

DESIGNATION REPORT

# Angel Guardian Home



# Angel Guardian Home

## LOCATION

6301 12th Avenue, (aka 6301-6323 12th Avenue, 1202-1216 63rd Street, 1201-1215 64th Street)

Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5739 Lot 1 in part

## LANDMARK TYPE

Individual

## SIGNIFICANCE

A monumental orphanage building designed by George H. Streeton in the Renaissance Revival and Beaux-Arts styles for the Sisters of Mercy, the 1899 Angel Guardian Home is symbolic of the importance of religious social services in the Progressive Era and prominent within the neighborhood of Dyker Heights.



**Angel Guardian Home 6301 12th Avenue, Brooklyn**

Jessica C. Baldwin, November 2020

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# Angel Guardian Home

6301 12th Avenue Brooklyn

## Designation List 521

LP: 2613

**Built:** 1899

**Architect:** George H. Streeton

**Landmark Site:** Borough of Brooklyn, Tax Map Block 5739 Lot 1 in part, consisting of the portion of the lot beginning at the northwest corner at 63rd Street and 12th Avenue, extending 200 feet south along the western lot line to the southwest corner at 64th Street and 12th Avenue, then east along the southern lot line 151.07 feet to the southeast corner of the south wing, then north at a right angle to the southern lot line 43.23 feet along the rear (east) facade of the south wing, then east 4.36 feet, then north 32.09 feet, then west 25.86 feet, north 0.84 feet, and west 4.17 feet to the rear facade of the main building, then extending north 123.88 feet in a straight line along the rear facade of the main building to the northern lot line, then continuing west along the northern lot line 125.34 feet to the point of beginning.

**Calendared:** June 30, 2020

**Public Hearing:** August 11, 2020

**Designation:** November 10, 2020

On August 11, 2020, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Angel Guardian Home as a New York City Landmark and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No.1). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. Sixteen people spoke in favor of designation, including the property owners, councilmember Justin Brannan, representatives from Community Board 10, the Historic Districts Council, the City Club of New York, the Dyker Heights Civic Association, the Guardians of the Guardian, and six individuals. Several of these people also asked the Commission to designate another building on the site. No one spoke in opposition. The Commission also received 71 letters in favor of designation, including one from Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, one from Councilmember Justin Brannan, Senator Andrew Gounardes, and Assembly member Peter J. Abbate, Jr. signing jointly, and a memorandum from the owner's historic preservation consultant. Among these was a letter from Councilmember Carlos Menchaca signing jointly with Brooklyn Community Board 10, Historic Districts Council, the Dyker Heights Civic Association, and Guardians of the Guardian, a letter from the Bay Ridge Conservancy, and an email campaign of 61 form letters, recognizing the significance of the main building and also asking the Commission to designate another building on the site.

## Summary

### Angel Guardian Home

The Angel Guardian Home, located at 6301 12th Avenue in Dyker Heights, Brooklyn, was built as an orphanage in 1899 and was operated by the Sisters of Mercy as a branch of their convent in Clinton Hill. George H. Streeton, a prominent architect of Catholic churches in New York City, designed the monumental brick and limestone structure. Its grand civic scale and blend of Renaissance Revival and Beaux-Arts styles stands out from the surrounding residential streetscapes. The main building (1899) facing 12th Avenue dates to the complex's formation at the turn of the twentieth century. With ornate carved limestone door surrounds, quoins, arched windows, copper cornices, and mansard roofs evoking the sophistication of European architecture, the Angel Guardian Home's design was intended to express the importance of its social service mission.

Historically part of the town of New Utrecht, the neighborhood of Dyker Heights remained a sparsely developed suburb until it was annexed to the City of Brooklyn in 1894 and incorporated into Greater New York City in 1898. During this period, the Sisters of Mercy expanded their charitable activities, renovating their convent, acquiring a large property in Dyker Heights beginning in 1880, and opening a campus on Long Island. In 1897, they hired George H. Streeton to design an orphanage that would serve approximately 200 children under the age of seven on their Dyker Heights property.

George H. Streeton was born in Brooklyn in 1864. After studying at Cooper Union and Cornell University, he embarked on a successful career as an ecclesiastical architect working throughout New

York City's five boroughs. Catholic churches ecclesiastical buildings that Streeton designed include, among others, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church rectory in the Greenwich Village Historic District, the Church of St. Cyril & Methodius and St. Raphael in Hell's Kitchen, and the Cathedral of St. James in Downtown Brooklyn.

At its opening in 1899, the Angel Guardian Home originally consisted of the four-story main building with small one-story extensions, on an elevated site surrounded by a stone wall. The north and south wings were added c. 1910 to accommodate a larger chapel and a school. A nursery building on 63rd Street, a house to quarantine sick babies, a boiler house near 64th Street, and other utilitarian structures were also constructed on the site. By the 1920s, the orphanage and its gardens were extended to encompass the entire block, surrounded by a stone wall at the 12th Avenue end of the block, to which a high brick wall was added in the 1920s and extended around the remainder of the block. The main building with its two extensions, occupying the entire 12th Avenue blockfront, is the most significant structure on the block and the public face of the complex within the surrounding neighborhood.

The orphanage closed in the 1980s and the complex has since been used for a senior center and other purposes. For close to 120 years, the Angel Guardian Home's distinctive main building has been prominent within the Dyker Heights neighborhood and remains highly intact. Its elegant design combined with its monumental civic scale and siting, set back and elevated above the Avenue, is symbolic of the importance given to social services in the Progressive Era, and of the role the Sisters of Mercy have played in Brooklyn for over a century.

# Building Description

Angel Guardian Home

## Description

The Angel Guardian Home located at 6301 12th Avenue was designed by George H. Streeton for the Sisters of Mercy and constructed in 1899. The design combines elements of the Italian Renaissance Revival and Beaux-Arts styles, creating a sense of monumental scale and elegance. The main building and its two flanking wings occupy the entire block-front of 12th Avenue between 63rd and 64th Streets, set back from and above the avenue on an elevated lawn, surrounded by a historic stone wall with iron railing and entrance gate. The primary entrance facade faces 12th Avenue to the west, and an original central block, consisting of four stories above a raised base, is flanked by two lower wings to the north and south, also on a raised base. The Main Building and its wings feature red brick façades, limestone and terra-cotta trim including sill courses, arched and splayed lintels, quoins, and an ornate carved limestone door surround. The Main Building is topped with a mansard roof with dormers, north and south wings feature hipped roofs with front gables.

## Main Building

### Primary West (12th Avenue) Facade

The symmetrical façade is four-stories in height and 12 bays wide, clad in red brick laid in Flemish bond, with terra-cotta quoins. The base features brick rustication topped with a limestone water table and contains 12 windows with stone lintels and sills. The historic central entrance features a central entrance with an elaborate limestone surround and an arched

copper-roofed vestibule, added by c. 1910. The vestibule contains a wood-and glass door with a bronze gate, arched stained-glass fanlight transom and sidelights, flanked by flat pilasters. The carved limestone surround features pilasters with scrolled brackets with guttae and elaborate carved Corinthian capitals and an ornately carved cartouche. Scrolled brackets support a pointed pediment with finials, topped by a stone cross. First-story and second-story windows feature terra-cotta splayed lintels with decorative keystones and stone sill courses. On the second floor of the center bay, paired windows above the entrance share a bracketed stone sill and decorative metal balconette. At the third story, arched windows are set on a molded projecting stone sill course and feature arched terra-cotta lintels with carved decorative keystones engaged in a terra-cotta entablature above. The building is topped with a metal modillioned cornice and a mansard roof with three metal dormers. Each dormer contains three one-over-one windows, pilasters and gabled pediments topped by a stone cross.

