

DR. SAMUEL MACKENZIE ELLIOTT HOUSE, 69 Delafield Place, Staten Island. Built about 1850.

Landmark Site: Borough of Richmond Tax Map Block 137, Lot 51.

On September 13, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Dr. Samuel MacKenzie Elliott House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 27). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Three witnesses spoke in favor of designation including the owner of the property. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Dr. Samuel MacKenzie Elliott House is an excellent example of country Gothic Revival architecture. Constructed of locally quarried random stone, the house was built about 1840 by Dr. Elliott, who was one of this country's early oculists. This house is said to be one of more than twenty-two designed by the doctor. They were all executed in the same style and were of similar design. The walls measure twenty-three inches in thickness, and today the Elliott House is attractively covered with trumpet vine and Virginia creeper. The vines, along with the pleasantly landscaped plot, enhance the picturesque quality of the Gothic architecture.

The house is well-planned and spacious with eight large rooms, an attic area and an enormous cellar. The house is entered at the gable-end of the building. The large entranceway is framed by diamond-shaped colored glass sidelights in blue and orange, and is crowned by a transom displaying glasswork in fan pattern. The gables of the roof are trimmed with attractive, scalloped, wooden vergeboards, originally designed with pendant and finial. The windows have sandstone lintels and are double-hung with the wide vertical central muntins, simulating casements. The second floor of this two and one-half story residence is accented by the introduction of a Gothic pointed arch window. The upper arch of this window once provided light for the attic area.

Dr. Elliott, a young Scot, lived briefly in Manhattan upon arriving in the early eighteen-thirties. His influence became so great on Staten Island's North Shore during the mid-Nineteenth century that the area around this property, which originally extended to the Kill Van Kull, became known for awhile as "Elliottville". The cause of freedom was one of Dr. Elliott's great interests, as well as designing houses. Active in the Abolitionist movement, he reputedly harbored many slaves in his cellar, which was set up with a special fireplace for cooking. He organized the Seventy-ninth Highlanders, a regiment of volunteers, to fight for the North during the Civil War. Dr. Elliott achieved fame as an oculist and eye surgeon, building up a large practice on Manhattan and Staten Island. His patients included John Jacob Astor, Peter Cooper, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Horace Greeley. When Dr. Elliott died in 1875, an obituary in the New York Tribune eulogized him as: "emphatically one of the men who impart the element of the picturesque to common affairs. A person of very strong, original, eccentric character. A man of positive genius in his profession."

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 Dr. Samuel MacKenzie Elliott 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.

The Commission further finds that the Dr. Samuel MacKenzie Elliott House, like the man who designed it, impresses upon the viewer a strong element of the picturesque, that the architectural detail of this vine-covered house creates an impression of charm and warmth which remains with the viewer long after leaving the site, and that this Gothic Revival house is a monument in stone to the accomplishments of the man who built it.

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 Dr. Samuel MacKenzie Elliott House, 69 Delafield Place, Staten Island, Borough of Richmond and designates Tax Map Block 137, Lot 51, Borough of Richmond, as its Landmark Site.