

ADDENDUM: AMENDMENT TO RE-INCLUDE 41-45 240th STREET BUILDING WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE DOUGLASTON HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT, 41-45 240th Street, Queens. Built c.1920s; David M. Ach and John Stasse, Associated Architects. Expanded 2005-07; Mitropoulos Architects.

Landmark Site: Borough of Queens Tax Map Block Lot 8105, Lot 9.

On March 13, 2007, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed re-designation of the 41-45 240th Street House (Item No. 1). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Thirteen people spoke in support of designation, including representatives of the Douglaston-Little Neck Historical Society, the Neighborhood Preservation Alliance, Queens Community Board 11, Historic Districts Council, and the New York Landmarks Conservancy. Three people, including the owners of the building, spoke in opposition to designation. Additionally, the Commission received letters in favor of re-designation from Councilmember Tony Avella and the Municipal Arts Society. The Commission also received petitions against re-designation of the building.



Summary

The building known as 41-45 240th Street was designated as part of the Douglaston Hill Historic District on December 14, 2004. Subsequent to designation, the owner of the property, who acquired the property after the public hearing and before designation, commenced a legal action challenging inclusion of his house in the district on the grounds that the description of his house in the designation report was inaccurate. Specifically, the owner claimed that the house dated from the 1920s and was not, as written in the designation report, an altered mid-nineteenth century house. In a decision dated December 7, 2005, Justice Feinman ruled that the Commission should have a new public hearing to consider the information submitted by the owner, indicating that the house was actually built in the early 1920s, and vacated the designation of the house.

The neo-Colonial-style was designed by David M. Ach and John G. Stasse, Associated Architects, and the owners were Mr. and Mrs. Fred Holweg, incorporating segments of the foundation wall of an earlier building. Subsequent to designation, on July 27, 2005, and before Justice Feinman's decision, the Commission approved plans and issued a Certificate of Appropriateness, currently being carried out, for the enlargement and alteration of the house in a manner consistent with its 1920s neo-Colonial style architecture. The house at present retains many of the attributes that support its inclusion within the boundaries of the historic district, including its architecture based on Colonial style precedents, its massing, its detailing, its positioning at the rear part of the lot, and the fact that the building sits on the only remaining, largely intact, original lot from the district's earliest development period.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Revised Historical and Architectural Development of the Douglaston Hill Historic District¹

Introduction

The Douglaston Hill Historic District, located in northeastern Queens near the border with Nassau County, is significant for its principles of mid-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century community planning and development, and as an example of an early twentieth century suburb. The district consists of thirty-one freestanding single-family homes that are fine examples of many late nineteenth and early twentieth century architectural styles, including Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Shingle, Arts and Crafts and Tudor Revival. The district's park-like setting, architectural expression and social history, represents the evolution of the commuter suburb, and is a precursor to the speculative suburban development which remade Queens in the twentieth century.

This transformation of Queens from colonial villages, estates, and small farms to commuter suburbs was typical of American settlement patterns in many parts of the country. The dramatic spatial change that this pattern of growth brought about – and the parallel development of a quintessential American lifestyle – was due to several factors. Rapid advances in transportation, particularly the steam railroad in the first half of the nineteenth century, made long-distance commuting possible. New levels of personal wealth following the Civil War, coupled with the pervasive cultural values of mainstream Victorian society, gave rise to a middle class that embraced virtues of domesticity, home ownership, and life in a sylvan setting.² These values were made manifest in the commuter suburb, which placed the single-family house in a non-urban setting, convenient to the city by rail.

By 1939, the Federal Writers' Project *New York City Guide* had designated Queens the “borough of homes,” a result of some fifty years of intensive speculative, mostly suburban, housing development.³ This development had its roots in planned developments of the 1870s and was greatly accelerated by the consolidation of New York City in 1898 – specifically by the public transportation improvements, large-scale middle-class migration, and public works it brought to the new Borough of Queens.

In the Douglaston Hill Historic District, this history of community planning and development, from the 1850s to the 1920s, can be read in the district's topography, layout, and architecture. Most of the houses in the Douglaston Hill Historic District feature stylistic elements of popular architectural styles from the 1890s to the 1920s, which contribute to the district's visual coherence. The historic district's buildings display a high level of architectural quality, and constitute a distinct sense of place. It is a significant reminder of the historic and cultural development of suburban Queens.

Early History

The Native American presence on the Little Neck peninsula, today known as Douglaston, included the Matinicot,⁴ one of the Munsee-speaking groups of western Long Island. Their land during the contact period (1550 – ca. 1750) reputedly extended from Newtown eastward to the Nissequogue River and southward to the center of Long Island. Their name roughly translates to “at the hilly land.”⁵ The Munsee were a loosely-related Lenape group whose settlements included larger villages at river mouths and smaller camps in areas utilized for subsistence activities. By the mid-1600s, several English and Dutch colonial towns and farming villages had been established in what is now northeastern Queens, such as Mespit (Maspeth), founded in 1642, Vlissingen (Flushing), founded in 1643, and Jamaica, founded in 1650.⁶ Colonial settlement along the northeastern shore began near Alley Pond in 1647, and a decade later when, in 1656, the Dutch assigned to Thomas Hicks a peninsula then called “Little Madman's Neck,” which encompassed much of the present-day Douglaston. Hicks evicted the Matinicot Indian Tribe from its fishing ground on Little Neck Bay in the 1660s in what is the only such seizure of property documented in Flushing town records.⁷

In 1683, Queens County was established as one of ten English counties, divided into five towns: Newtown, Jamaica, Flushing, Hempstead, and Oyster Bay,⁸ made up of various villages and settlements. The Alley Pond settlement, including present-day Douglaston, lay within the town of Flushing. Farming was the primary use of the land, with a few prominent families owning most of the land. A number of estates were built in the area prior to the Revolutionary war, including the Van Wyck House of 1735 (126 West Drive, aka 37-04 Douglaston Parkway, both an individually designated New York City Landmark and located within the Douglaston Historic District). During the Revolutionary War, Queens County served as a staging ground for

British troops, and by the war's end in 1783, the extensive tracts of primeval forest that had characterized the county had been devastated and many of its farms had been pillaged.⁹ Recovery and growth were slow in the first half of the nineteenth century, but transportation improvements, such as turnpikes and railroads, led the way for future settlements.