## Alterations

Windows replaced throughout; roofing replaced; four small eyebrow dormers removed; copper cornice appears to have been replaced with fiberglass matching historic profile; metal fencing added at roof.

## Main Building, Secondary East (Rear)

### Facade

The red brick secondary east facade is partially visible from the basement to second story, with windows of various sizes. The facade features brick lintels and stone sills, with arched windows with stone sills at the third story, and a metal modillioned cornice. The mansard roof features three large metal dormers and one small metal dormer all with one-over-one windows topped by a stone cross.

### **Alterations**

Windows replaced, metal fencing at roof; copper cornice appears to have been replaced with fiberglass matching historic profile; roofing replaced. Several additions have been added over time, including a tall brick chimney and one-story utilitarian addition; several brick one-story and two-story additions located off the landmark site; and a metal fire escape added from base to roof, also located off the landmark site. See description of work underway at time of designation below.

### **Main Building, Secondary South Facade**

A partially visible red brick façade, with a one-story connection to the south wing. It has a small one-over-one window with terra-cotta flat arch lintel with keystone, a third-story arched stained-glass window with terra-cotta arched enframements and decorative keystone, a copper modillioned cornice and mansard roof with gabled dormer.

### **Alterations**

Windows replaced; two eyebrow windows removed; copper cornice appears to have been replaced with fiberglass matching historic profile; roofing replaced; metal fencing at roof.

### **Main Building, Secondary North Facade**

A partially visible red brick façade, with a one-story brick connection to the north wing. It has a small one-over-one window with terra-cotta splayed lintels and keystone, third-story arched windows with stone arched enframements and decorative keystone, a copper modillioned cornice and gabled dormer.

### **Alterations**

Windows replaced; two eyebrow windows removed; copper cornice appears to have been replaced with fiberglass matching historic profile; roofing replaced; metal fencing at roof.

### **South Wing, Primary West (12th Avenue)**

#### **Facade**

The south wing is two stories in height. Its primary 12th Avenue facade is three bays wide and features terra-cotta quoins, a rusticated brick base, and a high stone water table. The main mass of this wing, which contains a chapel, has a hipped roof; facing 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue a projecting central two-story bay with a front gable is flanked by lower side bays with flat roofs. The central bay features white brick pilasters with Corinthian capitals supporting a stone cornice, a stone sill course and central arch with decorative keystone enframing a brick panel and stained glass arched transom. Lower flanking sections feature terra-cotta quoins, and recessed brick panels with terra-cotta splayed lintels and keystones with stone sills. The center bay features a modillioned copper cornice creating a triangular pediment; the flat and hipped roofs feature simpler copper cornices.

### **South Wing South (64th Street) Facade**

The two-story 64th Street facade features brick rustication at the first story and is topped with a high stone water table. The historic stone wall surrounding the site is directly in front of this facade and rises to the sill-level of first-story windows. A six-bay-wide main block features terra-cotta quoins, arched windows with terra-cotta arches and keystones at the second story resting on a stone sill course, and square-headed windows and side entrance door at the first story. The wing extends an additional bay to the west, where the base rustication and water table continue, and the second story contains a small second-story window with splayed terra-cotta lintel and steps back to reveal the top of an arched window with stained glass transom and terra-cotta arch and keystone. Above the copper cornice the hipped roof contains two one-over-one

copper-clad dormer windows; the basement is not visible.

#### **Alterations**

Secondary entrance doors replaced with two non-historic metal doors; one first-story window partially infilled with brick; non-historic metal grilles at all basement windows; non-historic security camera at first-story façade; the basement is not visible.

#### **South Wing, Secondary East (Rear) Facade**

This partially visible red brick facade features terra-cotta quoins, a high limestone water table above a rusticated brick base with flush stone lintels, a second-story limestone sill course and arched windows with terra-cotta arched lintels, topped by a copper cornice and hipped roof. At the second floor, the larger central arched windows, and small flanking windows to the left, contain stained glass windows. The basement and first story are not visible.

#### **Alterations**

One-bay-wide, two-story brick addition with copper cornice and shallow hipped roof and segmental arched windows is located off the landmark site; non-historic metal entrance door with metal awning. See description of work underway at time of designation below.

#### **South Wing, Secondary North Facade**

This partially visible red brick façade features terra-cotta quoins, a brick base with high stone water table, second-story arched stained-glass windows with arched terra-cotta enframements with keystone and stone sill course, an intact copper cornice and hipped roof. The basement is not visible.

#### **Alterations:**

Non-historic two-story brick addition; non-historic entrance door with metal awning.

#### **North Wing, Primary West (12th Avenue)**

##### **Facade**

This brick façade is two stories above a raised, rusticated brick base. It has terra-cotta quoins, a slightly projecting central bay with brick and stone water-table, paired basement windows with stone lintels and sill bands, stone belt course at basement façade, paired, arched first-and-second story windows with terra-cotta arched lintels with decorative keystone and stone sills, and a copper cornice at the gabled pediment and hipped roof with copper decorative details at roof.

#### **Alterations**

Windows replaced.

#### **North Wing, North (63rd Street) Facade**

The three-story facade facing 63rd Street is clad in red brick with brick rustication at the base, and terra-cotta quoins, stone water table, first-floor sill course, flush lintels at the first story and eared lintels with decorative keystones at the second and third-story windows. It is topped by a copper cornice and hipped roof with two copper dormer windows.

#### **Alterations**

Windows replaced

#### **North Wing, Secondary East (Rear) Facade**

This partially visible red brick façade has terra-cotta quoins, eared terra-cotta lintels with decorative keystone, stone sill course at first-story windows, stone sills at second-story windows, copper cornice with and hipped roof with copper ball finial and decorative copper details. See description of work underway at time of designation below.

#### **Alterations**

Windows replaced; located off the landmark site is a metal fire escape from base to roof with free-standing stairs and catwalk at first story to roof.

## North Wing, Secondary South Facade

Not visible

### Site

The Angel Guardian Home occupies an elevated lawn surrounded by a historic stone wall with an iron fence above, which runs along 12th Avenue and extends east on 63<sup>rd</sup> and 64<sup>th</sup> streets the length of the landmark site. At the center of the 12th Avenue blockfront, the primary pedestrian entrance to the site features stone piers and a historic iron gate; within, curved stone knee walls with five brick and stone steps lead to concrete walkway extending to main entrance. Along the south side of the site, on 64th Street, the low stone wall is directly in front of the south wing's brick facade and features an opening with concrete step and iron gate. At the east end of the wall at the south end, a brick wall installed in the 1920s above the stone wall features a limestone cap and is terminated with a brick pier. On the north side along 63rd Street, the low stone wall with iron fence continues along the length of the front lawn and past the facade of the north wing.

