

Landmarks Preservation Commission
July 15, 1986; Designation List 185
LP-1285

FORMER 50th PRECINCT POLICE STATION HOUSE, (originally the 40th Precinct Police Station House), 3101 Kingsbridge Terrace, Borough of the Bronx. Built 1901-1902; architects Arthur J. Horgan and Vincent J. Slattery.

Landmark Site: Borough of the Bronx Tax Map Block 3257, Lot 111.

On April 13, 1982, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the former 50th Precinct Police Station House, and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 9). The hearing was continued to June 8, 1982 (Item No. 10). Both hearings had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Three witnesses spoke in favor of designation. No witnesses spoke in opposition to designation. Letters have been received in favor of designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Designed in 1900, and built from 1901 to 1902 by the New York architects Arthur J. Horgan and Vincent J. Slattery, the former 50th Precinct Police Station House is prominently sited at the intersection of Kingsbridge Terrace and Summit Place. Its style, scale, materials of construction, direct relation to the street, and ornament contribute to the monumental character, which distinguished the building from the surrounding two- and three-story frame structures of rapidly expanding Kingsbridge. A symbol of the authority of the police force and of the presence of municipal government in early 20th century Kingsbridge, and an exemplar of Beaux-Arts principles of composition, the building should be seen within the context of the City Beautiful Movement.¹ Historical interest in the building further derives from its being among the best surviving works of an architectural firm that was very much in the public eye at the turn-of-the-century.

Development of the Kingsbridge Area

Coincident with the growth of the northwest Bronx generally, the modern development of Kingsbridge and of the area presently known as Kingsbridge Heights dates from the latter half of the 19th century.² Rural and sparsely populated, with a varied topographical character, the Bronx of the 19th century depended for its growth on the gradual subdivision of estates, on changed attitudes respecting the desirability of the area, and on the completion of the Harlem River Railroad, which provided a first impetus to the development of the "north side."³ Kingsbridge formally began to take shape as a residential community in 1847 when the Macomb family's "Island Farm," an extensive tract, was surveyed and subdivided into building lots, which were then sold for development.⁴

Notwithstanding its late development relative to communities on Manhattan Island, Kingsbridge has had a rich history beginning as early as 1609 with the arrival of Henry Hudson on the Spuyten Duyvil peninsula. Apparently, the Dutch had considered siting their projected New Amsterdam colony at Kingsbridge.⁵ The plan was soon abandoned, but by the early 17th century, the Dutch were farming areas on Manhattan as far north as the flatlands of Harlem. It was not long before they began to seek areas into which the population could expand; thus, in addition to disaffected New Englanders, among the first settlers of Westchester County (chartered in 1683) and the Bronx -- the land "upon the Maine" ⁶-- were the Dutch. Indeed, the earliest European settler of the immediate Kingsbridge area was the Dutchman Jonkheer Adrien Van der Donck in 1641. Van der Donck's tract, known as de Jonkheers, included all of the land from Spuyten Duyvil north eight miles along the Hudson River and east to the Bronx River.⁷

The construction of the Boston Post Road in 1673 facilitated travel and communication between Manhattan Island and the northern colonies. Originating in lower Manhattan, the route ran the length of the island, crossed the Spuyten Duyvil Creek, traversed Westchester County and Connecticut, and terminated in Boston. Until 1693 and the construction of the King's Bridge by landowner Vredryck Flypsen, crossing of the Spuyten Duyvil was accomplished by ferry. From the bridge, the Boston Post Road ran to Albany Crescent (which is just north of the old West Farms/Kingsbridge town line), followed Boston Avenue (the original name for that block of Kingsbridge Terrace in which the police station is located), and then veered toward the northeast, crossing the Bronx River at William's Bridge.⁸ Another of the early roads radiating from the location of the King's Bridge and moving north along Bailey Avenue, was the Albany Post Road (opened in 1669 as far as the Sawmill River and in 1700 to Albany), which then continued along the western side of the Van Cortlandt properties.