Origins of Douglaston Hill

In 1813, ownership of the land presently comprising the Douglaston Hill Historic District and its environs passed to Wynant Van Zandt III (1767-1831). A prominent New York City merchant, he had been a city alderman and a vestryman of Trinity Church in Manhattan before retiring to Little Neck as a gentleman farmer. He built a large manor in 1819, which survives as the Douglaston Club (600 West Drive, located in the Douglaston Historic District). Van Zandt kept his property in agricultural use. He also took an active interest in the civic affairs of the community around Alley Pond. In 1824, he financed the construction of a causeway across the marsh, creating a more direct and efficient route to Flushing.¹⁰ In 1829, he bequeathed land and funds for the construction of Zion Episcopal Church, which was completed the following year.¹¹

A few years after Van Zandt's death in 1831, the family sold the estate. The waterfront peninsula portion of the property (which now partly comprises the Douglaston Historic District) was sold to George Douglas.¹² The portion to the south, encompassing what is now Douglaston Hill, was sold in 1834 to Joseph DeForest. One year later, Cortland Van Beuren acquired the property from DeForest. Van Beuren sold it in 1843 to Jeremiah Lambertson, a local farmer, who held the property until 1853, when he laid it out in an urban grid, named the subdivision *Marathon*, and sold the lots at auction. The timing of Lambertson's subdivision suggests that he was anticipating the arrival of passenger train service on the Flushing and Northside Railroad, which was being extended eastward at the time, reaching Flushing in 1854, with plans to reach Great Neck, Long Island, via Douglaston, by the late 1860s.¹³

On February 15, 1853, the *Flushing Journal* reported that a party of sixteen persons arriving by omnibus had purchased the Lambertson farm with the intent of building country seats upon it. Property deed records show that title was transferred on July 23 and 27, 1853 to twenty-five buyers, with most buyers purchasing three or four lots each.¹⁴ Lambertson had laid out generous 200 foot by 200 foot lots on the sloping land, and named the streets for trees: Pine, Cherry, Poplar and Willow.¹⁵ The Lambertson family continued to be an important presence in the area, retaining their farmstead located at Northern Boulevard and Main Street (now Douglaston Parkway) into the 1870s.

Suburban Context

Because the Douglaston Hill subdivision was one of the earliest in northeastern Queens (Woodside and Bayside, both earlier stops on the Flushing and Northside Railroad, were not laid out until 1867 and 1872, respectively), its evolution from mapped lots to built form provides a window into how the commuter suburb developed as a physical and psychological manifestation of American middle class values. The ideas of a new and distinct form of community planning had their origins in the garden city movement of England of the 1820s, wherein the characteristics of rural, domestically-centered pre-industrial environments were consciously incorporated into new towns. These ideas were becoming more widely known around the time of the Lambertson subdivision. Their first expression in the United States was in the picturesque, semi-rural cemeteries created in the 1830s. City dwellers used these cemeteries as parks and picnic grounds. Many early suburban residential projects incorporated design elements of the cemeteries, such as contrived naturalistic landscapes and street names evoking natural features.¹⁶

By mid-century, a group of writers and designers had created a "cult of domesticity," proclaiming the moral virtues of family, home ownership and semi-rural living. Catherine Beecher's widely read *Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1841), and Andrew Jackson Downing's *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1841), were among the first books to offer house plans, and argue that gardens and home ownership were key to harmonious family life. These books were instrumental in formulating the American domestic ideal and the development of the American suburb.¹⁷ By the 1850s, many of Downing's principles were being expressed in the suburban developments created by his partner Calvert Vaux, architect Alexander Jackson Davis, and the landscape designer Frederick Law Olmsted.

In 1853, Davis and Llewellyn Haskell, a developer, created Llewellyn Park, New Jersey, the first American suburb. Twelve miles from Manhattan, and just outside of the City of Newark, New Jersey, it was a 350-acre development with a strip of common parkland, curving streets, a consistent architectural expression,

and a pastoral landscape. Llewellyn Park embodied the essence of what would become the characteristic suburb, except that it was several miles from a railroad station and thus impractical for all but the very wealthy.¹⁸ In the following years, Davis's and Haskell's concept was emulated and refined in new suburban developments throughout the eastern and mid-western United States. Often, these new communities were created around a town center and/or a railroad station, and included stipulations that ensured the creation and protection of a certain desired character through the use of restrictive covenants concerning the size of the lots and the siting of the houses.

Laid out around the same time as Llewellyn Park, the Lambertson subdivision at Douglaston Hill lacked the curving streets and instead consisted of a traditional street grid and lotting system, but the commodious lots were consistent with the suburban principles being advanced at the time. Douglaston Hill's main development, however, occurred some forty years later, approximately between the years 1890 and 1930. Since restrictive covenants were not in place and most of the original lots were subsequently divided, the Douglaston Hill Historic District came to display greater density and architectural variety than many similar developments. It nevertheless maintains many of the design and social values of the suburban ideals of Downing, Davis, and the others.