## Current Development

At the time of designation, work related to a redevelopment plan for the Angel Guardian Home landmark site is in progress. This work, which is being carried out under a Department of Buildings permit at the rear of the Main Building and its wings, does not impact significant historic features and involves the following:

**Main Building Secondary East Façade (Rear):** The removal of metal fire escapes and metal stairs from main building secondary rear facade from the basement to the roof; removal of two-story metal addition; removal of one-story brick addition; ten windows infilled with brick at the basement through third story.

**North Wing Secondary East Façade (Rear):** The removal of metal fire escape stairs at first to third stories and metal doors at first and second stories removed and infill remaining opening with brick.

**South wing Secondary East Facade (Rear):** The removal of (rear) two-story brick addition and infill remaining opening with brick.

# History and Significance

Angel Guardian Home

## History and Development Dyker Heights<sup>1</sup>

The Angel Guardian Home is located on a prominent site occupying a full block-front of 12th Avenue in the Dyker Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn. Dyker Heights was once part of New Utrecht, one of the original six towns settled by the Dutch in the 17th century, and under British rule from 1664 until the end of the Revolutionary War. New Utrecht was annexed by Brooklyn in 1894 and became part of New York City upon its consolidation in 1898, around the time it began to be referred to as Dyker Heights.

The first indigenous people to settle the area were members of the Nyack nation, part of a larger Native American confederacy of the Lenape Nation,<sup>2</sup> primarily a coastal people.<sup>3</sup> Prior to European contact the Brooklyn landscape was dotted by Native American villages and traversed by trails, some of which have shaped its current street layout.<sup>4</sup> The introduction of Europeans to Brooklyn displaced most of the early Native American settlements.<sup>5</sup>

The Dutch were the first Europeans to settle in Brooklyn and governed from roughly 1624 to 1664. The village of New Utrecht was founded in 1657 when Jacques Cortelyou secured patents for land.<sup>6</sup> Cortelyou divided the area into 20 plots of 50 acres each, and “reserved several lots for the town’s poor.”<sup>7</sup> New Utrecht received its own Charter from Governor Peter Stuyvesant in 1661, and after the British seized control of New Netherland in 1664, many of New Utrecht’s original Dutch families remained. In 1683, the English established Kings County within the Province of New York, and in

1702 formal boundaries were established for the town of New Utrecht.<sup>8</sup>

From the late-1600s into the 1800s, New Utrecht was predominately pastoral farmland and undeveloped woodlands. In c. 1690 as the population increased from 20 families to over 259 people, census records indicate 48 were enslaved Africans. Slavery grew in the area in the 17th and 18th centuries, and by 1755, the number of enslaved people in New Utrecht doubled.<sup>9</sup>

During the Revolutionary War British and Hessian troops made New Utrecht their main encampment<sup>10</sup> for the Battle of Long Island and occupied New Utrecht until the end of the war.<sup>11</sup>

In the 19th century, an Irish community began to grow in New Utrecht. According to historians Linder and Zacharias, “the Irish started arriving during the 1840s due to the potato famine in Ireland. They were the most prominent ethnic group from the 1860s to the 1870s.” Later in the 1880s, “non-Irish U.S. whites became the leading group in New Utrecht and New Lots.” “African American farm laborers formed a relatively large group of the work force in all towns.”<sup>12</sup> Many Germans, Italians, Jews, and other European ethnic groups arrived during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Kings County Legislature laid out a street grid for all of Kings County in 1869, but it was not immediately developed in all sections.<sup>13</sup> Intensive residential development of Dyker Heights did not begin until the 20th century and was spurred by the completion of transportation lines connecting the area to other parts of Brooklyn and Manhattan. Early transportation routes through the neighborhood provided access to and from Manhattan to the shoreline, establishing transit routes that contributed to the suburban development of Dyker Heights.<sup>14</sup>

The West End Line or New Utrecht Avenue Line, connecting Sunset Park to Coney Island, was the primary public transit route serving Dyker

Heights. It was originally built by the Brooklyn, Bath and Coney Island Railroad in the 1860s as a steam line and later became a trolley line; in 1913 an elevated Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit Corporation (BMT) West End Line was built over New Utrecht Avenue, continuing on to 86th Street and Stillwell Avenue, replacing the surface line, and spurring residential development along the route.<sup>15</sup>

Most of New Utrecht continued to be rural farmland with some industry into the 1880s, including factories that produced horse-drawn railroad cars.<sup>16</sup> In the late-19th century developers began buying large tracts of land,<sup>17</sup> and by the early-20th century were constructing one- and two-family houses, large residences along 11th Avenue with views of the Verrazano Narrows and Gravesend Bay, and a business district developed along 13th Avenue.<sup>18</sup>

Significant among these early developers was Frederick Johnson (1841 to 1893),<sup>19</sup> who according to the *Brooklyn Eagle*, did “much toward developing the locality in which he resided. He was the author of the original New Utrecht Improvement Bill, an ardent advocate of the annexation of the Town to this City,” and his son Walter Loveridge Johnson (1872 to 1953) is credited with coining the name Dyker Heights. After his father’s death in 1893, Walter Johnson developed his parents’ property as “Dyker Heights,” a name likely associated with the Van Dyke family, early Dutch settlers of New Utrecht.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Sisters of Mercy<sup>21</sup>**

The Angel Guardian Home was constructed in 1899 on 12th Avenue in Dyker Heights as an orphanage for the Sisters of Mercy, a Catholic order of nuns originally from Ireland. The Institute of the Sisters of Mercy was founded by Catherin McAuley (1778 to 1841) in Dublin, Ireland in 1831.<sup>22</sup> To help young women in Dublin, she built a school, chapel, and a

dormitory called the “House of Mercy” for homeless girls and women who worked as domestic servants.<sup>23</sup> The organization was converted to a religious order to suppress any disapproval of young single women working without the approval of the church. By the time of McAuley’s death in 1841, the order had spread rapidly and there was a total of 14 “foundations” of Mercy in Ireland and England. To fulfill their mission, all orders followed the same rules set in motion by Catherin McAuley: All members of the convents had to take three vows including; poverty, chastity and obedience, the Sisters of Mercy took a fourth vow, of service to the “poor, sick, and uneducated.”<sup>24</sup> In addition the orders needed to be fully independent (self-governing) and self-sufficient.<sup>25</sup> Catherin McAuley’s main purpose was to help the poor, never wanting the sisters to be a cloistered order, “People referred to these early Sisters of Mercy as “the walking nuns” because they were seen in the streets on their way to minister to the poor and sick.”<sup>26</sup>