That the King's Bridge served as the principal passage from the northern tip of Manhattan Island to the Bronx mainland, underlines the significance of the greater Kingsbridge area during Revolutionary times. As the main military artery for the armies of both the British and the Americans, the bridge was under constant attack during those Revolutionary War years when New York City was subject to British occupation (1776-1783).⁹ Boston Hill (the name for the rise in the immediate vicinity of Albany Crescent) was the scene of many battles in the years following 1776, and from 1777 to 1779, the British established a presence at the Van Cortlandt mansion (located on the eastern side of the Albany Post Road).¹⁰

Early indications of the eventual residential development of the area can be seen in the period immediately following the Revolution, at which time, well-to-do New Yorkers focused on the natural beauty of the area with an eye toward moving northward.¹¹ The eventual annexation of the Bronx proceeded in piecemeal fashion and not without opposition: against the incorporation were those Bronx residents who thought that nothing would be gained by aligning themselves with heavily populated Manhattan, and those New Yorkers who saw no advantage to appropriating farmland.¹² Nevertheless, on 1 January 1874, the townships of Kingsbridge, West Farms, and Morrisania formally became the twenty-third and twenty-fourth wards of the City of New York; from that time until 1898, they were known

collectively as the "Annexed District". It was not until 1895, however, that the annexation of the Bronx east of the Bronx River was effected. In 1897, the New York State Legislature passed a charter for the creation of Greater New York City; in 1898, twenty-four local governments including all the annexed districts north of the Harlem River, as well as the boroughs of Brooklyn, Queens, and Richmond (Staten Island) were officially consolidated.¹³

Commenting on building operations in the Bronx and noting a remarkable thirty-three percent increase thereof between 1898 and 1899, a dealer in real estate averred: "as to the future of the borough, that is assured, for the natural trend of the city's growth is northward, and the Bronx with all its proposed improvements will reap a golden harvest."¹⁴ Corroborating his opinion, the Real Estate Record and Guide of 1901 observed that "more families continue to forsake their downtown neighbors for better homes and the purer air and ampler room above the Harlem and especially brisk in the matter of building is [sic] the upper and eastern sections of the Bronx, where both private and tenement houses are springing up."¹⁵ In point of fact, just after 1895 and the annexation of the eastern section, booms in both real estate and population occurred. These were attributable to a combination of factors, the most important being inclusion into the metropolitan area, self-government,¹⁶ and the improvement of transportation.

Bronx Police History and the 50th Precinct

Bronx police history formally began in January 1866 when the Metropolitan Police District, created by an act of the New York State legislature in 1857,¹⁷ established a substation in the Village of Tremont in the Town of West Farms. Previously, police activity in Kingsbridge had been under the jurisdiction of Manhattan's 32nd Precinct (currently the 30th), located at Amsterdam Avenue and 152nd Street. Due to an increase in criminal behavior accompanying the immediate post-Civil War growth of the area, the residents of Yonkers and West Farms had favored incorporation within the Metropolitan Police District. Participation in the State's Metropolitan Police District was not long-lived, however; in 1870, as a result of the reorganization of local government according to the terms of the Tweed Charter, the City reclaimed control of the police department. In the following year, Yonkers withdrew from the Metropolitan Police District and organized a police force of its own. In November 1871, the Yonkers police established a substation at Kingsbridge (the predecessor of the 50th) to serve the precinct extending from the West Farms town line to just south of the present Yonkers city line; an existing frame building, located at Verveelen Place, just east of Broadway and south of 231st Street, was adapted for use as a station house. As a consequence of the separation of the Township of Kingsbridge from the City of Yonkers in 1872, the force headquartered at Kingsbridge was administered by a joint Board of Police Commissioners of Yonkers and Kingsbridge. Following annexation in January 1874, the district constituted of Kingsbridge, Morrisania, and West Farms was divided into two precincts and one sub-precinct of the New York Police Department. Shortly thereafter, the sub-precinct, headquartered at Kingsbridge, came into its own as the 35th Precinct.¹⁸

With the consolidation of 1898, the Police Department of Greater New York

assimilated eighteen small police agencies, and a move was initiated to conform the boundaries of police precincts to the lines of the individual townships. New precincts were created to serve newly annexed areas and to accommodate rapid population increases and building and commercial development in already established ones. In accordance with the general objective of creating a flexible system that would provide for future expansion of the force, several renumberings of Bronx precincts occurred during the next thirty years. Upon consolidation in 1898, Kingsbridge was redesignated the 40th; in January 1918, the 74th; in April of the same year, the 57th; in 1924, the 26th; and on 1 August 1929, the 50th, which it remains to this day.