Early Development

At the time of the 1853 Marathon subdivision, the Village of Alley Pond was a shipping and trading hub, its general store providing an immense variety of goods, "from needle to anchor." A community of oystermen was thriving, with more than a dozen sloops and schooners operating on Little Neck Bay at the foot of Old House Landing Road (now Little Neck Parkway).¹⁹ Two possible oystermen cottages from the early or mid-nineteenth century may have survived within the Douglaston Hill Historic District.²⁰ No. 240-27 Depew Avenue (originally Willow Street) is a 1 ½-story, altered frame cottage with some vaguely Greek Revival-style detailing, such as the smaller second-story fenestration that are characteristic of rural house design in the first half of the nineteenth century. The house, which is situated very close to the front of the lot and below the grade of Depew Avenue, is currently three bays wide, and has a one-story wing on its west side that looks to have been added later in the nineteenth century, or possibly the early twentieth century. The building appears on the *Beers Atlas* of 1873, which is the earliest-available map of the area showing buildings. The house possibly predates the 1853 subdivision and sale, and could have been built by Jeremiah Lambertson or Cortland Van Beuren. Another possibility is that it was moved to its present location sometime before 1873, possibly by William Holland, one of the original purchasers in 1853. The neighboring house at 240-35 Depew Avenue may be of a similar origin, but was greatly expanded and appears to have been moved to the rear of the lot in the early-twentieth century. The house includes an original 1 ½-story wing, similar in proportion, material, and detail to 240-27 Depew Avenue.

In 1866-67, the Flushing and Northside Railroad reached the Little Neck area. William Douglas donated a farm building from his estate to serve as the railroad station; in exchange, he asked that the station and the village around be called Douglaston.²¹ The arrival of the railroad greatly reduced travel time to the city, but the trip still required taking a ferry from Long Island City to Manhattan. Douglaston remained relatively isolated, slowly attracting new residents. Area census records from 1870 and 1880 portray a rural population comprised of farmers, farmhands, baymen, laborers, oystermen, house keepers, grooms, coachmen, wheelwrights, and stone masons, as well as a stockbroker and an insurance agent.

Suburban Growth 1890-1930

In 1887, just prior to Douglaston Hill's key period of growth, the *Flushing Journal* reported on the area's idyllic setting: "Possessing all of the requisite features which tend to make a place of sojourn acceptable, Douglaston, indeed, is the Elysium of restfulness and peace. From the old curbed wells that can be found in the yards of most of the farm houses to the stately trees that line the drives leading to the same – everything smacks of rural life in its most pleasing form."²² By the turn of the century, new residents – both permanent and seasonal – were introducing a middle-class commuter population into this secluded hamlet community. Around the turn of the century, many of the generous lots were being subdivided, wherein the 200-foot front to rear dimensions were retained, but the 200-foot side-to-side dimensions were reduced. Later, some lot widths were reduced even more. The houses were built mainly in the same plane, near the street and centered on their lots. Many of the houses were built speculatively, although some were erected specifically for occupancy by their owners. The houses modestly combine stylistic elements from popular styles, especially those found in

the neo-Colonial style, although some of the turn-of-the-century houses display Queen Anne- and Shingle-style influences, while some from the 1920s have Tudor- and Arts-and-Crafts-style elements. The presence of porches, high chimneys, projecting eaves, and bays embrace the picturesque suburban ideals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Mass-produced construction components and rail transportation gave rise to the freer plans and excesses of late nineteenth and early twentieth century architectural styles. The picturesque qualities of weatherboard and wood-shingle cladding, intersecting rooflines, tall brick chimneys, and spacious porches link many of the houses in the Douglaston Hill Historic District. An eclectic use of classically-inspired detailing, characteristic of the neo-Colonial style is prevalent: patterned shingle ornament, Palladian window groupings, molded window and door surrounds, and pedimented porticos. The historic district's pre-World War I houses reflect a combination of stylistic influences – and particularly illustrate how such influences are incorporated into basic vernacular forms by local builders. They feature a complicated intersection of gables and multi-level eaves, but are modestly-scaled and otherwise simple in architectural expression. The houses maintain a vernacular simplicity, while also expressing a link to popular architectural styles.

Two new houses were completed by the turn of the century. The altered neo-Colonial-style house at 240-44 43rd Avenue was built c.1891-1900 by either local postmaster and gardener Albert Benz²³ or box manufacturer Adolph Helmus. This house is 2 ½ stories and features a wraparound porch and intersecting gable roofs -- popular architectural forms during this period. The shingled Queen Anne-style house at 42-25 240th Street was built in 1899-1900 for Jeannie Clark. Featuring a polygonal corner tower and turret with paneled moldings and brackets, and a tall brick chimney, this 2 ½-story house was designed by architect John A. Sinclair and constructed by builder Herman Haak. The original siting of the houses, which included a large sideyards that were later developed reflect a continuation of the mid-nineteenth-century suburban ideals embodied in the original Marathon subdivision, while their picturesque roofline reinforce the strong suburban character of the neighborhood.

From 1900 until the First World War, fifteen of the historic district's thirty-one houses were built. Of these, three families were responsible for at least twelve of the fifteen houses. This small group, whose actions as realtors, builders, and home owners shaped the community both physically and socially, were some of the area's most prominent residents. William J. Hamilton and his wife, Josephine, were probably the first to develop houses speculatively in the Douglaston Hill area, and constructed six of the houses in the historic district. In his brother's obituary in 1907, Hamilton was described as the "well-known builder of Douglaston."²⁴ Denis O'Leary and his wife, Ellen, also Douglaston Hill residents, built another four, while members of the Stuart family – John, Frederick, Charles, and James, Jr. – constructed three adjacent houses on 43rd Avenue.

Denis and Ellen O'Leary were Douglaston Hill residents from about 1901 through 1943, the year that Denis O'Leary died.²⁵ Denis O'Leary was typical of an early suburban commuter. A prominent attorney and politician, he was active in civic affairs. He served as an Assistant Corporation Counsel for New York City, Public Works Commissioner, Queens District Attorney, and United States Congressman. Locally, he was a founding officer of the Douglaston Hose Company No. 1, and was active in numerous charitable and fraternal organizations, including the Shinnecock Democratic Club of Flushing, the Flushing Council, the Catholic Benevolent Legion, and the Holy Name Society of Sacred Heart Church.