The Sisters of Mercy first arrived in the United States from Ireland in 1843, in response to an invitation of the Bishop of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.<sup>27</sup> Three years later in 1846, at the request of Bishop John Hughes (1797 to 1864), seven Sisters of Mercy from the sisterhood in Dublin, Ireland came to New York City to help found an Institute of Mercy, or what the Bishop called a “house of protection” to care for immigrant girls.<sup>28</sup> A convent at 18 West Washington Place (now part of Greenwich Village Historic District), was given to the sisters as their residence.<sup>29</sup> Initially the Sisters of Mercy focused their efforts on caring for the sick and poor in their homes.<sup>30</sup> In the first five years, (1849 to 1854) they established a convent, provided daily visitations of the sick and infirmed, and established a free school for the instruction of young girls from poor families. In November 1860, the Sisters of Mercy opened their first orphanage in

New York City, a temporary refuge for homeless children, on Second Avenue.<sup>31</sup>

The Sisters of Mercy arrived in Brooklyn by 1855, first occupying a small convent on Jay Street until 1862, when Bishop Loughlin built for the nuns a new convent at Willoughby and Classon avenues.<sup>32</sup> After the United States Civil War started in 1861, the Sisters of Mercy set up a hospital in Beaufort, South Carolina, at the request of Edwin McMasters Stanton (1814 to 1869), Secretary of War for the Union Army.<sup>33</sup> A total of 16 New York City-based Sisters of Mercy served during the Civil War.<sup>34</sup> The Sisters' work during the Civil War helped dissuade the prejudice that Catholics had faced in the United States.<sup>35</sup> To recognize their services during the Civil War the City of New York gave the Sisters of Mercy a tract of land at 65 East 81<sup>st</sup> Street to build a boarding school, with the provision that it be used to care for daughters of Civil War veterans.<sup>36</sup> In 1869, St. Joseph's Industrial Home for Girls was established at that site.<sup>37</sup>

By the end of the Civil War the Catholic religion was the largest denomination in the United States, due in part to the increasing number of immigrants from Europe, including an influx of Irish immigrants escaping the potato famine.<sup>38</sup> Many Irish immigrants came to New York City and Brooklyn between 1845-1860, and lived in unstable conditions. The need for more charitable services increased during this era and Catholic institutions built schools and orphanages to help with the care for children and young women.<sup>39</sup> It was during this period that the Sisters of Mercy extended their services both within Brooklyn and further afield to Long Island, purchasing a large property in Dyker Heights in 1880-82, and opening the St. Mary of the Angels Home for 50 boys in Syosset in 1894.<sup>40</sup>

In Brooklyn, over the course of the late 19th century, the Sisters of Mercy opened several facilities to serve local children, culminating their

efforts in 1899 with the opening of the Angel Guardian Home in Dyker Heights.<sup>41</sup> In 1892, the Sisters opened an industrial school for girls at 273 Willoughby Street, and housed orphans over the age of seven at their convent on Classon and Willoughby avenues.<sup>42</sup> A home-placement service was organized in 1901 to place children in selected homes. The Sisters of Mercy constructed an addition to their convent and motherhouse in St. Patrick's parish on Kent Avenue in 1902, and by 1921 the building was serving as a home and industrial school for 450 destitute girls.<sup>43</sup>

The Sisters of Mercy created foundations throughout the United States and have served American Catholics for over 175 years.<sup>44</sup> Today the order serves over 22 countries around the world, offering a range of services such as education and health care.<sup>45</sup>

### **Orphanages in New York City**

In the 19th century, when children in New York City were orphaned, many were indentured or placed in almshouses. Ecclesial and independent organizations were formed to care for and educate them.<sup>46</sup>

Different religious denominations and communities founded their own orphanages, including those sponsored by Catholic, Protestant, Quaker, and Jewish groups. Many orphanages did not accept Black children, and African American groups founded orphanages to serve their community. Orphanages were thus segregated by race, and separated inhabitants by gender; in some cases, building separate facilities for boys and girls.

Orphanages and homes for children of difficult circumstances offered a range of accommodations and served different communities in New York City, beginning in the 19th century. Two of the earliest orphanages in the city, both designated New York City Landmarks, are the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum (Old St. Patrick's

Convent and Girls School) at 32 Prince Street, founded by the Sisters of Charity and built in 1826,<sup>47</sup> and the former Leake & Watts Orphan Asylum Building, built in 1838-42 and now part of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and the Cathedral Close individual landmark.<sup>48</sup> Two no-longer-extant orphanages further represent the variety of accommodations in the early-19th century: the Society for the Relief of Half-Orphan and Destitute Children at 67 West Tenth Street, near Sixth Avenue in Manhattan (within the Greenwich Village Historic District, demolished), was established in 1835 to enable widowed parents to work while their children were cared for and educated.<sup>49</sup> The Colored Orphans Asylum located on Fifth Avenue between 42nd and 43rd Street, was founded by Quakers in 1836, to care for African-American children not allowed in white orphanages (no longer extant).<sup>50</sup>

In the Progressive Era, as organizations and reformers addressed problems caused by industrialization and urbanization, orphanages took on a more monumental civic presence. The (Former) American Female Guardian Society and Home for the Friendless Woody Crest Home (1901-02, a designated New York City Landmark), is an impressive Beaux-Arts style structure built as a home for abandoned and needy children. The Messiah Home for Children (1905, a designated New York City Landmark), also in the Bronx, was designed in an elaborate Jacobean revival style and built on property donated by Standard Oil magnate Henry H. Rogers, who also funded its construction. It provided care to young children with one or no parents.<sup>51</sup>

According to historian Matthew Crenson, “Until the 1880s, Roman Catholics were the leading founders of orphanages, especially in the East with its burgeoning populations of Catholic immigrants in Boston, New York, and other seaboard cities.”<sup>52</sup> In a report from 1905, John Koren stated that in New York City, out of 659 total institutions serving

orphans, 216 were built or run by ecclesiastical benevolent institutions.<sup>53</sup>

Conditions for children in orphanages were often difficult. Crenson discusses the harrowing conditions that children faced in these institutions in New York City and across the country:

“Conditions varied but tended not to be good. Many orphanages were highly regimented, especially early in the century. Children marched to meals, which they ate in silence. They wore uniforms and sometimes had their heads shaved. Living in an orphanage meant either being a predator or a victim. There were institutions that were well-run by compassionate people, but in general an inmate's life was a tough one.”<sup>54</sup>

Orphanage buildings were designed in a range of styles throughout New York City, and with varying degrees of civic presence, from sober and restrained institutional buildings to the more elaborate and ornate structures of the Progressive Era. The Angel Guardian Home is one of the city's most impressive orphanage buildings. It occupies a full block-front, is set back and raised above the street level upon a spacious lawn, and its monumental scale and refined classical design combining elements of the Renaissance Revival and Beaux-Arts styles make it prominent in its neighborhood. It represents the importance of social services during the Progressive Era.