Despite its changed status upon incorporation into the Greater New York City Police Department, the 40th Precinct (subsequently the 50th) continued to occupy its makeshift quarters at Verveelen Place, which were enlarged in 1886 by taking possession of a two-story frame building to the east. This measure served only as a stopgap, however, for conditions had become progressively unsatisfactory and indeed unsavory. Not only were the quarters cramped, but the basement of the building had flooded so often that the jail had settled out of plumb. A newspaper reporter of the time remarked that "no more unhealthier police station exists in the City of New York than this one,"¹⁹ and in the late 1880s, the Board of Health condemned the building. Nevertheless, although a project for construction of a new facility finally was initiated in 1898, new accommodations would not be had until 1902 when " 'the shanty', as the frame building which . . . sheltered the blue-coated guardians ever since the 40th precinct was established [was] abandoned for a modern structure."²⁰

In a review of the official architecture of New York City, The Real Estate Record and Guide (November 1898) branded municipal architecture a disgrace, deplored its standards, and observed that there appeared to be a tendency to employ builders over professional architects. This situation -- in which "there is not even one architecturally decent police station"²¹ -- began to improve as New York embarked on a citywide reconstruction and renovation campaign to modernize police facilities. The turn of the century enthusiasm for constructing civic monuments provided a further impetus.

Horgan and Slattery were commissioned to design a new 40th Precinct Police Station House sometime between 1898 and fall 1900, although the City of New York did not purchase the land on which the building is situated until 2 October 1900.²² The firm estimated the construction costs for the station house, stables, and a prison, at \$70,000. Plans were filed in December 1900, but approval to proceed was denied due to the omission of tie rods between the steel floor and the spruce beams of the one-story carriage house. The New Building Application was approved on 9 January 1901 only after the architects filed a petition demonstrating that their use of the Roebling System of Fireproof Construction would constitute a sufficient tie in itself.²³ Construction began 18 March 1901 and was completed 16 April 1902.

Horgan and Slattery

From 1894, when The New York Times initially reported on the financial

difficulties of the firm, until the period 1899 to 1903, when the newspaper regularly and eagerly followed the professional lives of Horgan and Slattery, the architects gained more and more notoriety. While political patronage certainly was not an invention of the Tammany administrators, Mayor Robert Van Wyck was overly zealous about stamping the municipal architecture of New York City with the seal of his administration. It appears to have been Van Wyck's intention either to convey all city projects directly to Horgan and Slattery²⁴ or to install them in a consulting capacity over more widely renowned architects such as John Thomas (Hall of Records) or Frederick Withers (City Prison).²⁵ The firm first achieved public recognition with the rehabilitation of the interior of the Democratic Club in 1897. Upon completion of that job, apparently "finding. . . hundreds of odd jobs, large and small. . . for the favored architects."²⁶

Queries from a perhaps overly critical press respecting any architect's professional qualifications or lack thereof are not in themselves objectionable.²⁷ However, in the case of Horgan and Slattery, the situation was rather more complicated as the attacks became a vehicle for denouncing the Van Wyck administration generally and pertained very little, if at all, with a fair assessment of the firm's work. In order to bolster their charges of corruption in the Van Wyck administration, the press seized upon the seeming irregularity in the relationship between the architects and the administration, claiming that the firm name had become "a trademark of municipal disrepute and jobbery".²⁸ Horgan and Slattery were characterized as political pawns "who had no standing artistic, political, scientific, or financial [but were] used as the cat's paw of politicians anxious to get control of municipal building in New York. . ."²⁹ Despite the scandals surrounding the firm, political affiliations carried the day, for "on the death of the architect J.R. Thomas, the contract for the completion of the Hall of Records was granted to the favorite Tammany contractors Horgan and Slattery in spite of strong denunciation of such action."³⁰

Considered cogs in a great political machine and sarcastically dubbed the "universal solvents" or experts in all fields of architecture, the firm was taken to task for lapsed professional and moral responsibilities:

The new city administration has acted none too soon and with none too much severity in the cases of those two "devouring absurdities" Horgan and Slattery. Two self-respecting men in their places -- but that is unimaginable. Two self-respecting men could never occupy their places. But two men with not more than twice the average thickness of skin would have got out, when Tammany was defeated, without waiting to be kicked out amid the cheers of the bystanders.³¹

Upon his election in 1902, Mayor Seth Low called for the "dishorganizing and unslatterifying" of municipal architecture and insisted that "all business relations between the city and Horgan and Slattery, who received the award of all city contracts during the administration of Mayor Van Wyck should be terminated as soon as possible."³² Mayor Low's administration adopted a hardline position according to which it would be preferable to pay damages in court than to honor any outstanding contracts with the architects.