Each member of the Stuart family, also long-term Douglaston Hill and Little Neck residents, worked in differing areas of the building trades and appear to have collaborated in the construction of several houses. John Stuart of Little Neck, whose name often appeared as the architect of record on plans filed at the Department of Buildings, was listed as a building material supplier in early-twentieth-century city directories and censuses. His building plans were often noted in the local newspapers, such as the *Flushing Daily Times*. The same sources described James Stuart, Jr., as a contractor, Frederick Stuart as a painter, and Charles Stuart as a carpenter.

The Hamiltons' involvement in the Douglaston Hill Historic District began in the 1890s with the Queen Anne-style house with Colonial Revival elements at 240-45 43rd Avenue (originally Pine Street). He was listed as the house's owner in the property tax rolls in the year 1900, the first year that complete tax records for this section of Queens were produced; however, the title for this property is incomplete and it is not known when he acquired it from the previous owner, Florence Wakeman. The house occupies a portion of the original Marathon lot 93, which Hamilton acquired from Wakeman along with lots 89 and 94, according reference in a deed for an adjacent property recorded in 1918. The design of this house, which features a

wraparound porch, projecting attic pediment with decorative shingles and supporting brackets, and a Palladian window, is attributed to local architect/builder Samuel Lindbloom, who in 1890 designed and built the nearly identical rectory of the nearby Zion Episcopal Church, located at 242-02 44th Avenue (not in the historic district). The original siting of the house, which sat at the western third of the original 200-foot-wide lot and included a large, wooded side yard to the east (now occupied by two houses built in 1913-14 and 1958-62) and its Queen Anne- and Colonial Revival-style architecture reflect picturesque, mid-nineteenth century suburban ideals.

In 1898, the Hamiltons sold the western half of Marathon Lot 94 to Denis and Ellen O'Leary, and in 1900, both families began constructing nearly identical neo-Colonial style houses on these 100-foot-wide properties, located at 240-35 and 240-25 43rd Avenue, respectively.²⁶ The houses were designed by the architect D.S. Hopkins of Grand Rapids, Michigan, who published several books of house plans from the 1890s through the 1920s.²⁷ The design chosen by the Hamiltons and the O'Learys was distinguished by two-story, paneled pilasters on the main façade (presently obscured by aluminum siding on 240-25) and by a semicircular front porch with turned columns on paneled bases, denticulated crown, and rooftop balustrade. The asymmetrical rooflines consist of intersecting overhung gables and hips on scrolled brackets, a hipped dormer facing the front, and a tall brick chimney. The siting of the houses, set back on large, wooded lots, reflect the continuing influence of the ideals of bucolic suburban living that guided the creation of the original subdivision in the 1850s.

In 1901, the Hamiltons sold the western half of Marathon Lot 89 to the O'Learys, and in 1903, both parties began nearly-identical developments once again. This time, however, the lots were divided into narrower 50-foot frontages and four neo-Colonial-style houses were built from 240-24 through 240-42 42nd Avenue. The designs were produced by the architectural firm, Frank P. Allen & Son, another well-known producer of plan books, also based in Grand Rapids.²⁸ These houses originally featured a variety of details, such as intersecting roof gables, overhanging eaves, wide front porches with turned columns, and wide window surrounds. The narrower building lots and siting of these houses closer to the street reflect the evolution of Douglaston Hill from an area of wooded country estates to a twentieth-century commuter suburb. The original, asymmetrical massing of these houses, as well as later alterations, lend visual interest to their nearly-identical designs.

In 1907, the Hamiltons built a neo-Colonial-style house at 240-48 43rd Avenue, designed by Frank P. Allen, on property they purchased from the Estate of Albert Benz that was part of the original Marathon lot 99. The house is characterized by its intersecting roof gables with a broad north slope that flares out to form the roof of the front porch, which is supported by tapered columns. The main entryway is recessed behind the porch. A wide gable sits on the roof, which is topped by a tall brick chimney. Also that year, Marathon Lots 97 and 98 were subdivided into four building lots and sold by owner W. Watson to four parties who completed houses on them in the following year. Among the developers were the Hamiltons and the O'Learys, who again built similar side-by side neo-Colonial-style houses with Arts and Crafts-style elements. However, the O'Learys built 240-34 43rd Avenue from plans made by the Keith Corp.²⁹ of Minneapolis, another prominent producer of architectural plan books, while William J. Hamilton was listed as the architect for 240-40 43rd Avenue. Both houses feature symmetrical, three-bay-wide façades that are distinguished by a full-width front porch with segmental openings, topped by balcony at the second story. The houses are topped by a prominent hip roofs and tall brick chimneys. Their smaller lots reflect the neighborhood's transition from an area of country estates to a commuter suburb in the early twentieth century, while their picturesque rooflines and spacious porches reinforce the strong suburban character of the historic district.

The other two other houses built on the former Watson property were developed by individual owners. No. 240-22 43rd Avenue was built by Catherine T. Burne of Douglaston from plans filed by George W. Cornell, a Little Neck contractor. This 2 ½-story house consists of two intersecting wings creating an L-shaped plan that is unified by a full-width front porch that wraps around the front wing and fills the recess formed by the setback. The roof of the porch is supported by Doric columns and shades the sidelit main entryway. The façade features molded window surrounds, and an imposing hipped roof on curved brackets with exposed rafters, hipped dormers, and a corbelled brick chimney. No. 240-16 43rd Avenue was built by Adolph Helmus of Douglaston from plans filed by Walter J. Halliday of Jamaica, Queens. This 2 ½-story house is distinguished by a wraparound front porch with Doric columns, a paneled wood-and-glass main entryway with a molded surround, wide window enframements, an overhung roof comprised of intersecting closed gables, round-arch windows in the gable-ends, and a corbelled brick chimney. Helmus and his wife, Otilie, occupied

this house for many years. In 1915, meetings that led to the founding of St. Anastasia Roman Catholic Church were held at the Helmus residence. Masses, baptisms, and church meetings also took place in this home while the congregation was being formed.