### **History of The Angel Guardian Home<sup>55</sup>**

The Convent of the Sisters of Mercy initially purchased large tracts of land in New Utrecht, in 1880 and 1881, and in 1892 purchased the bulk of

the site eventually developed for the Angel Guardian Home.<sup>56</sup> The remainder of the block between 12th and 13th avenues and 63rd and 64th streets was assembled over a 10 year period from 1904 to 1914.<sup>57</sup>

In 1897, Bishop Charles E. McDonnell (1854 to 1921) of the Diocese of Brooklyn, asked the Sisters of Mercy to start an institution devoted exclusively to the care of young children ages two to five years old, to help fill the increasing need for accommodations for orphan children.<sup>58</sup>

The Sisters chose their Dyker Heights site to construct the orphanage, largely because of its semi-rural location with existing transportation links, and commissioned George H. Streeton to design a building to accommodate 200 children ages two to seven years old. The project broke ground in 1897 and opened in July 1899.<sup>59</sup> *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* applauded the new facilities, housed in a “substantial building,” and “equipped throughout with all the modern improvements for the care of little children,” and described its original layout:

“The new building is 115 feet in front and 50 feet deep and is four story and basement with two one-story extensions... On the first floor, at the west [south] end of the building, is the chapel. There is also a sacristy, a kindergarten and two parlors. The second floor is divided into dormitories for the children and cells for the sisters. There are more dormitories on the third floor. In addition to the quarantine for the sick children and infirmary are located there, a kitchen and bathroom for the exclusive use of sick children, and more cells for the sisters. The fourth or top story is finished as well as the other floors.

A large section will be used as a recreation room for convalescent children. The remainder will be devoted to a sewing room, a wardrobe for the children’s clothes, and sleeping rooms for the help.”<sup>60</sup>

According to the Sisters of Mercy’s records, on July 4, 1899, “six Sisters of Mercy, five employed lay women and nine young women from the Convent of Mercy Home opened The Angel Guardian Home to ninety girls between the ages of 2 [sic] and five years old.” In 1901, the Commissioner of Public Charities requested that Sisters of Mercy open their facility to orphan babies and single mothers and their infants, which they did beginning in that year.<sup>61</sup> In 1903 the New York City Department of Welfare approved the Angel Guardian Home’s Foster Boarding Home Program, which began with 30 babies. The *Catholic Directory* of 1905 listed 232 people living in the Angel Guardian Home: eight Sisters and 194 children. The age for boarding children was extended to three years in 1905, and to five years in 1913.<sup>62</sup> In the Sisters of Mercy Brooklyn charter, they included among their corporate purposes to provide care to children and mothers without distinction of race or creed.<sup>63</sup>

As the Angel Guardian Home increased their programs and their facilities, a nursery building for infants was built in 1905 and opened 1906 on 63rd Street behind the main building, and a second nursery, St. Ann’s building was built c. 1907 and initially used as a house to quarantine sick babies.<sup>64</sup> The Angel Guardian Home main building was expanded in the early-20th century, with north and south wings added to the Main Building c. 1910, the north wing referred to as an annex and containing a school, and the south wing containing an expanded chapel. In c. 1910 a laundry building, and an engine and boiler house was built near 64th Street behind

the main building, and the records of the Angels of Guardian indicate the north wing annex of the main building was expanded by an additional floor in 1917, to accommodate the orphanage's growing programs. In 1922, a high brick wall was built, encompassing the entire site.<sup>65</sup> As the block was developed, the original Angel Guardian Home, commanding the entire 12th Avenue frontage of the property, retained primacy within the complex and served as its public face within the surrounding neighborhood.

### **Design of the Angel Guardian Home<sup>66</sup>**

The Angel Guardian Home at was designed by George H. Streeton in 1897 and constructed in 1899. Executed in the Italian Renaissance Revival style with Beaux-Arts Style elements, the Angel Guardian Home features a red brick façade, limestone trim and a mansard roof, with ornate carved limestone door surrounds, quoins and arched windows. The 1910 expansions of the chapel wing to the south and the school wing to the north, which was extended an additional story in 1917, were designed in the same style as the original center portion and employ similar decorative features, creating a unified ensemble.

Streeton's design of the Angel Guardian Home employs elements of two styles of architecture, the Italian Renaissance Revival style and the Beaux Arts style to create a large scale, elegant structure. At the turn of the 20th century, these two styles were commonly used in institutional structures such as schools and public buildings and reflect classical design with impressive scale and symmetry.

The Italian Renaissance Revival Style was popular in the United States from 1890 to 1930. Its characteristics include imposing scale and formal design incorporating classical details such as columns and round arches, typically more than three

stories in height, a dominating ground floor of rusticated brickwork, horizontal bands of brick, stone (string courses) to visually separate the floors, massive, arched doorways and arched windows on the ground floor.<sup>67</sup>

The Beaux Arts style was introduced around 1885, and its popularity increased because of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.<sup>68</sup> In its grandiose treatment of classic architectural forms, the Beaux Arts style was an ideal expression of both wealth and civic pride. The style uses formal symmetry, Italian Renaissance form, and classical Greek and Roman decorative elements like columns and pediments to create a grand and imposing architectural statement. Exterior decorative details include quoins, balconies, as well as ornamental windows and grand entrances. The mansard roof with elaborate metal dormers creates a grand and imposing architectural statement, also seen in the Beaux-Arts style design of the (former) American Female Guardian Society and Home for the Friendless Woody Crest Home (1901-02, a designated New York City Landmark).<sup>69</sup>

### **Architect George H. Streeton<sup>70</sup>**

George H. Streeton was born in Brooklyn on September 29, 1864. He studied at the Ferrari Modeling School, at Cooper Union and Cornell University. After graduation he was employed at the architectural firm of Schickel & Ditmars for ten years before starting his own firm. Streeton was an officer of the Brooklyn AIA.

Streeton is known primarily for his ecclesiastical architectural designs, including two that are within designated historic districts, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church Rectory constructed in 1895,<sup>71</sup> in the Greenwich Village Historic District, and St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church Rectory in the St. George/New Brighton Historic District on Staten Island. Streeton designed

the nursery building for Angel Guardian Home,<sup>72</sup> and a total of eight churches in New York City.<sup>73</sup>

### **Angel Guardian Home Later History**

The Angel Guardian Home provided housing and support services to orphans, both male and female and unwed mothers through much of the 20th century. In the 1930s, the orphanage extended its age limit to include school-age children and allowed siblings to be housed together in their facilities. Also, a separate department was opened for unmarried mothers.<sup>74</sup> Angel Guardian Home placed social workers in their Foster Boarding Home Department to help with the placement and supervision of foster children.

