

**H.H. RICHARDSON HOUSE**, 45 McClean Avenue, Staten Island.  
Built 1868-69; Henry Hobson Richardson, architect.

Landmark Site: Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 3105, Lot 1, in part, consisting of that portion of the lot originally held by Henry Hobson Richardson and his wife, as delineated in deeds filed at the Richmond County Register's Office, Liber 75, page 573 and Liber 74, page 340 in 1868. This roughly rectangular portion of the lot includes the land bounded by a line beginning at the southwest corner of Lot 1, extending northwesterly along the western lot line to the intersection with the northern lot line, northeasterly along the northern lot line for 100 feet, southeasterly at said point extending to the southern lot line and parallel to the western lot line, and southwesterly along the southern lot line, to the point of beginning.

On February 24, 2004, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the H. H. Richardson House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No.1). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There were nine speakers in favor of designation, including Councilmember Oddo and a representative of State Senator Lachman. Other speakers in favor of designation included representatives of the Preservation League of Staten Island, the Landmarks Conservancy and the Historic Districts Council, as well as several individuals. Both the legal representative of the current owner and the architect for the developer in contract for the property spoke in opposition to designation. The Commission has also received several letters supporting designation, including from the Municipal Art Society and from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

#### Summary

Henry Hobson Richardson, considered by many to be the greatest nineteenth century American architect, built a house for himself and his family in Arrochar, on Staten Island in 1868. The Richardson family lived there from 1869 until 1874 when they moved to Brookline, Massachusetts so that Richardson could supervise the construction of Trinity Church in Boston. The Staten Island house is a large, Stick Style residence with a high mansard roof, showing Richardson's understanding both of the prevalent styles in American home building as well as the influence of his years studying and traveling in France. The house survives on what is now a busy thoroughfare, having been converted in 1946 to physicians' offices. It is a striking reminder of a period in Staten Island history when the borough was a rural enclave, home to numerous prosperous and enlightened men who were looking for beauty and community near an urban environment. Although the wall cladding has been changed and there have been some additions on the first story, the tall mansard with its numerous dormers and chimneys, the iron roof cresting, and the variety of exterior shapes and picturesque outline continue to suggest the vibrancy of the life that was once lived here. This building survives as one of only two in New York City attributable to Henry Hobson Richardson.



## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### Arrochar, Staten Island

Staten Island had experienced a huge influx of population beginning in the 1810s due to the widespread economic and social changes caused by Manhattan's rapid growth and commercialization. The island began to attract many wealthy businessmen from New York, who were looking for real estate investments, residences and retreats from the hubbub of the city. The pace of development increased after several epidemics in Manhattan in the 1820s and 30s, as well as the Great Fire of 1835. Staten Island was easily accessible by ferry to lower Manhattan, yet the area remained rural and idyllic. The initial increase in population was "concentrated on the north and eastern shores," and "was so intense that dividing lines between developments blurred: by 1840, the area appeared to many observers as 'almost a continued village.'"<sup>1</sup>

There were, however, numerous distinct new settlements including Clifton, a suburban area south of Stapleton, founded in 1837. One section of Clifton, located on a high point of land overlooking the Narrows and Fort Wadsworth was originally very rural. Numerous large estates were built in this area after the Civil War, and it came to be called Arrochar. The name derived from the hills of Arrochar on the northern end of Lach Lomond in Scotland, the family estate of Wall Street attorney William W. MacFarland, who built his new residence on Staten Island in 1880.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to and during the Civil War, Staten Island was home to a community of forward-thinking men (many of them abolitionists), that included Frederick Law Olmstead, Judge William Emerson (brother of Ralph Waldo), newspaper editor Sidney Howard Gay, and prominent man-of-letters George William Curtis. Growth continued after the Civil War, as hundreds of wealthy families built villas and large estates on the still undeveloped land.

### Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886)<sup>3</sup>

Henry Hobson Richardson was born to a wealthy family at Priestly Plantation in Louisiana. After a private school education, Richardson attended Harvard University, where he became interested in architecture. After graduation, Richardson traveled in England and Europe, finally settling in Paris where he enrolled at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, and the atelier of Jules-Louis Andre, which he attended intermittently between 1860 and 1865. Richardson was only the second American (after Richard Morris Hunt) to study at this important institution. Stranded in Paris during America's Civil War, Richardson's funds were cut off

and he worked for French architects Theodore Labrousse and Jacques Ignace Hittorff to support himself.

