

Landmarks Preservation Commission
July 30, 1968, Number 2
LP-0350

EDGEWATER VILLAGE HALL, Tappan Park and Canal Street, Staten Island.
Completed 1889.

Landmark Site: Borough of Richmond Tax Map Block 523, Lot 1 in part and Lot 2 in part, consisting of the land on which the described building is situated.

On September 13, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Edgewater Village Hall and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 39). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Two witnesses spoke in favor of designation including a representative of the Parks Department. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Picturesque and somber in appearance, this late Nineteenth Century Village Hall, with Romanesque Revival influence, is a superb example of Victorian architecture. Built to house the civic functions of an incorporated village, the one and one-half story sturdy brick building has a rugged, individual character. Situated in a small, landscaped public square called Tappan Park, this utilitarian structure, a handsome Victorian municipal building, is a type which is rapidly disappearing from the major metropolitan cities of America.

The front elevation of this T-shaped building has a square tower that rises a short distance above a slate-covered, hipped roof. Very fine brick corbeling embellishes the tower, just below the cornice which crowns the shaft. Above this cornice, a low concave-roofed spire sweeps upward to a pedestal-cap surmounted by a flagpole. A distinctive feature of the building is the unusual treatment of the second floor dormer windows which penetrate the eave line. The building has wide eaves with a very pronounced molded cornice, supported by evenly spaced, fluted brackets with rosettes in square panels between them. At intervals, interrupting this pattern are the dormer windows with double-hung sash, enframed by very large end pieces carried on brackets which rest on a sill supported by brick corbels. These forward-projected brackets, which are carried out to meet the line of the eaves, are of exceptional design.

Most of the first floor windows are paired and set in brick arches. At the spring lines of these arches, the windows are joined together with a brick band course which encircles the building, enhancing and unifying the structure. The lights in the arches, above the square-headed windows, are arched above each window and are each surmounted by a circular light.

The Village of Edgewater was incorporated in 1866, and the Village Hall was built in 1889. A "Descriptive Sketch of Stapleton" published four years later says, "The courtroom is one of the finest on the island, or for that matter, anywhere in the immediate vicinity of New York," and of the building itself "substantial....of brick two stories in height and of a somewhat ornate style of architecturewell adapted to the purpose to which it is devoted." Municipal Court and City Magistrate's Court were held in this Village Hall until new courthouses were erected. The building is used by the Health Department of the City of New York.

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 Edgewater Village Hall 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, Edgewater Village Hall is a distinguished example of Victorian architecture with Romanesque influence, that it has striking and sturdily built individual features, that it is exceptionally well sited and that, as a public building, it has admirably served the civic needs of the community and continues to do so, now housing an important city agency.

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 Edgewater Village Hall, Tappan Park and Canal Street, Staten Island and designates as its related Landmark Site that part of Borough of Richmond Tax Map Block 523, Lot 1 and Lot 2, which contains the land on which the described building is situated.