In 1948, after the Displaced Person Act was passed,<sup>75</sup> the Angel Guardian Home and the Catholic Committee of Refugees worked together to create an “Overseas Program,” which placed orphan children from Europe in homes in Brooklyn and Long Island.<sup>76</sup>

The Sisters of Mercy celebrated 100 years of service and dedication to Brooklyn in September 1955.<sup>77</sup> Highlighting their centennial anniversary, an article noted that in addition to education and children’s services, the Sisters of Mercy continued to take care of the poor and sick and provided monthly visits to the incarcerated in the jails of Brooklyn.<sup>78</sup>

Due to the increasing number of orphaned children of school age in New York City, starting in the 1960s and continuing through to the 1980s a series of articles were written in several Catholic newspapers encouraging African American and Hispanic families to adopt or become foster families. A 1961 article in *The Tablet*, a Catholic newspaper, stressed the need for adoption and foster families.<sup>79</sup> The article went on to explain the “Mercy First” program and the process of becoming a foster family and how to apply for the program.<sup>80</sup>

During the late 1960 through the 1970s, the Sisters at the Angel Guardian Home reached out to surrounding neighborhoods within Brooklyn to help care for children of all races and ethnicities. A 1973 article in *The Daily News* highlighted the success of one such adoption, four African American children, once housed at Angel Guardian, were adopted by an African American family over the course of four years. The article encouraged other families in the African American community to reach out and do the same. The adoptive mother of these children stated that; “the more you give love it seems the more God gives you to give.”<sup>81</sup> A 1976 article in the *New York Daily News* stated that there were a total 1500 children in foster care and on site at the Angel Guardian Home; Black, White and Hispanic children in need of adoption.<sup>82</sup>

The New York State Department of Social Services initiated the Child Protective Services Act of 1973, to protect children and encourage the reporting of abuse. Subsequent reforms in the 1980s related to the protection of children in congregate care, and the encouragement of foster care, led to the closure of programs at the Angel Guardian Home.<sup>83</sup>

With the rise of the AIDS epidemic, the main building of the Angel Guardian Home became the Chalone Interim Care Residence, for infants infected with HIV, named in honor of Sister Margaret Mary Chalone. However, in 1998, the residence was closed due to a New York State Clinical Guidelines stating the children did not need special medical supervision and could be placed with foster families.<sup>84</sup> In 1992, in conjunction with the New York State Department of Social Services, the Angel Guardian Home started a relationship with the New York State Kinship Program, established in 1975, helping children who were given up for adoption by their birth parents to be placed with family members.<sup>85</sup> In 1997, it officially changed its

name to Angel Guardian Children and Family Services, Inc.

Consistent with the history of orphanages in the United States, there have been allegations of poor conditions and treatment at Angel Guardian Home, including over-crowding, poor record keeping, lost or destroyed adoption records, and abuse.<sup>86</sup> There are also positive success stories of children that were adopted into loving families. For example, in a 2018 article in the *Brooklyn Paper*, two former child residents, Gregory Mango and Joanne Sullivan Silva expressed their gratitude to the Angel Guardian Home and the Sisters of Mercy:<sup>87</sup>

“I couldn’t have asked for any better parents, quite frankly,” Mango said. “The Sisters of Mercy saved my life.” “I was very fortunate to be adopted,” Silva said. “I just loved my life. And I love the Sisters of Mercy, I have wonderful memories of them.”<sup>88</sup>

In 2003, the administrations of Angel Guardian Home and St. Mary’s of the Angels Home merged to form the “Mercy First” network of agencies, and residential care for orphaned children at the Angel Guardian Home was phased out. On September 21, 2017, during the annual “Mercy Day” celebration, doors to the Chapel of Angel Guardian Home were symbolically closed for the last time.<sup>89</sup> The Sisters of Mercy sold the Angel Guardian Home and its site in 2018, stipulating in a deed restriction that future use of the property should include open space, community facilities, and dwelling structures of which at least 15% of the units would be affordable multi-family residential units.<sup>90</sup>

## Conclusion

The Angel Guardian Home is historically and architecturally significant. The distinctive and prominent building in the Dyker Heights neighborhood, with its monumental civic scale and adept blend of Renaissance Revival and Beaux-Arts architectural details, is symbolic of the importance given to social services in the Progressive Era, and of the role the Sisters of Mercy have played in Brooklyn for close to 120 years.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Ellen Marie Snyder, *Brooklyn: and Illustrated History*, “Dyker Heights” 377; Henry Reed Stiles, *The Civil, Political, Professional and Ecclesiastical History, and Commercial and Industrial Records of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn, N. Y. from 1863 to 1884*, (New York: W. W. Munsell & Company, 1884) 255-269.
- <sup>2</sup> <https://www.6sqft.com/this-1946-map-shows-how-native-american-trails-became-the-streets-of-brooklyn/>; <https://www.heyridge.com/2015/08/the-rarely-told-story-of-the-real-bay-ridge-natives/>, accessed 02/18/2020.
- <sup>3</sup> City of New York Landmarks Preservation Commission, Archeology Survey, Native American Site Survey Record/LPCAYSVYNAK, 02/18/2020, Daniel Pagano.
- <sup>4</sup> Some of the trails that became streets in Brooklyn are Flatbush Avenue, Fulton Street, part of Atlantic Avenue, Division Street in Williamsburg and Kings Highway. James A. Kelly, *Indian Villages, Paths, Ponds and Places in Kings County* map copyright 1946, <https://www.6sqft.com/this-1946-map-shows-how-native-american-trails-became-the-streets-of-brooklyn/>, accessed 02/18/2020.
- <sup>5</sup> John B. Manbeck, “Ask a Historian: What Happened to Brooklyn’s Native American Tribes?” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 2, 2019, <https://brooklyneagle.com/articles/2019/05/02/ask-a-historian-what-happened-to-brooklyns-native-american-tribes/>, Accessed: 02/18/2020.
- <sup>6</sup> Charlotte, Bleecker, Bangs, *Reminiscences of Old New Utrecht and Gowanus*, (New York: Brooklyn Eagle Press, 1912); 19; Henry Reed Stiles, *The Civil, Political, Professional and Ecclesiastical History and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn, N.Y., from 1683 to 1884, 1884*, v. II, part 1 1884.
- <sup>7</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson, *Encyclopedia of New York City* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2010), “New Utrecht”, 907.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, Stiles 262.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid*. Stiles, 262, the Cortelyous; the Van Pelts; the Van Nuys; the Van Voerhees; the Van Brunts; the Van Duyns; The Johnson, the Johnsens; were just some of the slave holding families in the town of New Utrecht; E.B. O’Callaghan, *Census of Slaves 1755*, (New York, Self-Published 1850), 860; Jahongir Usmanov , “New Utrecht: Settlement & Slavery,” [https://www.brooklynroots.org/sinu\\_settlement/](https://www.brooklynroots.org/sinu_settlement/), accessed 03/24/2020.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid* Stiles, 262.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid*. Bangs, Bleecker 48-49.
- <sup>12</sup> Marc Linder, Lawrence S. Zacharias. *Of Cabbages and Kings County: Agriculture and the Formation of Modern Brooklyn*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press), 1999, 80-120.
- <sup>13</sup> Information from: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission *Avenue H Station House Designation Report*, (June 29, 2004), prepared by Eve M. Kahn.
- <sup>14</sup> “Dyker Heights and Wall Street,” *Wall Street Journal*, September 22, 1899, p. 5.
- <sup>15</sup> “Nassau Cars on Sea Beach Line,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 5, 1899, 12.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid*. Linder and Zacharias, 115.
- <sup>17</sup> “A Land Boom in New Utrecht,” *Real Estate Record and Builder’s Guide* 44, no. 1136 (December 21, 1889): 1700; “Real Estate Movement, New Utrecht,” *New York Tribune*, (January 19, 1980), 21
- <sup>18</sup> “Buys Brooklyn Realty,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, January 17, 1897, p. 5
- <sup>19</sup> “Frederick H. Johnson Sudden Death,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 15, 1893, 1.
- <sup>20</sup> “Dyker Heights Development,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* December 31, 1899, p. 28
- <sup>21</sup> Mary Eulalia Herron, “Work of the Sisters of Mercy in the United States”, *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, v. 33, No. 3, (September 1922), 216-237.
- <sup>22</sup> Catherine McAuley, Kevin L. Hughes, Mary C. Sullivan, *The Correspondence of Catherine McAuley, 1818-1841*, (The Catholic University Press: Dublin, Ireland, 2004).
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid*. McAuley, Hughes, Sullivan.
- <sup>24</sup> Their ministries in education, healthcare, and social

justice grew out of these vows. Their commitment to justice is often manifested in these services as well, justice for the under-served and marginalized of society,

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Sisters of Mercy Archives, Merion, Pennsylvania.