Richardson returned to this country in 1865, settling in New York City. In the same year, Frederick Law Olmstead also came back to the city to begin work with Calvert Vaux on Prospect Park.<sup>4</sup> All three men participated in the newly founded American Institute of Architects, as well as the Century Club, a group of artists, architects, and men of letters, and it is clear that the men became friends. Richardson lived first in Brooklyn while trying to start an architectural practice. In 1867, Richardson began a partnership with Charles Dexter Gambrill (1832-1880), another Harvard graduate. It appears that this was purely a convenient business arrangement with no artistic collaboration between them.<sup>5</sup> The firm lasted until 1878 however, and it is credited with only one extant work in New York City, the renovation of the Century Club.<sup>6</sup>

By 1866 Olmstead had convinced Richardson to move to Staten Island, where he, like Olmstead, became a member of the Island's elite.<sup>7</sup> In 1868, Olmstead recommended that Richardson design the Alexander Dallas Bache Monument, a memorial for a man with whom Olmstead had served on the U.S. Sanitary Commission.<sup>8</sup> This was the first of numerous collaborations between Richardson and Olmstead, who remained friends and colleagues until Richardson's death. In 1870 they were both appointed, along with public health expert Dr. Elisha Harris, to the Staten Island Improvement Commission which laid out a comprehensive plan for sanitation, water supply, roadways and the siting of new buildings to provide for thoughtful development of the island. This was, unfortunately, never implemented.<sup>9</sup>

After successfully gaining his first architectural commission in 1866,<sup>10</sup> Richardson married his fiancé of eight years, Julia Gorham Hayden, in January, 1867 and settled in a rented cottage in Staten Island. Their first child was born by the end of the year and Richardson and his wife then purchased a large plot of land on a rise overlooking the bay in what was then called Clifton, later Arrochar.<sup>11</sup> Richardson began work immediately on a new home for his family, helped in the financing by his father-in-law, Dr. John Hayden. They took up residence there at the end of January, 1869.

Richardson was known as "generous and open-hearted," with a large circle of friends, both among the artistic community and among his fellow Harvard alumni. He was "a great talker, with a light stammer,

he radiated charm and conviction.”<sup>12</sup> During this time, however, Richardson was beginning to suffer from Bright’s disease, which eventually led to his premature death in 1886. He was frequently too ill to take the ferry to his Manhattan office and therefore often worked from his home on Staten Island.<sup>13</sup>

In 1872 Richardson received the commission for a large structure for Trinity Church in Boston. Although Richardson was still in practice with Gambrell at this time, this commission is attributed solely to him. He worked on the plans from New York for the first two years, but by 1874 it became necessary to be in Boston to oversee this important job. He moved his family from the Staten Island house to Brookline, outside of Boston, into a large eighteenth century house which could also accommodate his office. Although he continued to travel and design buildings for many locations, he maintained this working arrangement for the rest of his life. Additions were made to the studio section of this building to accommodate his growing staff, with whom he maintained close relationships through the years.<sup>14</sup> Richardson died of Bright’s disease at the age of 48 in 1886, after a short but illustrious career.

#### The Architecture of Henry Hobson Richardson<sup>15</sup>

Henry Hobson Richardson was one of the most important and influential American architects of the nineteenth century. The unique style of architecture he developed, the “Richardson Romanesque,” was not only named after him, but was also influential on later European and American developments. Spanning the time period between Victorian picturesque eclecticism and the modern era, his work reflected the various contemporary architectural currents while moving toward the simplification and clarity of design inherent in modernism.

As the second American architect to study at the prestigious Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris,<sup>16</sup> Richardson returned to the United States with training different from other American architects of the period. This school was known for the emphasis it placed on planning for the functions of a building, as well as on classically-inspired exterior designs. In his French work experience with Theodore Labrouste, Richardson was also exposed to some of the most advanced structural ideas of the period.<sup>17</sup> In his own mature work, Richardson chose to build on the more forward-looking aspects of his training. The spatial organization of his work, whether for private homes or for complex civic centers, shows his ability to get to the essence of the design problem and to express this directness on the exterior as well as the interior forms.

Another important influence on his work was Richardson’s travel in southern France, especially the medieval buildings he saw in the Auvergne region. These impressed him with their pyramidal massing. The solidity, strong masonry and bold arches of these early French churches can clearly be seen as influences in his later work.

Richardson’s work upon returning to the United States was consistent with current American architecture of the period. His earliest office buildings, for the Western Railroad Company (1867-69) and for the Agawam National Bank (1869-70), both in Springfield, Mass. and both demolished) were restrained masonry piles with raised basements, three full stories and mansard roofs with dormers. While the railroad building had windows topped by Italianate pediments, the later effort displayed heavy stone voussoirs surrounding round-arched window openings in a preview of Richardson’s later Romanesque Revival style work. His first two church designs, also in Massachusetts (Unity Church, Springfield, 1867-69, demolished and Grace Episcopal Church, Medford, 1867-69), exhibit picturesque Gothic designs with high steeples, asymmetrical massing and rough-cut stone walls.

