

ERASMUS HALL MUSEUM, Courtyard of Erasmus Hall High School, between Flatbush Avenue and Bedford Avenue near Church Avenue, Borough of Brooklyn. 1786.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5103, Lot 10 in part, consisting of the land on which the described building is situated.

On February 8, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Erasmus Hall Museum and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 72). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Three speakers spoke in favor of designation including the retired principal of Erasmus Hall High School. In a letter, the Board of Education concurred in the proposed designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Erected in 1786, this handsomely proportioned rectangular structure approximately thirty-six feet wide by one hundred feet long shows the hand of a master builder. This interesting wood-framed, clapboard Federal Style building of two and one-half stories has a stone basement and stands in the center of an ivy-towered quadrangle of brick and stone Collegiate Gothic buildings. The facade is divided into three equal divisions with the center section defined by sharply cut corner blocks or quoins. It has a four-columned porch with a low pitched pediment set into the hipped roof. Evenly spaced, delicately scaled blocks punctuate the cornice. The very handsome second floor Palladian window is centered in a row of eight evenly spaced, double hung windows while the front door with its fine side lights and delicate pilasters divides the symmetrically balanced first floor windows likewise. Though remodeled and restored, the building contains many of its original features.

Erasmus Hall began as a private academy in 1787, with funds contributed by John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr and others. The Flatbush Dutch Reformed Church, located across the street, donated the land for the project. It was the first secondary school to be chartered by the Regents of New York State, and it is one of the oldest schools in the country. The Museum contains among other memorabilia the original school bell and the first dictionary bought for the Academy, a 1778 edition of Samuel Johnson's famous work.

#### FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Erasmus Hall Museum has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, Erasmus Hall Museum is a distinguished example of a Federal Style wooden building with many excellent architectural features of the style, that it is one of the oldest secondary schools in the country and that for many years the building played a significant part in the educational life of Brooklyn.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 8-A of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Erasmus Hall Museum, Courtyard of Erasmus Hall High School, between Flatbush Avenue and Bedford Avenue near Church Avenue, Borough of Brooklyn, and designates as its related Landmark Site that part of Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5103, Lot 10 which contains the land on which the described building is situated.