The Stuart family developed three adjacent, neo-Colonial-style houses on 43rd Avenue between 1903 and 1905. The first two were the nearly identical buildings constructed in 1903-04 at 242-09 43rd Avenue and 242-19 43rd Avenue, which were subsequently occupied by Frederick Stuart and Charles Stuart, respectively. These 2 ½ -story, two-bay-wide houses are distinguished by their full-width front porches, intersecting gable roofs, and tall brick chimneys. In 1904-05, John Stuart designed a much larger house at 242-03 43rd Avenue for James Stuart, Jr. This four-bay-wide house is also two-and-a-half stories, but is distinguished by its wide, wraparound front porch with Tuscan columns, its molded window and door surrounds, prominent hip roof with flared and overhanging eaves, gabled dormers with eave returns, and tall, corbelled brick chimney. The neo-Colonial-style designs of the houses and their picturesque rooflines reinforce the strong suburban character of the neighborhood.

The Hamiltons' last project in the district is the Arts and Crafts-style house at 242-01 43rd Avenue, which they built in 1913-14 from plans filed by contractor Isaac Beers of Little Neck. The three-bay-wide house features segmental first-story fenestration, recessed main entryway with a hooded surround, and the composition is dominated by the broadly-sloping roof with the building's second story incorporated beneath a wide shed-roofed dormer. The house's Arts and Crafts-style design and low roof profile reinforce the strong suburban image of the historic district. After the completion of this house, development in the Douglaston Hill Historic District halted until World War I was concluded.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, frequent reports by the Flushing newspapers recorded the comings and goings of seasonal and permanent residents in Douglaston, which included a mix of professional men and business owners.³⁰ Census records from 1900, 1910 and 1920 show a range of occupational categories for Douglaston Hill – from professions such as chemist, lawyer, teacher, banker, builder, jeweler, merchant, post office and railroad stationmaster to laborers such as blacksmith, mason, shoemaker, domestic, factory worker and laundress.

Another period of enormous growth took place in the 1920s with the continuing subdivision and development of the original Marathon lots. Approximately 2,000 people lived in Douglaston-Little Neck in 1920. Just ten years later, the area's population was 8,000. Houses built during this period reflected the continuing influence of Colonial precedents, as well as the new popularity of Tudor Revival and Arts and Crafts styles, and reinforce the strong suburban image of the historic district. Classicized detailing, symmetrical forms, formal entryways, and pediments continued to be found on the neo-Colonial-style houses. Deeply overhanging roofs, exposed rafters, and decorative brackets characterized the Arts and Crafts-style houses, while Tudor influences include steeply-pitched roofs, overlapping gables, and faux half-timbering.

In 1921, the neo-Colonial-style dwelling with Arts and Crafts-style elements at 240-01 42nd Avenue (aka 41-53 240th Street), was built for Oscar Armbruster, vice-president of Chase Bank, from plans made by architect Henry A. Erdmann. It was constructed by S. Braithwaite, a builder based in Long Island City, who was listed as the building's architect in records on file at the New York City Department of Buildings.³¹ Erdmann was a Manhattan architect who was in practice during the first decades of the twentieth century, and was in partnership with Henry C. Hahn during the 1910s (Erdmann & Hahn). This 2 ½-story frame and stucco house consists of a three-bay-wide main block with a one-story sideporch on the south side. The building is characterized by brick highlights at its base, first-story oriels, and an overhanging, slate-covered hip roof with copper seams and hipped dormers. The positioning of the house, which is set back from the street beyond a sloping, wooded expanse, reflects the continuing influence of the ideals of bucolic suburban living that guided the creation of the original subdivision in the 1850s. In 1922-23, owner David W. Barnes, an electrical engineer, erected a Tudor Revival-style dwelling at 42-17 240th Street from plans filed by A.F. Bruns of Corona, Queens, on a lot that the Barnes family owned since 1910.³² This 2 ½ story, frame and stucco house features half-timbered highlights, a wood entry porch with hewn columns, a first-story oriel, and a gabled roof with a broad west slope that flares out to form the roof of the porch. The building's second story is partially formed by a wide, shed roof dormer. The house's Tudor Revival-style design and picturesque roofline reinforce the strong suburban character of the neighborhood. The house at 41-45 240th Street (originally Prospect Avenue) was built in the early 1920s on part of the foundation of an earlier house. This two-story frame, neo-Colonial-style house with later alterations still occupies its original 200 by 200-foot *Marathon* lot.

The way the house is positioned at the back of its large lot continued to reflect early suburban ideals after most of the other lots had been subdivided.³³

Between 1925 and 1927, the local architect/builder Samuel Lindbloom produced three of the five new houses in the historic district, and was responsible for the relocation, enlargement, and alteration of another. In 1925, Lindbloom built the neo-Colonial-style house at 240-17 43rd Avenue for A.R. Newman. It was designed by local architect Aubrey B. Grantham, whose frequent collaborations with Lindbloom included the new Zion Episcopal Church in 1924-25 (not located inside the historic district). This two-story house consists of an L-shaped plan topped by a roof composed of intersecting gables with overhanging eaves. The building's second story is partially incorporated within shed-roofed wall dormer filled with multi-pane casements; the facades feature wide, molded window surrounds. The house is further characterized by the placement of its main entryway on the west side of the building, entered via a gabled porch with a built-in bench. A tall brick chimney projects from this façade and towers over the roof. In 1925-26, Lindbloom designed a neo-Colonial-style dwelling at 240-18 42nd Avenue for Lynne Nicholas, wife of the silk manufacturer, Blaine J. Nicholas. This two-story house, which occupies a site that slopes to the west, is distinguished by the mannered use of the classical vocabulary and a dramatic westward-sloping roof which flares out over the main entryway and enclosed porch. The basement rises to full height below the entryway and porch and contains the house's garage, which is entered via the west side. In addition, the house's main entryway and paired fenestration are topped by curved pediments. In 1926, Lindbloom designed the neo-Colonial-style house at 42-09 240th Street, which he developed in partnership with M. Edwin Schultz, another area contractor. This time, Lindbloom composed a more traditional symmetrical façade for this 2 ½-story dwelling, plus a one-story side porch to the south. The three-bay-wide façade features a gabled entry portico with an open pediment and Doric columns, a sidelit main entryway with a fanlight and paneled door, and molded window surrounds. The gabled roof has overhanging eaves and gabled dormers with eave returns, flat pilasters, and fanlit windows. The roof is surmounted by a vented cupola with a wrought-iron weathervane and a tall brick chimney.