Richardson’s earliest house designs reflected their location as well as the prevailing American architectural styles. During the mid-nineteenth century, the works and writings of Andrew Jackson Downing were the dominant influence on American house design: Downing promoted picturesque designs in naturalistic country or suburban landscapes. Downing’s houses derived from the romanticism of the English Gothic revival, but used wood (which was easily accessible in America) to express the skeletal qualities of their framing. In what is now commonly known as the Stick Style, architects of these buildings used broad wooden vertical and horizontal boards on the exterior to express the interior structural elements. The emphasis on the picturesque can be seen in some of Richardson’s earliest house projects which also have numerous projecting bays and porches topped by steep, irregular roofs.<sup>18</sup> The structure of these houses, which are usually clad with clapboard, is sometimes further emphasized by Tudor style half-timbering.<sup>19</sup> Even though he was working in the popular style of the period, Richardson nevertheless was able to “discipline the picturesque and to provide an underlying order to his vigorous compositions” through his reliance on the rigorous geometries of Beaux Arts influenced compositions.<sup>20</sup> Another popular element on American houses of this period, which Richardson also employed, was the mansard roof. Devised in France during Haussmann’s

rebuilding of Paris during the Second Empire, this roof type was seen in America as the latest, most fashionable addition one could make to a house. It was an element Richardson would have been quite familiar with due to his time in France.

During the same period, Richardson designed several urban houses which show some similarities to his other domestic work but clearly are designed in a more restrained manner consistent with their urban sites. The Benjamin Crowninshield house (1868-70, Boston) and the William Dorsheimer house (1868-71, Buffalo)<sup>21</sup> were executed in masonry rather than wood, and feature brick walls with flat stone banding that outline the structural elements. They have tall, slate-covered mansard roofs with hooded dormers and tall chimneys. In keeping with their urban sites, these houses are constructed close to the edges of their urban lots with few projecting bays. Among Gambrill and Richardson's limited work in New York City were two adjoining townhouses on Park Avenue, built for father and son Jonathan and Frederick Sturges in 1869-70 (Nos. 38 and 40 Park Avenue, demolished). These brick and brownstone mansions displayed a highly restrained classical design with contrasting quoins, a single entrance bay and a mansard roof with pedimented dormers.

The beginning of Richardson's mature style can be seen in one of his designs that dates to just after the construction of his home in Staten Island. In his Brattle Square Church (1869-73, Boston)<sup>22</sup> one can see the early use of a variety of local stone for its decorative qualities, and the combination of a picturesque plan with medieval elements such as round-arched individual openings and arcades, carved friezes, and steeply-pitched roofs.

Although there were several projects during the period immediately after this, Richardson's work on Trinity Church (1872-77) was the true turning point of his career and the building that established his reputation in America and Europe as the dominant architect of his day.<sup>23</sup> Created of several different local stones used for their color and texture variations, the church and parish house complex occupy a highly visible site in Boston's Back Bay. The church takes the form of a Greek cross in plan and is topped by a square tower with turrets and a pyramidal, tiled roof. An elaborate triple-arched porch stretches between two towers on the western facade,<sup>24</sup> while a rounded apse is on the opposite side. The overall effect of the massing is pyramidal, although the solidity of the structure is broken up by numerous variations in the arrangement, large openings and variety of materials.

During and after the Trinity Church project, Richardson's work, which included a variety of types

of buildings, continued to evolve into his mature design style.

Drawing upon the environmental vision of his erstwhile collaborator Frederick Law Olmstead, Richardson seems to have attempted to generate architectural forms appropriate to their content and their context, that is, their position within contemporary society. In so doing he was to create prototypes for urban commercial and suburban or rural domestic buildings that were to inspire, among other subsequent works, the office buildings of Louis Sullivan and the residences of Frank Lloyd Wright.<sup>25</sup>

Richardson's numerous house designs included his Watts-Sherman House of 1874-76 in Newport, Rhode Island, with its asymmetrical arrangement and its wood shingle cladding, derived from the English work of Richard Norman Shaw.<sup>26</sup> Other large and expansive shingle style houses included the Andrews House (1872-73) and two different projects for houses for the Cheney's in South Manchester, Massachusetts (1876 and 1878). Richardson's designs for large urban houses show his ability to move from the openness and expansiveness of the country house to the dignified simplicity required by the urban setting. These urban works include the Anderson house (1881), and the Adams and Hay houses (both 1884-86), all in Washington and all demolished. The culmination of Richardson's urban house designs in stone was the Glessner House in Chicago, finished after his death in 1886. It shows how Richardson's style evolved to fashion a handsome, highly functional house, with solid masonry exterior walls protecting the living space from the urban environment, while opening up the courtyard facade to display an irregular, lively structure suited to the needs of a busy family.

Richardson's commercial work began to fully develop in his R. and F. Cheney Building in Hartford, Connecticut (1875-76), a large block containing stores and offices. Here Richardson showed his ability to organize the facade into a coherent system within the Romanesque vocabulary.<sup>27</sup> Richardson's crowning achievement was the warehouse he designed for the Marshall Field company in Chicago, one of the greatest buildings of the nineteenth century. Its massive stone walls, articulated by a rhythmic series of arches, gives a sense of power and scale not previously seen in commercial architecture.<sup>28</sup> Although his Marshall Field store was only extant for forty years, it was seen as leading the way for modern skyscraper development and directly influenced the work of other

important architects, such as Louis Sullivan and Burnham and Root.

