

RICHARD CORNELL GRAVEYARD, located in the center of the block bounded by Greenport Road, Caffrey Avenue, New Haven Avenue and Mott Avenue and adjacent to 1457 Greenport Road, Queens.

Landmark Site: Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 15574, Lot 10.

On June 23, 1970, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Richard Cornell Graveyard and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 48). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. One witness testified in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Neglected and forgotten for many years, this little graveyard, named after the first white settler in the Rockaways, is one of the few old burial grounds in the City which have survived to the present day.

Richard Cornell (1625-93) was an ironmaster in Flushing. Born in England, he came to this country with his parents who settled in Flushing, where they acquired considerable land. On August 20, 1687, Richard Cornell purchased most of the area now known as Far Rockaway from John Palmer. Two years earlier, Palmer had bought the land from the Indians for 31 pounds, 2 shillings. The deed was signed by two Indian chiefs, Tackapoucha, who lived in Little Neck, and Paman. Richard Cornell, his wife, Elizabeth, and their five sons and two daughters settled in Far Rockaway in 1690. They lived in a large frame house overlooking the ocean, near Beach 19th Street, on a site now occupied by the Hebrew Institute of Long Island.

The cemetery, measuring 75 feet wide by 67 feet deep and enclosed by a high iron picket fence, was used in the 18th and 19th centuries as a private burial ground by the Cornell family. Among the distinguished members of the family who rest here is Thomas Cornell (1703-64), who served for twenty-seven years as a representative from Queens in the Colonial Assembly of the State of New York. Other well known descendants of Richard Cornell include Ezra Cornell (1807-74), founder of Cornell University, and his son Alonzo B. Cornell (1832-1904), speaker of the Assembly in 1873 and governor of the State of New York (1879-82).

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this graveyard, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Richard Cornell Graveyard 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 finds that, among its important qualities, the Richard Cornell Graveyard is one of the few surviving 18th century cemeteries in New York City, that it is the oldest burial ground in Far Rockaway, and that it is closely associated with the Cornell Family, the earliest settlers of the area.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 63 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 Richard Cornell Graveyard, located in the center of the block bounded by Greenport Road, Caffrey Avenue, New Haven Avenue and Mott Avenue and adjacent to 1457 Greenport Road, Borough of Queens and designates Tax Map Block 15574, Lot 10, Borough of Queens, as its Landmark Site.