Lindbloom's final-known contribution to the Douglaston Hill Historic District is perhaps his most interesting. The main wing of the sprawling house at 240-02 42nd Avenue is an Italianate-style house, built c.1850 that was moved to this location in 1927, where it was renovated and enlarged. Lindbloom served as the architect, and is listed as part-owner of the property with M. Edwin Schultz; however, they transferred ownership during construction to Carra U. Alexander, wife of Gavin Alexander, the president of the Braithe Manufacturing Company. The house's complex footprint consists of five attached sections of varying sizes and heights, visually unified by a large screened porch with a dramatically-sloping, concave roof, and by the approximation of the original, carved façade ornament of the c.1850 wing on the building's later additions. It is topped by a prominent brick chimney. In the 1920s, it was fairly common to move older houses to new locations, usually to make way for more dense commercial or residential development on the original sites. In addition, interest in historic preservation and Colonial architecture produced many sympathetic rehabilitations of older houses, such as this one.

Three additional houses were constructed in the historic district in the 1920s. The Arts and Crafts-style dwelling at 240-11 43rd Avenue was designed by Aubrey B. Grantham and built in 1926-27 by mason/builder Charles H. Platt for his own use. This 1 ½-story house features a wood porch at the main entryway with turned columns and a bracketed roof, paneled entry door with a molded surround, a wood-frame car port on the east side with a slatted roof and carved brackets, a broadly-sloping gable roof with overhanging and returning eaves, and a prominent brick chimney. The architect of the neo-Colonial-style house at 35 - 240th Street (aka 41-10 240th Street), built c. 1928, remains undetermined, while the developers were either Frederick E. & Caroline E. Hollweg, who purchased the property in 1924 or Herman I. Epstein, who acquired it from the Hollwegs in 1928. Hollweg was a bank president and area resident; Epstein, whose was retired, occupied the house into the 1930s. This three-bay-wide, frame and stucco dwelling has its main façade oriented toward the south rather than toward 240th Street. The house is distinguished by its steeply-pitched gable roof, gabled entry porch, shed dormers, and massive brick chimney. The neighboring house at 41-18 240th Street, also built c.1928, is a more conventional neo-Colonial-style design by an architect who remains unidentified. Its developer was either the Hollwegs, who had owned the lot since 1924 or Alexander H. Tompkins, a confectioner, who acquired the property in 1928. This three-bay-wide house contains a centrally-located main entryway beneath a gabled hood, molded window surrounds, multi-pane sash, a gabled roof covered with slate, and a prominent brick chimney.

As the 1920s drew to a close, so did major development in the Douglaston Hill Historic District, which by then had developed into a comfortable suburban community comprised of a substantial dwellings occupying many differently-sized properties. This environment remains largely intact to this day.

Later History

During the 1930s and 40s, no additional houses were constructed in the Douglaston Hill Historic District, but several garages were built as automobiles became the prevalent mode of transportation. Also, a number of houses were modestly expanded in size with the addition of side and rear wings, and the enclosure of porches. Some siding and roofing were replaced, often with new, up-to-date materials, such as asphalt and asbestos shingles. These trends continued into the 1950s and 60s when aluminum siding was gaining in popularity as a replacement material.

The final house to be constructed in the historic district is the postwar Modern-style dwelling at 240-51 43rd Avenue, which was designed and built by Thomas Arcidiacono in 1958-62, on a lot that formerly belonged to 240-45 43rd Avenue. This 1 ½-story house consists of three wings of varying heights, including one which is offset to create the building's asymmetrical plan. The house is further characterized by its flat roofs with wide overhangs, exposed joists, ribbon windows, and veneer brick highlights.

Minor alterations, window replacements, and additional residings took place during the remainder of the twentieth century. Vinyl siding joined aluminum as a favorite replacement material, and aluminum and vinyl replacement sash were installed on many of the houses. Some stoops and porches were rebuilt, and new paving materials were sometimes introduced. Nevertheless, a larger number of homeowners in the Douglaston Hill Historic District chose to maintain original building fabric during these years and to replace worn materials in kind, or even to restore lost detail. As a result, the district continues to evoke the nineteenth and early-twentieth century suburban ideals that guided its development and displays a distinct sense of place.

Revised Building Profile for 41-45 240th Street

Date: c 1920s with 2005-07 alterations

Architects: David M. Ach and John G. Stasse (1920s); Mitropoulos Architects (2005-07)

Original Owner: Mr. & Mrs. Fred Holweg (1920s); Kevin L. Mosely (2005-07)

Type: Free-standing house

Style: neo-Colonial with later alterations

Stories: Two with basement and attic

Materials: Wood frame covered with clapboards, painted white, above a brick and concrete foundation.

Alterations: 2 ½-story subordinate wing and one story enclosed porch on its north side, one and two story additions to the rear façade, the addition of roof dormers, the restoration of an open front porch, changes to the sizes and positions of some windows, and new fenestration on the existing south side porch; replacement roof; replacement siding.