During the last ten years of his life, Richardson developed designs for completely new forms of buildings, such as public libraries and suburban railroad stations, each uniquely responsive to the needs of its particular location. His large public buildings included work on the New York State Capitol in Albany (1875-1886) with Leopold Eidlitz, and the Allegheny County Courthouse in Pittsburgh (1883-88). The Pittsburgh building,

lucidly organized and richly formed ... ranks as one of his major achievements and is without doubt his most impressive surviving monument. [Through this work] Richardson brought a measure of discipline to the picturesque without losing any richness.<sup>29</sup>

In his twenty years as a practicing architect, Richardson

managed to transform American architecture. . . . he created seminal alternatives to the English Gothic and French classical buildings of his contemporaries and inspired a particularly American episode ... He created in his own terms disciplined but fresh and diversified architectural forms for the American Society of his day ... [and] left a rich legacy for potential development for those who followed.<sup>30</sup>

#### The House in Arrochar

Richardson was a young architect, well-connected to wealthy individuals, but also involved with the progressive thinkers of his period, such as Olmstead and Emerson. He chose to live in a rural area in Staten Island because he was aware of the positive influence of the natural environment. Richardson and his wife Julia purchased 1.7 acres of land from Roderick Cameron<sup>31</sup> on the corner of Richmond (now McClean) Avenue and Sea (now Lilypond) Avenues.<sup>32</sup> They then sold .8 acres of the property to Elizabeth and James Houghton,<sup>33</sup> leaving .9 acre on which to build their new home.

In designing his own house, Richardson had only his own desires and needs of his family to fulfill. As one of his first works however, he would have wanted to create a house using the most modern, up-to-date styles while also showing what he had learned in his years in Paris. In all of Richardson's earliest works, he was influenced by the popular styles of the day, but the desirable picturesqueness is tempered by his command of Beaux Arts planning principles and illustrates his attempt to incorporate both these goals.<sup>34</sup>

While equipped with every modern convenience, this house corresponded to the other designs Richardson was creating at this time. His house was foremost a picturesque one, with a variety of projecting bays and porches to create variety on each facade. Set on a hill overlooking the harbor and on a large property, this house incorporated an assortment of spaces, projections, and many picturesque details to be enhanced by numerous trees and plentiful shrubbery around it. The steep, slate-covered mansard roof was topped with intricate iron cresting to emphasize its height and irregularity.<sup>35</sup> Tall brick chimneys extended above the top of the roof for a further sense of the picturesque. The surface of Richardson's house was originally faced in clapboard, a material that was not too expensive (Richardson was just starting out and had to borrow money from his father-in-law for the house) but also added variety to the surface of the building. Flat boards were placed along the edges and crossed under the windows, emphasizing the structural framework of the building. Scully has called this type of building Stick Style, because of its emphasis on the interior wooden structure. Other influences may also have been at work. Francis Kowsky<sup>36</sup> makes the case that this type of structural framework was also seen on mid-nineteenth century French suburban houses and illustrates his point with pictures from Victor Petit, *Maisons de compagnie des environs de Paris choix des plus remarquables maisons bourgeois nouvellement construit aux alentours de Paris*, Paris (185\_) which show a distinct similarity to several of Richardson's early, mansard-roofed buildings. Although in the Staten Island building, the basic house is rectangular in plan, there were originally significant projecting bays, porches and overhangs on each facade.<sup>37</sup> There is also, however, a sense of solidity to the structure which sets it apart from other Stick Style structures of the period, foreshadowing the solidity of the masonry structures of Richardson's mature period. Kowsky also notes a "harmony of parts, refined proportions, and discreet and scholarly ornament."<sup>38</sup>

During a visit to his daughter and her family in March, 1869, Julia Richardson's father, Dr. Hayden wrote a letter to his wife describing the new residence as "very handsome and convenient." It was a large house for a family just starting out, with plenty of room to accommodate Richardson's studio space for the times he could not travel to work. The house was equipped with all the latest amenities, including pipes for gas which had not yet reached this location. (However, having helped the young couple with the purchase of the property, Dr. Hayden was concerned that the house was too expensive for Richardson's current level of income.)<sup>39</sup>

### Subsequent History

Even though the family moved to Massachusetts in 1874, their ownership of the house was retained until after Richardson's death in 1886. During a public auction in 1887, the Arrochar house was sold to Adolphus L. King, a wealthy Staten Island businessman and property owner.<sup>40</sup> According to his biography, when King settled in Arrochar it was

heavily wooded and appreciated as one of the beautiful countrysides of the Island. Nearby were a number of spacious country houses owned by influential families.<sup>41</sup>

Heirs of King sold the lot to Abraham and Esthilde Eglinton in 1907.<sup>42</sup> Eventually their heirs divided the house into rental units, and in 1946 sold it to Lena Romano.<sup>43</sup> At this time the ground floor was used as physicians' offices with apartments on the two upper stories.<sup>44</sup> Sometime thereafter, the second and third stories were converted to ancillary office and storage space in connection with the physicians' offices on the first floor. After the property was purchased by Lena Romano, it was transferred several times within the family and was eventually sold to its present owner, McClean Avenue Associates Ltd. Limited information at the Buildings Department shows one-story additions at the southeast and northwest corners of the building in 1991 and 2000.<sup>45</sup>

### Description

The house at 45 McClean Avenue sits alone on a large, raised corner lot on a busy street near the Verrazano Bridge. The lot is bordered by a concrete retaining wall topped by a non-historic iron railing. Near the southwestern corner of the lot is a large mature tree, possibly dating from the original landscaping.