<sup>25</sup> Mary C. Sullivan, Mary O'Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy*, (University of Notre Dame Press, 1995); <https://www.mercy.net/newsroom/mercy-quick-facts/>.

<sup>26</sup> <https://civilwarsisters.com/grid-page/catherine-mcauley-and-the-sisters-of-mercy/>; Brian Broaders, "The Walking Sisters", *The Furrow*

V. 62, No. 5 (May 2011), 302-304.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.sistersofmercy.org/about-us/our-history/>, accessed 02/28/2020.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid Herron, 217.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid Heron, 218.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. Herron, 220.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. Catherine McAuley, Kevin L. Hughes, Mary C. Sullivan

<sup>32</sup> "Behind Convent Walls: The Renovated Institution of the Sisters of Mercy," *Brooklyn Eagle* (February 3, 1895, 21)

<sup>33</sup> <https://civilwarsisters.com/grid-page/sisters-in-the-east/>, accessed 02/807/2020.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Herron, 226, List of names of all Sisters of Mercy that served in the Civil War; Mother Mary Madeline Tober, Sister Mary Augustine MacKenna, Sister M. Ignatius, Sister M. Agnes O'Connor, Sister M. Joseph Devereux, Sister M. Alphonsus Smyth, Sister M. Gerard Ryan, Agatha McCarthy, Sister M. Elizabeth Callahan, Sister M. Vincent Sweetman, Sister M. Paul Lennon, Sister M. Gertrude Ledwith, Sister M. Paula Harris, Sister M. Veronica Diamond, Sister M. Francis Murray, Sister M. Martha Corrigan,

<sup>35</sup> Ilia Delio, "The First Catholic Social Gospelers: Women Religious in the 19th Century," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 13, no. 3, Social Activism (Summer 1995): 1-22.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. Herron, 230.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. Herron, 231-237.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. Ilia Deli, 1-22."

<sup>39</sup> Edward Rohs and Judith Estrine *Raised by the Church: Growing up in New York City's Catholic Orphanages*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011).

<sup>40</sup> John Kean Sharp, *History of the Diocese of Brooklyn, 1853-1953: The Catholic Church on Long Island*, Part 2 (New York: Fordham University Press, 1954).

<sup>41</sup> "New Orphan Home Will Open Tuesday," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 8, 1899.20.

<sup>42</sup> New York (State), *Annual Report of the State Board of Charities 1900*, (Albany, New York: James B. Lyon, State Printer, v.2, 354, Behind Convent Walls: The Renovated Institution of the Sisters of Mercy," *Brooklyn Eagle* (February 3, 1895, p. 21).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. Sharpe, 114.

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.sistersofmercy.org/about-us/our-history/>, accessed 02/28/2020

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.graham-windham.org/about-us/history/>, accessed 03/31/2020

<sup>47</sup> New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Old St. Patrick's Convent and Girls' School* designation report, (New York, LP-0186, 1966).

<sup>48</sup> Donald Presa and Jay Shockley, LP, *Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine and the Cathedral Close*, LP-2585, 2017.

<sup>49</sup> Columbia Archival Collections, *Society for the Relief of Half-Orphan and Destitute Children Records, 1836-1923 bulk 1853-1922*, [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/archival/collections/ldp\\_d\\_4079808/](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/archival/collections/ldp_d_4079808/)

<sup>50</sup> Elissa Gootman, "Recalling a Place of Sanctuary for Black Orphans," *New York Times*, April 7, 2003; Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626-1863*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 279-288, <https://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/317749.html>, accessed 03/31/2020.

<sup>51</sup> Virginia Kurshan, LPC, *Messiah Home for Children*, LP-1892, 1997.

<sup>52</sup> Matthew Crenson, *The Invisible Orphanage: A Pre-history of the American Welfare System*, (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001). The Catholic Church viewed American society as dominated by Protestants. It responded by founding parochial schools and parochial children's homes. Some Catholic orphanages were huge, housing more than 1,000 kids. Initially, orphanages emerged as an instrument of ethnic defense. A nonconforming minority used the orphanage as a vehicle

of resistance against the dominant protestant culture.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. Koren, 12, Corporal punishment was common, with inmates routinely beaten across the hands with leather straps. The diet tended to be poor. Orphanages often were dangerous. The mortality rate was not much better than on the streets. Older, bigger, tougher kids preyed mercilessly on younger, smaller inmates. As hard as it was to leave kids at the mercy of some adults, it was much worse to leave them at the mercy of 100 kids.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. Keiger.

<sup>55</sup> Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Sisters of Mercy, “Angel Guardian Home Children and Family Services History Outline of Events 1890-1998;” (Merion Pennsylvania, 01/30/1998); Harry M. Culkin, *Priests and Parishes of the Diocese of Brooklyn, 1820-1990*, (W. Charles Print Company, 1990-1991); John Kean Sharp, *History of the Diocese of Brooklyn, 1853-1953*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 1954). Projected Buildings, *Real Estate Record and Builders Guide*, 73, no. 1883 (April 16, 1904): 906

<sup>56</sup> Kings County, Registers Office Block and Lot Index, pg. 1 section 17, Block 579, December 13, 1880, Liber No. 1408, pg. 280; December 3, 1881, Liber No. 1445, p 470, Liber No. 1451. pg. 46; January 18, 1892, Liber No. 2086, pg. 445.

<sup>57</sup> Kings County, Registers Office Block and Lot Index, pg. 1 section 17, Block 5739, Lot 1, in total the Sisters of Mercy would own more than twelve acres of land in New Utrecht and mortgage the land to raise funds for the new orphanage “Mortgage for a Convent,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 1, 1897, 1.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. Sharp.

<sup>59</sup> “Angel Guardian Home, Formally Opened To-day,” *the Brooklyn Eagle*, July 11, 1899, 7.

<sup>60</sup> “New Orphan Home Will Open Tuesday,” *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 8, 1899, 16.

<sup>61</sup> Catholic News *New York Archdiocesan Weekly Newspaper*, June 14, 1902

<sup>62</sup> Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Sisters of Mercy, “Angel Guardian Home Children and Family Services History Outline of Events 1890-1998;” (Merion Pennsylvania, 01/30/1998).

<sup>63</sup> Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Sisters of Mercy, “Angel Guardian Home Children and Family Services History Outline of Events 1890-1998;” (Merion Pennsylvania, 01/30/1998);

<sup>64</sup> “Angel Guardian Home,” *The Tablet*, 1959, 10.

