demolition
Photo: Ray Fingado, Courtesy Staten Island Historical Society



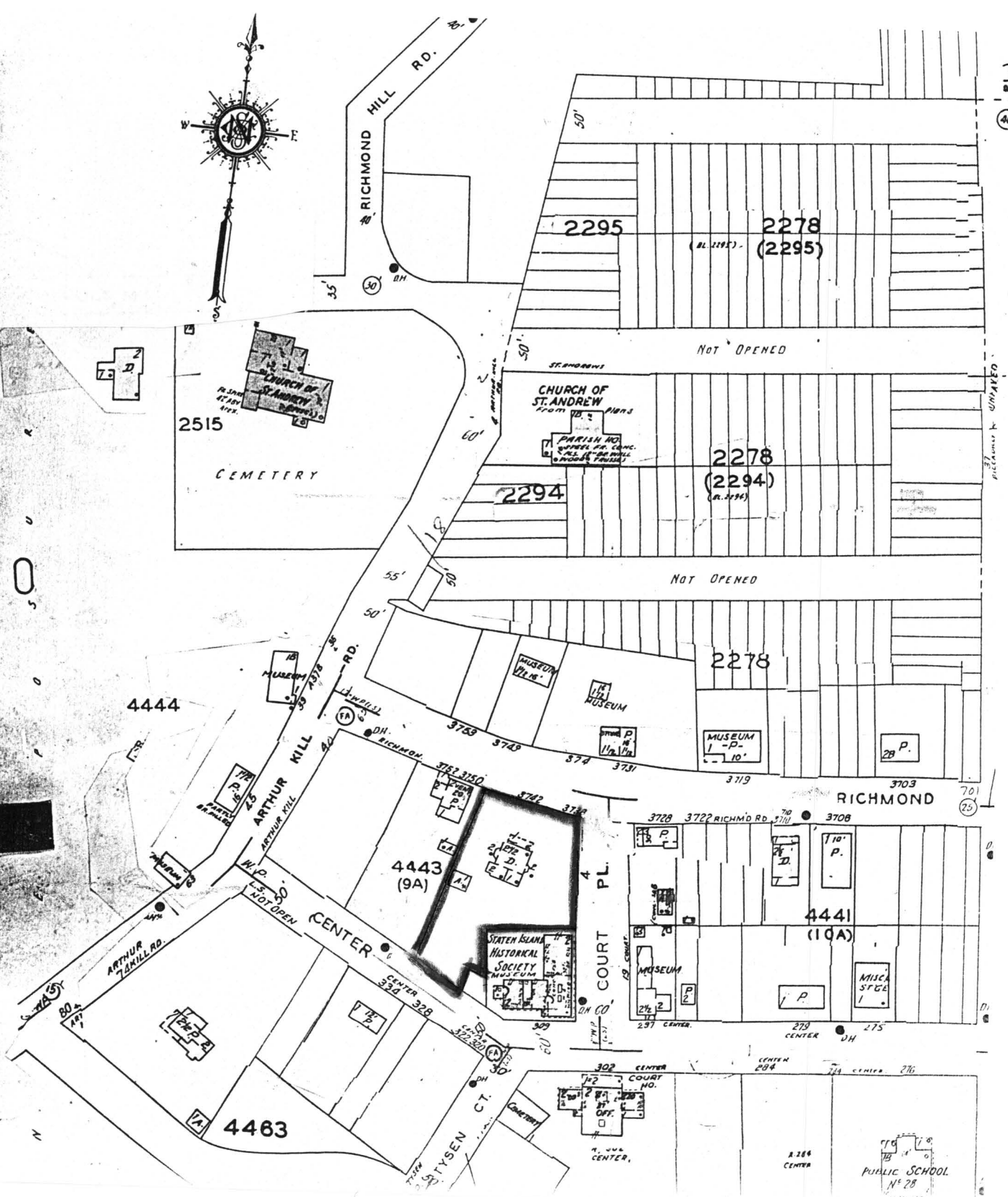
View from the southeast showing the Court Place and rear facades
Photo: Carl Forster



Left: Detail of the entrance surround on the Richmond Road (north) facade
Right: Detail of the first-story French doors opening onto the entrance porch facing Richmond Road
Photos: Carl Forster



Left: Detail of the west facade
 Right: Detail of the attic window and bracketed eaves on the gable facing Richmond Road
 Photos: Carl Forster



Edwards-Barton House, 3742 Richmond Road

(aka 3738-3742 Richmond Road, 4 Court Place), Staten Island

Landmark Site: Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 4441, Lot 1 in part, consisting of the irregularly-shaped parcel of land formerly known as Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 4443, Lot 8, bounded by a line starting at the southwest corner of Richmond Road and Court Place and proceeding northwesterly along the northern lot line for 105.22 feet, then southwesterly for 207.51 feet along the former western lot line of former Lot 8, to the former southern lot line of former Lot 8, southeasterly for 66 feet along part of the former southern lot line of former Lot 8, northerly for 27 feet along part of the former eastern lot line of former Lot 8, southeasterly for 23 feet along part of the former southern lot line of former Lot 8, northerly for 66 feet along part of the former eastern lot line of former Lot 8, easterly for 100 feet along part of the former southern lot line of former Lot 8, and northerly for 110 feet along part of the former eastern lot line of former Lot 8, to the point of beginning. .

Source: Sanborn Building & Property Atlas of Staten Island, 1998