Notable site features: Sloping site; mature trees; Belgian block curb; non-historic concrete driveway.

Description: *Main Façade (overlooking 240th Street)*: Irregular bay arrangement; three-bay-wide open porch with Tuscan columns, wood railings, and molded cornice; historic; paneled wood and multi-pane glass main entryway with multi-pane sidelights and flanking multi-pane hoppers; two-story projecting bay with recessed side wing with multi-pane casements at the first story and six-over-one sash at the second story; multi-pane casement at the second story above porch. *Roof*: Asphalt-shingle-covered gables and hips with overhanging; brick chimneys; gabled dormers with multi-pane casements; aluminum gutters and drainpipes. *North Façade*: Three bays; similar detailing and fenestration as the main façade; one-story attached wing. *South Façade*: Three bays; projecting brick chimney; enclosed porch with an asphalt-shingle-covered hip roof; angled, projecting bay at the second story; similar detail and fenestration as the main facade. *Rear Façade (facing east)*: Irregular bay arrangement; one-story attached wing with hipped roof and paneled wood and glass secondary entryway; cross-gable at the attic story; similar detail and fenestration as the main façade.

History: This neo-Colonial-style house with later alterations was designed by architects David M. Ach and John G. Stasse and built in the early 1920s for Mr. and Mrs. Fred Holweg during the enormous growth period of the 1920s, when the population of the Douglaston/Little Neck area increased from 2,000 to 8,000 and

several new houses were constructed in the Douglaston Hill Historic District. The house appears to incorporate segments of the foundation of a mid-nineteenth-century house, once standing at the same location that was demolished in the early twentieth century. Its positioning at the back of its large sloping, wooded lot was evocative of the ideals of bucolic suburban living that were being espoused in the mid-nineteenth century, when the initial development of the Douglaston Hill Historic District began. Its neo-Colonial-style architecture reflected the early twentieth century, when interest in historic preservation and Colonial architecture produced many sympathetic rehabilitations of older houses and new house designs based on Colonial-style precedents. The 1920s was a significant time period in the development of the Douglaston Hill Historic District, as evidenced by the inclusion of nine other houses, out of a total of 31 houses in the district, which were either constructed or significantly remodeled during that decade. In addition, the house is of particular significance as the only structure in the district occupying an original, undivided 200 by 200 foot lot, although a small section of the northwest corner of the lot had been removed in the 1860s for the Flushing and Northside Railroad right-of-way. Subsequent to designation, the owner of the property, who acquired the property after the public hearing and before designation, commenced a legal action challenging inclusion of his house in the district on the grounds that the description of his house in the designation report was inaccurate. In a decision dated December 7, 2005, Justice Feinman ruled that the Commission should have a new public hearing to consider the information submitted by the owner and vacated the designation of the house. On July 27, 2005, and before Justice Feinman's decision, the Commission approved plans and issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the house's enlargement and alteration, designed by Mitropoulos Architects, in a manner consistent with its 1920s neo-Colonial style architecture. The work, which is currently being carried out in general compliance with the Certificate of Appropriateness, consists of the addition of a 2 ½-story subordinate wing and one story enclosed porch on its north side, one and two story additions to the rear façade, the addition of roof dormers, the restoration of an open front porch, changes to the sizes and positions of some windows, and new fenestration on the existing south side porch.

The expanded house at present retains many of the attributes that support its inclusion within the boundaries of the historic district, including its architecture based on Colonial style precedents, its massing, its detailing, its positioning at the rear part of the lot, and the fact that the building sits on the only remaining, largely intact, original lot from the district's earliest development period. Further, the original foundation and brick chimney of the 1920s house are intact and the building retains similar proportions as the house at the time of designation, and maintains an important presence in the Douglaston Hill Historic District.

Report researched and written by
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NOTES

¹ This section is based on and adapted from Laura Hansen, "Origins and Significance" and "Narrative Description," in United States Department of the Interior *Douglaston Hill National Register Historic District* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 2000), and Anthony Robins, "Historical and Architectural Background of the Douglaston Historic District," in Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *Douglaston Historic District Designation Report* [LP-1957], (New York: Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1997), 5-8.

² Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: the suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 1-45.

³ Federal Writers' Project in New York City, *New York City Guide* (New York: Random House, 1939), 555.

⁴ Or "Matinecock." See Ives Goddard, "Delaware," in *Northeast*, vol. 15 of the *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. William B. Sturtevant (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 214.

⁵ Eugene Bosch, *1997 Archaeological Evaluation and Sensitivity Assessment of the Prehistoric and Contact Period Aboriginal History of Queens, New York*, 17-18. On file with the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

⁶ Federal Writers' Project in New York City, *New York City Guide* (New York: Random House, 1939), 557.

⁷ In the 1930s, according to local histories, a Matinecoc burial ground was destroyed to make way for a widening of Northern Boulevard, and the remains re-interred in the cemetery of Zion Church under a stone monument depicting a tree growing from a split rock, their tribal mark. *A Brief History of Zion Episcopal Church* (Zion Episcopal Church, 1992), 9 and Edward C.K. Reed, *A Brief History of Douglas Manor on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Douglas Manor Association* (Douglaston: Douglas Manor Association, 1956), 3. Zion Church is located outside the historic district.

⁸ Federal Writers' Project in New York City, 557.

⁹ Vincent Seyfried, *Queens, A Pictorial History* (Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company, 1982), 23-25.

¹⁰ This causeway became a section of the North Hempstead Turnpike from Flushing, and was the forerunner of today's Northern Boulevard. *The Sylvan Alley* (Bayside Historical Society, 1989), 8.

¹¹ The original building was destroyed by fire in 1924 and rebuilt shortly thereafter.

¹² Queens County Office of the Register, Liber Deed and Conveyance, Liber KK, p. 101.

¹³ Vincent Seyfried, "Queens," and "Little Neck" in *Encyclopedia of New York City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), ed. Kenneth T. Jackson.

