Landmarks Preservation Commission
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LP-0757

306 STATE STREET HOUSE, Borough of Brooklyn, Built c. 1847.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 176, Lot 13.

On June 23, 1970, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 306 State Street House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 70). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Twenty-six witnesses spoke in favor of historic preservation in the Boerum Hill neighborhood and for the creation of the Boerum Hill Historic District. There were no speakers in opposition to designation of the houses on State Street.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

No. 306 State Street, transitional in style from Greek Revival to Italianate, was built in about 1847 as a pair with No. 308, although the two properties had different owners. Edward Bridge, a merchant who lived at 88 Clinton Street, acquired No. 306 in 1847 for investment purposes after a previous buyer had defaulted on his mortgage. Nos. 306 and 308 were erected by the same builder and were among the first buildings on this block.

These residences were part of the Boerum Hill community which had formed the original Town of Breuckelen founded in 1646 by Dutch colonists. It was incorporated into the larger City of Brooklyn in 1834. The development of Boerum Hill as an urban community began in the 1840s and continued into the 1870s. Many of the houses which remain from this period incorporated Greek Revival and Italianate elements in the design. These houses were built for merchants and professional people, many of whom worked in the Wall Street area or in the vicinity of the Fulton Street ferry.

All the land in this block had originally been part of the Jacob Van Brunt farm. He willed it to his daughter Jane, wife of Samuel T. Gerritsen, in 1824. State Street was originally known as Gerritsen Street. The Gerritsens and the Van Brunts, both old Dutch families, had long been interconnected by marriage and had some of the largest landholdings in Kings County. Charles Hoyt and Russell Nevins, two Manhattan real estate developers with extensive interests in Brooklyn, acquired the properties on this block in 1833. Both Hoyt and Nevins had streets named after them to the east of this block.

This transitional house incorporates the simplicity of a Greek Revival front with various details characteristic of the Italianate style. The basement has two windows with iron grilles and is separated from the parlor floor by a wide stone bandcourse with carved fan-shaped ornaments above each of the two windows. The square-headed entranceway has an arched double door with glass panels and is the most striking feature of the house. The doors are enframed by a spiral leaf molding, and the entrance is crowned by a stone cornice slab supported on foliate brackets, Italianate in character. The two full-height parlor floor windows, and the second floor windows, have stone lintels with cap moldings, typical of the Greek Revival. The Italianate roof cornice is supported on foliate brackets, single at the ends and paired in between. Modillions. and dentil moldings are set between the brackets. The handsome iron yard railing, as well as the handrailings at the stoop, are composed of curvilinear forms, typical of the Italianate. The use of cast-iron ornament in railings became popular in New York City in the 1850s when mass production made them readily available at reasonalbe prices.

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 306 State Street 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 306 State Street House is a fine example of a transitional style of architecture from Greek Revival to Italianate that is one of a handsome pair of houses, that it contributes to the dignity of the street and that this house adds significantly to the overall character of the Boerum Hill community.

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 306 State Street House, Borough of Brooklyn and designates Tax Map Block 176, Lot 13, Borough of Brooklyn, as its Landmark Site.