The house is three stories high including a steep, mansard roof clad in shaped asphalt shingles and topped by original ornate iron cresting. Three large,

original, painted brick chimneys extend from various parts of the roof. In addition, each section of the roof has at least one historic dormer. Some dormers have shed roofs and others have original, decorative gable hoods. Many of the dormer windows appear to be original, with 2/2 wood sash.

The footprint of the house is (and was originally) irregular and there have been two, one-story additions to the original structure (one at the northwest corner and one at the southeast corner) and other areas which were open porches have been enclosed.<sup>46</sup> On the original projecting areas, such as that on the western side of the building, the same mansard roofs continue, as does the iron cresting. The newer sections also have mansard roofs, with similar shingle siding. In the original port-cochere, facing Lilypond Avenue one can see the original wooden roof and brackets. The window openings at the second story are at their original locations, and many retain their wooden sash. The building was originally clad with wooden clapboards; now it is covered in white vinyl siding. The main entrance currently is on the eastern side of the building, within the one-story addition. This section also has a variety of sizes and types of non-historic windows, and a large air conditioning unit on the roof of the addition. A sidewalk ramp with iron railings leads from the doorway to the parking lot. There is another ramp leading to a porch and secondary entrance near the northern edge of this facade. An original porch with a gabled hood at this location indicates another entrance that has since been closed.

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### **NOTES**

1. Charles L. Sachs, "The Island Image: Reflections and Refractions from Home and Abroad," in *Community, Continuity and Change, New Perspectives on Staten Island History* (New York: Pace Univ. Press, 1999), 52.
2. "Local Names of Staten Island - Past and Present" compiled by Victor Garnice.
3. There have been numerous studies of the life of Henry Hobson Richardson. This information has been compiled from several sources, including: "Henry Hobson Richardson," *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, Adolf K. Placzek, ed., Vol. 3, (New York: The Free Press, 1982), 558-75; James O' Gorman, *Living Architecture, A Biography of H. H. Richardson* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997); and Henry-Russell

- Hitchcock, *The Architecture of H. H. Richardson and His Times* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1936).
4. After his early years of “scientific farming” on the south shore of Staten Island, Olmstead had traveled throughout the southern United States and written articles against slavery. During the Civil War, he headed the United States Sanitary Commission and afterwards began a partnership with George William Curtis to publish *Putnam’s Magazine*.
  5. O’ Gorman, *Living Architecture*, 82-83.
  6. 1869, 109-111 East 15<sup>th</sup> Street, a designated New York City Landmark. The firm’s work on this building included a rear extension and a new facade, but it is unclear which of the partners actually is responsible for the designs. All other work of this firm in New York City has been demolished.
  7. Herbert Weiner, “Twice Upon an Island Revisited: Another Look at Staten Island’s Role in the Landscapes and Planning of Frederick Law Olmstead,” in *Community, Continuity and Change*, 74.
  8. The monument to Alexander Dallas Bache is located in the Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C.
  9. Elizabeth Stevenson, *Park Maker: A Life of Frederick Law Olmstead*, 297-98.
  10. The Unity Church in Springfield, Massachusetts.
  11. Richmond County Register’s Office, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 74, page 340, April 3, 1868.
  12. Stevenson, 300-01.
  13. Jeffery Karl Ochsner, *H. H. Richardson; Complete Architectural Works* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982), 1.
  14. Richardson was known for the training he gave to his staff members, who included such important figures as Charles McKim and Stanford White. Others, such as Rutan and Coolidge carried on his work and became the successor firm to Richardson after his death.
  15. This section is compiled from the following sources: Ochsner; Hitchcock, *The Architecture of H. H. Richardson and His Times*; William H. Pierson, Jr., *American Buildings and Their Architects, Technology and the Picturesque, The Corporate and the Early Gothic Styles* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1978); “Richardson, H. H.,” Alan Gowans, *Images of American Living* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1964), 350-62; Lewis Mumford, *Roots of Contemporary American Architecture* (New York: Dover Publ., 1972), 117-31; Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Richardson as a High Victorian Architect* (Amherst, Mass.: Smith College, 1965), 8-11; James O’Gorman, *Living Architecture*, 75-83; Francis Kowsky, “The Veil of Nature; H.H. Richardson and Frederick Law Olmstead,” in *H. H. Richardson, The Architect, His Peers, and Their Era*, Maureen Meister, ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), 55-58.
  16. Richard Morris Hunt had attended the Ecole from 1846 to 1854.
  17. Theodore was the brother of Henri Labrouste, designer of the seminal Bibliothèque Nationale, 1858-68, where structural iron and glass had been used more extensively than ever before on a comparable building. Mumford, “The Regionalism of Richardson,” in *Roots of Contemporary American Architecture*, 120.
  18. These project drawings are in the Richardson archives at Houghton Library at Harvard University. They include projects number 3 (Redmond House, 1867), 13 (1868), 14 (1868) and 16 (Richard Codman House Project, 1868-69) in Ochsner, *Complete Architectural Works*, as well as Richardson’s own Staten Island house.
  19. Vincent J. Scully, Jr., *The Shingle Style and the Stick Style, Architectural Theory and Design from Downing to the Origins of Wright* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1955), 4-5 and Hitchcock, *The Architecture of H. H. Richardson*, 80-82.
  20. Thomas C. Hubka, “The Picturesque in the Design Method of H.H. Richardson,” in *H.H. Richardson, The Architect, His Peers and Their Era*, Maureen Meister, ed., 5.