¹⁴ Of these, twenty were from New York City (which at that time included Manhattan and part of the Bronx), while four came from the City of Williamsburgh and one from Brooklyn.

¹⁵ "Map of the Village of Marathon, at the head of Little Neck Bay," filed July 23, 1853 at the Office of the Queens County Register.

¹⁶ Robert A.M. Stern, *Pride of Place* (New York: American Heritage, 1986), 125-167.

¹⁷ Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 45-72.

¹⁸ Stern, 132-133.

¹⁹ Seyfried, "Little Neck" in *Encyclopedia of New York City*. By 1882, the shipment of oysters and clams was depicted as "the principal industry now carried on at Little Neck," by then nationally famous for its shellfish. *History of Queens County New York, with illustrations, portraits & sketches of prominent families and individuals* (New York, W.W. Munsell & Co., 1882), 101.

²⁰ Nineteenth-century census information covering this area of Queens is geographically vague, making it impossible to determine the inhabitants of these specific houses and their occupations.

²¹ Riley, 22. Seyfried, "Douglaston," in *Encyclopedia of New York City*. In 1887, Douglas and resident subscribers funded a Queen Anne-style depot building and landscaping at the new Douglaston station. *Flushing Journal*, April 9, 1887.

²² *Flushing Journal*, June 18, 1887.

²³ In the early 1890s, Benz owned several lots in the Douglaston Hill area.

²⁴ *Flushing Daily Times* (Oct. 21, 1907).

²⁵ Their daughters remained in Douglaston Hill through the 1950s, living in separate houses across 43rd Avenue from their childhood home.

²⁶ The Hamiltons built 240-35 43rd Avenue as their own residence, which they occupied for several years.

²⁷ His books include: *Houses and Cottages Designed by D.S. Hopkins* (Grand Rapids: D.S. Hopkins, 1893), *Houses and Cottages: a collection of house and cottage designs* (Grand Rapids: D.S. Hopkins, 1899), and *Home Builders' Catalog* (Chicago: National Trade Journals, Inc., 1929).

²⁸ Allen's books include: *Artistic Dwellings: containing views, floor plans and estimates of cost of fifty-six house and cottage designs* (Grand Rapids: Frank P. Allen, 1892) and *Artistic Dwellings: supplement to the ninth addition* (Grand Rapids: F.P. Allen, 1904). His house plans were often published in *The Ladies' Home Journal*, which helped to popularize the use of architectural plan books in house construction. Daniel D. Reiff, *Houses from Books, Treatises, Pattern Books, and Catalogs in American Architecture, 1738-1950: A History and Guide* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 148.

²⁹ Max L. Keith's books included: *Bungalows and Cottages... 100 designs for bungalows and inexpensive cottages* (Minneapolis: M.L. Keith, 1909), *Keith's Book of Plans, Volume 7* (Minneapolis: M.L. Keith, c.1909), *Beautiful Homes, 200 plans* (Minneapolis: Keith Corp., c.1925), and *Keith's Plan Book: Inexpensive Homes* (Minneapolis: Keith Corp., 1928).

³⁰ *Flushing Journal* (June 20, 1903); *Flushing Daily Times* (May 29, 1903), (April 8, 1909); (April 13, 1909).

³¹ The present owner possesses the original building plans made by Erdmann.

³² During construction of this house, Barnes sold the northern two-thirds of the property, originally Marathon lot 88, to local architect/builder Samuel Lindbloom and his partner M. Edwin Schultz, who developed three houses on the site in 1925-27.

³³ The house has recently been enlarged using neo-Colonial-style vocabulary.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of the building and site, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the 41-45 240th Street House has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest, and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City and the Douglaston Hill Historic District.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the building known as 41-45 240th Street was built in the early 1920s; that the architects were David M. Ach and John G. Stasse, Associated Architects; that the owners were Mr. and Mrs. Fred Holweg; that the house was built in part on existing foundation walls of an earlier building on the property that was substantially demolished between 1909 and 1919; that the present house was constructed in the early 1920s at about the same location on the lot as the original house; that the house's positioning at the back of its large sloping, wooded lot was evocative of the ideals of bucolic suburban living that were being espoused in the mid- nineteenth century when the initial development of the Douglaston Hill Historic District began; that its neo-Colonial-style architecture reflected the early twentieth century, when interest in historic preservation and Colonial architecture produced many sympathetic rehabilitations of older houses and new house designs based on Colonial-style precedents; that the 1920s was a significant time period in the development of the Douglaston Hill Historic District, as evidenced by the inclusion of ten houses, including this one, out of a total of 31 houses in the district, which were either constructed or significantly remodeled during that decade; that the house is of particular significance as the only structure in the district occupying an largely original, undivided 200 by 200 foot lot; that its gabled roof with overhanging eaves, prominent brick chimney, and front and side porches are all hallmarks of its neo-Colonial style; that the house was enlarged and renovation following its original designation as part of the Douglaston Hill Historic District generally according to approved plans under a Certificate of Appropriateness issued by the Landmarks Preservation Commission; that the enlargement and alteration of the house is in a manner consistent with its 1920s neo-Colonial style architecture; that the original foundation and brick chimney of the 1920s house are largely intact; and that the house at present retains many of the attributes supporting its inclusion within the boundaries of the historic district, including its architecture based on Colonial style precedents, its massing, its detailing, its positioning at the rear part of the lot, and the fact that the building sits on the only remaining, largely intact, original lot from the district's earliest development period.

Accordingly, pursuant to 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 41-45 240th Street House as part of the Douglaston Hill Historic District, and designates Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 8105, Lot as its Landmark Site.

Robert Tierney, Chair; Pablo Vengoechea, Vice Chair
Stephen Byrnes, Joan Gerner, Roberta Brandes Gratz, Christopher Moore, Jan Hird Pokorny
Diana Chapin, abstaining