<sup>65</sup> Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Sisters of Mercy, “Angel Guardian Home Children and Family Services History Outline of Events 1890-1998;” (Merion Pennsylvania, 01/30/1980).

<sup>66</sup> Buffalo as an Architectural Museum, Renaissance / Renaissance Revival Architecture Styles, <https://buffaloah.com/a/DCTNRY/r/renaiss.html>, accessed 06/09/2020

<sup>67</sup> Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/italian-renaissance.html>, accessed 06/09/2020.

<sup>68</sup> Pennsylvania Historical and Museum commission, <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/beaux-arts.html>, accessed 06/09/2020.

<sup>69</sup> Gale Harris, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, (former) *American Female Guardian Society and Home for the Friendless Woody Crest Home*, LP: 2049, 2000.

<sup>70</sup> Landmarks Preservation Commission, Architect files; NYT April 25, 1901, Church of St. Charles Borromeo; American Architect and Building News XC, No. 1606 (October 6, 1906).

<sup>71</sup> St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church in Greenwich Village had two fires, one in 1855 and the other in 1885, that caused extensive damage to the interior.

<sup>72</sup> Projected Buildings *Real Estate Rerecord and Guide*, 73, no. 1883 (April 16, 1904): 906 [NURSERY BUILDING].

<sup>73</sup> Churches attributed to George H. Streeton include; St. Ambrose Church, 222 Tompkins and Dekalb Avenues, Brooklyn, Charles Borromeo Church, 211 West 141 Street, Manhattan, St. Raymond’s Church, at Castle Hill Avenue at Tremont Avenue, The Bronx, Cathedral of St. James, 233 Jay Street, Brooklyn, St. Francis De Sales Church, 135 East 96th Street, Manhattan, David W. Dunlop, *From Abyssinian to Zion: A Guide to Manhattan’s Houses of Worship*, (New York City: Columbia University Press, 2004).

<sup>74</sup> Catholic Directory, 1953

<sup>75</sup> Congress authorized admissions for refugees from Europe and permitted asylum seekers already in the U.S. to regularize their status. Carl J. Bon Tempo, Americans at the Gate: *The United States and Refugees During the Cold War*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008); Immigration in the United States, *Displaced Persons Act of 1948*, <https://immigrationtounitedstates.org/464-displaced->

persons-act-of-1948.html, accessed 03/17/2020.

<sup>76</sup>Through the Angel Guardian home affiliation with the New York City Board of Education they developed a program for unwed mothers, at the Dyker Heights facility Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Sisters of Mercy, “Angel Guardian Home Children and Family Services History Outline of Events 1890-1998;” (Merion Pennsylvania, 01/30/1998).

<sup>77</sup> “Nuns to Observe 100 Years Labor in Brooklyn” *The Tablet*, September 3, 1955, 1.

<sup>78</sup> “The Sisters of Mercy in the Diocese of Brooklyn-1955,” *The Tablet*, September 3, 1955, 13.

<sup>79</sup> Richard Ryan, “2000 Children Need Foster Families,” *The Tablet*, July 8, 1961, 10, accessed 10/12/2019. The article showed pictures of beautiful toddlers of all ethnicities, dressed in their finest, and explained the need of these children, and the tireless work of the Sisters of Mercy and Angel Guardian Home and their commitment to finding these children, proper loving families to take them

<sup>80</sup> Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Sisters of Mercy, “Angel Guardian Home Children and Family Services History Outline of Events 1890-1998;” (Merion Pennsylvania, 01/30/1998).

<sup>81</sup> William Reel, “Love is Having Four Kids Who Need A Home,” *The Daily News*, September 2, 1973, 60.

<sup>82</sup> “Need Parents to Adopt Homeless Youngsters,” *The New York Daily News*, September 5, 1976, 791, accessed 11/12/2019.

<sup>83</sup> Office of Children and Family Services, *The Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment*, <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/cps/>, accessed 04/02/2020.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. Angel Guardian Home Children and Family Services History Outline of Events 1890-1998;” (Merion Pennsylvania, 01/30/1998).

<sup>85</sup> However, in 1998, this program, and the On-Site Social Service Daycare Center at AGH were closed due to New York City budget cuts. Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Sisters of Mercy, “Angel Guardian Home Children and Family Services History Outline of Events 1890-1998;” (Merion Pennsylvania, 01/30/1998); Adoptive and Foster Family Coalition, <https://affcn.org/about-us/history/> accessed 04/07/2020.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, Edward Rohs, Judith Estrline.

<sup>87</sup> Julianne Mcshane, “No Place Like Home: Demolition of Angel Guardian Building in Dyker Heights Would Be ‘Heart Breaking,’ Old Residents Say,” *Brooklyn Paper*, posted online, 02/18/2018, <https://www.brooklynpaper.com/no-place-like-home-demolition-of-angel-guardian-building-in-dyker-heights-would-be-heartbreaking-old-residents-say/>, accessed 07/07/2020.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. Mcshane.

<sup>89</sup> Maureen King, RSM, *Closing Ritual Held For Angel Guardian*, <https://thetablet.org/mercy-sisters-close-doors-at-angel-guardian-for-last-time/>, accessed 04/06/2020.

<sup>90</sup> NYC Department of Finance Office of the City Register, Sundry Miscellaneous Agreement, August 15, 2018, Schedule B Deed Restriction.

# Findings and Designation

## Angel Guardian Home

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and the other features of this building and site, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Angel Guardian Home 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.

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 Angel Guardian Home and designates Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5739, Lot 1 in part as its Landmark Site as shown in the attached map, consisting of the portion of the lot beginning at the northwest corner at 63rd Street and 12th Avenue, extending 200 feet south along the western lot line to the southwest corner at 64th Street and 12th Avenue, then east along the southern lot line 151.07 feet to the southeast corner of the south wing, then north at a right angle to the southern lot line 43.23 feet along the rear (east) facade of the south wing, then east 4.36 feet, then north 32.09 feet, then west 25.86 feet, north 0.84 feet, and west 4.17 feet to the rear facade of the main building, then extending north 123.88 feet in a straight line along the rear facade of the main building to the northern lot line, then continuing west along the northern lot line 125.34 feet to the point of beginning.



**Angel Guardian Home 6301 12th Avenue, Brooklyn**  
Jessica C. Baldwin, November 2020



**New York City Department of Taxes Photograph, c. 1938-43**  
Courtesy: Municipal Archives



**Angel Guardian Home, c. 1920**  
Courtesy: Sisters of Mercy of the Americas



**South Wing 64th Street facade**  
Jessica C. Baldwin, November 2020



**North Wing 63rd Street facade**  
Jessica C. Baldwin, November 2020



**Angel Guardian Home (Main entrance, 12th Avenue Facade)**

Top, Jessica C. Baldwin, 2020

Above, Sisters of Mercy of the America, 1998



**North Wing 63rd Street facade (rear)**  
Jessica C. Baldwin, November 2020



**South Wing 64th Street facade (rear)**  
Jessica C. Baldwin, November 2020



**Rear façade**

Jessica c. Baldwin, November 2020



**Roof and Dormer detail**

Jessica C. Baldwin, November 2020