21. Richardson received the commission for a house for William Dorsheimer (1868) in Buffalo, NY, through Frederick Law Olmstead. Dorsheimer was a politically-connected district attorney in Buffalo and was also instrumental in securing Richardson's first major commission, that of the Buffalo State Hospital (1870).
22. Hitchcock considered this building to be a major breakthrough in Richardson's work. Oschner, 73-77; Hitchcock, *The Architecture of H. H. Richardson*, 110-24.
23. Oschner, 114-123; Hitchcock, *The Architecture of H. H. Richardson*, 136-149.
24. The porch and the capping of the two western towers were added in the nineties by Richardson's successor firm, Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge.
25. James O'Gorman, *Three American Architects: Richardson, Sullivan and Wright, 1865-1915* (Chicago: Univ. Of Chicago Press, 1991), 45-46.
26. Here, Richardson's use of the large central hall as an organizing principle is fully developed for the first time. Stanford White has been given some of the credit for the fine detailing on this building. Oschner, 133-139, Hitchcock, 156-161.
27. Two stores in Boston for F. L. Ames followed (1882-85), both of which show Richardson's propensity for using large, round-headed arches as an organizing system, although the second one was probably a remodeling rather than a totally original work.
28. *Macmillan Encyclopedia*, 565.
29. O'Gorman, *Three American Architects*, 26, 30
30. O'Gorman, *Three American Architects*, 67.
31. Sir Roderick Cameron, of the Australian Steamship Line, had an unusually large estate. *Staten Island, A Resource Manual for School and Community*, (New York, Board of Education of the City of New York, 1964), 103.
32. The property extended for 266 feet, 7 inches along Sea Avenue (Lilypond Avenue) and 267 feet 8 inches along Richmond Avenue (McClellan Avenue). Richmond County Registers Office, Liber Deeds and conveyances, Liber 74, page 340.
33. The property they sold to Elizabeth and James Houghton was half of that previously purchased and began (on Richmond Avenue) 133 feet 10 inches east of the corner of Richmond and Sea Avenues. Richmond County Registers Office, Liber Deeds and conveyances, Liber 75, page 573.
34. Hitchcock, 80-81.
35. Mansard roofs were popular in the United States at this time, where they were seen as the latest style. A French import, they were added to many American buildings in an attempt to update them after the massive and well-publicized rebuilding of Paris during the Second Empire.
36. Francis R. Kowsky, "The William Dorsheimer House: A Reflection of French Suburban Architecture in the Early Works of H.H. Richardson," *The Art Bulletin* 62 (March, 1980), 134-147.
37. The porches have been enclosed and a large one-story addition has been added to the main structure to adapt it for its current use.
38. Kowsky, 147.
39. Letter from Dr. J. C. Hayden to his wife in Cambridge from Staten Island, March 21, 1869, in papers of Henry Hobson Richardson, Reel 1184, Archives of American Art.
40. Richmond County Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 175, page 5, April 25, 1887. King owned several properties in this area and had his own residence nearby. He was a captain of lightering and later became president of the Staten Island Savings Bank, the first successful banking institution on Staten Island. *Staten Island, A Resource Manual*, 11.



41. Charles W. Leng & William T. Davis, *Staten Island and Its People, A History 1609-1929*, v. III, (New York: Lewis Historical Publ. Co., 1930), 272.
42. Richmond County Registers Office, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 327, page 395, August 5, 1907. Eglinton was a descendant of William Bradford, second governor of Plymouth Colony and the Earl of Eglinton, Ayre, Scotland. Eglinton and his descendants owned this and several neighboring properties and formed a holding company, the Arrochar Improvement Company.
43. Richmond County Registers Office, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 966, page 472, October 8, 1946.
44. There were no changes to the exterior of the building at this time.
45. A few drawings for alterations exist in the Staten Island Building Department block and lot files.
46. The porch at the southwest was enclosed, as was part of the port-cochère.

