

GARDINER-TYLER HOUSE, 27 Tyler Street, Staten Island. Built about 1835.

Landmark Site: Borough of Richmond Tax Map Block 305, Lot 76.

On September 13, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Gardiner-Tyler House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 33). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Two witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. The owners have indicated to the Commission that they are in favor of the proposed designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This handsome two-story Greek Revival house with four columned front portico is square in shape, five windows wide and shingled. It was originally designed with a cupola. The portico has the low pediment to be found in the finest period of Greek Revival. The architect, working within this style, made use of simplified variations, designing without bases the two-story fluted Corinthian columns that support the front of the pediment. Where it returns to the front wall, handsome vertically placed console brackets support it. A handsome dentilled cornice surrounds the house. The central hall runs from front to rear of the house and contains a fine stairway. The rear wall of the parlor is curved and back to back with the similarly curved wall of the library, the space between being used for closets. The house contains several original fireplaces.

The Gardiner-Tyler House was built about 1835 by Mrs. Elizabeth Racey, upon property that had been formerly operated as a farm by Nathaniel Britton. Originally the residence stood in a grove of white birches.

In New York City, on June 26, 1844, Julia Gardiner, the beautiful, willful daughter of New York State Senator, David Gardiner, became the second wife of the widower John Tyler, President of the United States. She presided at the White House during the crucial closing months of his term, and her portrait is the first of a President's wife to hang in the White House. This Staten Island house had been bought by Mrs. Tyler's mother, Mrs. Juliana Gardiner of New York City and Easthampton, who gave it to her daughter. Julia Gardiner Tyler paid only rare visits to the Staten Island house before 1868, when she came here as widow of the President, who had died in Richmond, Virginia on January 18, 1862. She and her seven Tyler children made this their home, and Staten Island was her legal residence until 1874, when she returned to the south, dying in Richmond in 1889. The house was purchased in 1878 by William M. Evarts, Secretary of State under President Rutherford B. Hayes and previously U. S. Attorney General under President Andrew Johnson.

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 Gardiner-Tyler 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, among its important qualities, the Gardiner-Tyler House displays an attractive variation of the Greek Revival theme which, while provincial in character, was highly distinctive, and that this house was the legal residence of Julia Gardiner Tyler, widow of President John Tyler, and of their seven children.

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 Gardiner-Tyler House, 27 Tyler Street, Staten Island and designates Tax Map Block 305, Lot 76, Borough of Richmond, as its Landmark Site.