## 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 H. H. Richardson 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 H. H. Richardson House was designed in 1868 by one of America's foremost nineteenth century architects, Henry Hobson Richardson for use by his own family; that, although he lived and worked in New York City for eight years, this house is one of only two extant buildings in the city attributable to this master architect; that the house was one of Richardson's earliest works after he returned to America from his studies in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux Arts: that the picturesque Stick Style residence represented the current popular style of home building in America at the time, as well as a style known from suburban Parisian houses; that the house was capped by a substantial mansard roof, which represented the most up-to-date fashion of the time and would have been thoroughly studied by Richardson during his years in Paris; that the house has been modified through the years but retains much original fabric including the massing, roof details and materials, and picturesque qualities prized by homebuilders in the period after the Civil War; that the area of Staten Island where this was built, Clifton (later Arrochar), was a beautiful rural section and home to many of the Island's most successful men and progressive thinkers, a group to which Richardson belonged; and that during the twenty years of his professional career, Richardson's work evolved from a disciplined rendering of current picturesque American design to a highly personalized, functionally-derived style which was remarkable for its clarity of line, logic of plan, and strength of materials, and that provided direct inspiration to Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright and the future modern movement.

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 H. H. Richardson House, 45 McClean Avenue, Borough of Staten Island, and designates Staten Island Tax Map Block 3105, Lot 1, in part, consisting of that portion of the lot originally held by Henry Hobson Richardson and his wife, as delineated in deeds filed at the Richmond County Register's Office, Liber 75, page 573 and Liber 74, page 340 in 1868. This roughly rectangular portion of the lot includes the land bounded by a line beginning at the southwest corner of Lot 1, extending northwesterly along the western lot line to the intersection with the northern lot line, northeasterly along the northern lot line for 100 feet, southeasterly at said point extending to the southern lot line and parallel to the western lot line, and southwesterly along the southern lot line, to the point of beginning as its Landmark Site.



Henry Hobson Richardson House  
45 McClean Avenue, Staten Island



Henry Hobson Richardson House  
View from the northeast



Henry Hobson Richardson House  
View from the west



Henry Hobson Richardson House  
View from the southeast



Henry Hobson Richardson House  
roof details

*Photos: Carl Forster*



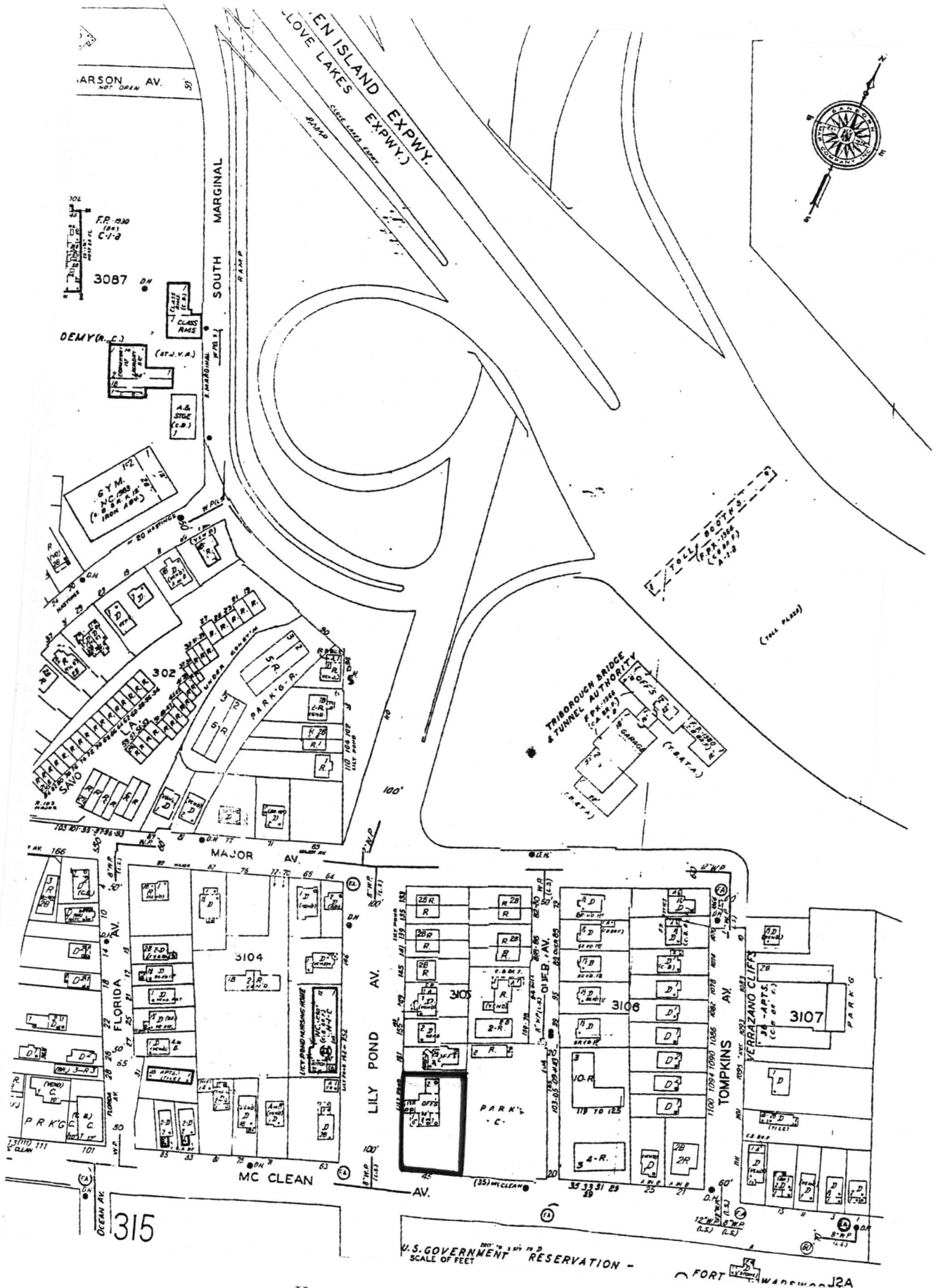
Henry Hobson Richardson House  
Roof and siding details





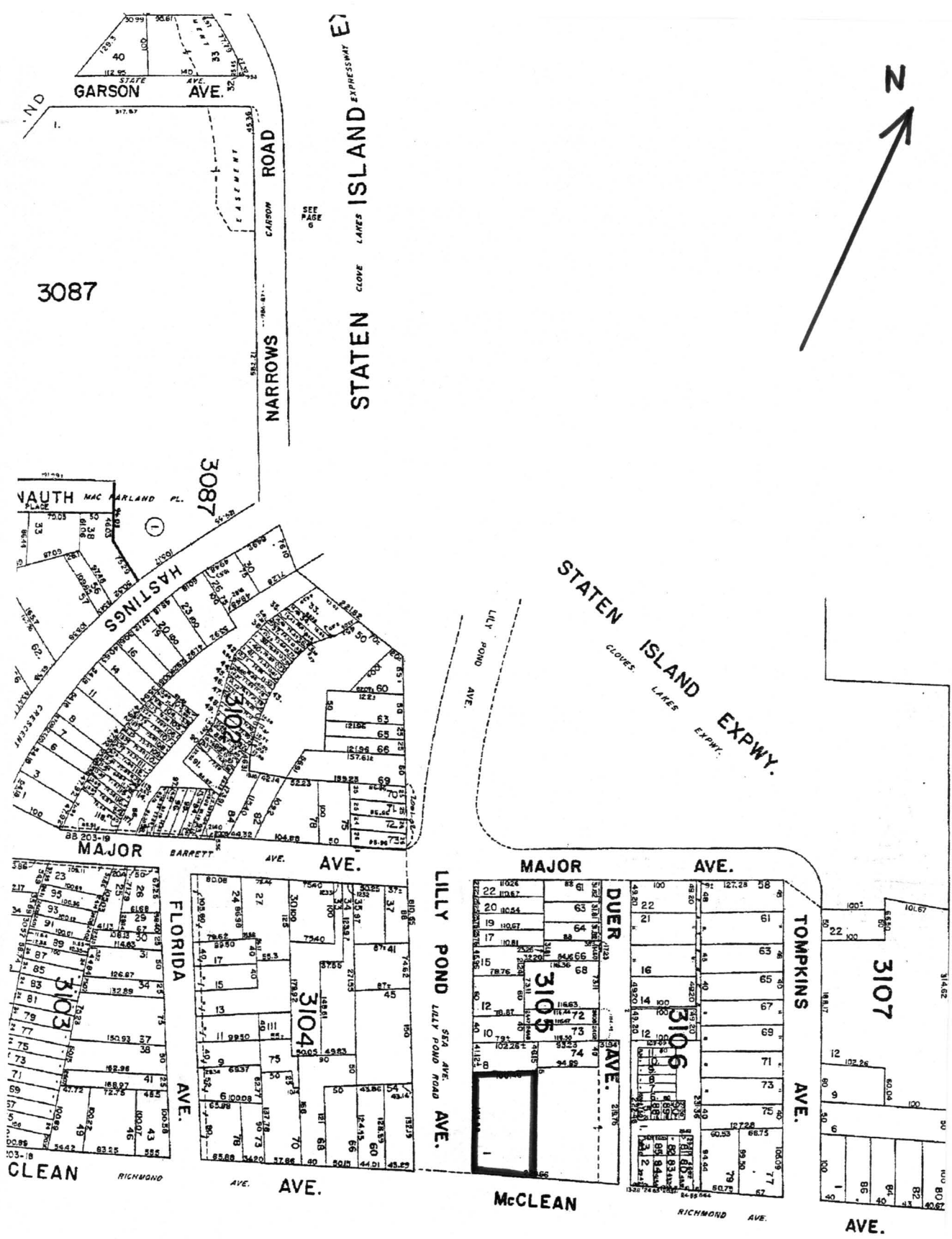
*Photo: Carl Forster*

Henry Hobson Richardson House  
Roof and chimney details



Henry Hobson Richardson House  
 45 McClean Avenue, Staten Island  
 Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 3105, Lot 1, in part  
 Source: Sanborn Building and Property Atlas, Staten Island, NY (2002), vol.3. pl. 314





Henry Hobson Richardson House  
 45 McClean Avenue, Staten Island  
 Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 3105, Lot 1, in part  
 Source: Sanborn Building and Property Atlas, Staten Island, NY (2002), vol.3. pl. 314