Although ethics rather than aesthetics constituted the point of departure for the accusations in the local press -- there having been very little critical coverage of the design work -- the artistic capabilities of the architects were fair game as well. Nevertheless, the firm's rise to prominence, even in the context of its alleged association with the great turn-of-the-century New York City Democratic party machine, cannot nullify the inherent value of their designs, which, in large part, combined classical vocabularies and Beaux-Arts principles of composition. The Architects' and Builders' Magazine of January 1907 recognized that, "[J. R. Thomas'] work has been carried on in praiseworthy fashion by Messrs. Horgan and Slattery who have added to Mr. Thomas' brilliant conception much of the virility of design which characterizes their other well-known masterpieces."³³

Scant biographical information exists on the two architects. Photographs or drawings of a fair number of their projects were published in architectural journals, but accompanying text is rare. Arthur J. Horgan (1868-1911) and Vincent J. Slattery (1867-1939) entered into partnership in 1886. Until 1897, the New York City Directory listed them as **builders**; interestingly, in the 1898 edition, they emerged as **architects**. Evidently, they had incorporated as such and were working out of an office at 1 Madison Avenue. Apart from Horgan's testimony in 1899³⁴ before the Mazet Committee that he had studied architecture for five years in the offices of his godfather, Colonel Arthur Crooks,³⁵ virtually nothing is known about the professional educations of the architects. Slattery testified that the "outside work" of the firm was his responsibility, while Horgan assumed the "inside work"; he also referred all technical questions to Horgan. In the absence of conclusive information concerning their respective positions in the firm, which would elucidate Slattery's statement, one may speculate either that Horgan was the principal designer and Slattery the business partner, or that Horgan dealt with structural questions and Slattery with interior embellishment. Following Horgan's death in 1911, Slattery went into business for himself, retiring in 1934.

The Design

The former 50th Precinct Police Station House is a handsome example of Beaux-Arts classicism, a mode of design that characterized much public architecture at the turn-of-the-century and became the emblem of the City Beautiful Movement. Although clearly indebted to the architectural styles of the past, the design does not endeavor to replicate historical models exactly, nor did such archaeological accuracy underlie the historicism of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Rather, the elements are derived from classical prototypes but are freely interpreted and ingeniously combined. Typologically, the building refers to an Italian Renaissance urban palace; the ornament is eclectic.

Horgan and Slattery approached the design of this small (relative to the grandest examples of the style in New York City, among them the Public Library and Grand Central Station) but imposing building in an imaginative way. The building dominates its site; further, it is the dominant architectural feature on the primarily residential block. The architects' masterful handling is demonstrated in the sensitivity to the site, an

understanding of the rules of Beaux-Arts composition, the use of ornament, and the adaptation of an ancient but particularly appropriate building type to a modern use. Their studied application of Beaux-Arts principles is evident in the clear articulation of the parts of the building, the bilateral symmetry, the clearly marked and elaborated openings, the hierarchy of constituent elements in the facades, the play of advancing and receding planes, and the consistency of the articulation.

The form of the building refers to two distinct phases in the evolution of the Italian Renaissance urban palace. The 15th-century palace, such as the Pitti or the Medici, with its massive presence, direct relation with the street, and rusticated base, is an appropriate model for the expression of such values as power, security, invulnerability, and monumentality, which, surely in the public mind, are associated with the police force. Strengthening this association are the horizontal extension of the station house, which intensifies the image of its being firmly wedded to its site, and the battlements or crenellations of the roof parapet. The horizontal lines of the building are reiterated in the surface treatment on every level of the facades: by the granite base; by the continuous channels of the recessed brick courses; by the lines of the windows; by the projecting stringcourses; by the continuous cornice, which is distinguished from the fabric of the building both in color, texture and materials; by the roof parapet, which is defined as a series of advancing and receding planes. In the 16th-century type, exemplified by the design for the House of Raphael by Bramante, the ground story rustication is mediated by the application of architectural ornament in the upper stories, which is also the case here.

Description

The Kingsbridge Terrace of today, which is rather an unprepossessing street lined with detached houses as well as low-rise apartments, does not figure prominently in the street system of the Bronx, or even of Kingsbridge. This was not always the case, however. From the 18th century until 1913, that portion of Kingsbridge Terrace north of what is presently Albany Crescent, was known as Boston Avenue, the name deriving from its having been a segment of the Boston Post Road. As the east/west section of the almost elliptical Albany Crescent (running roughly perpendicular to the present Bailey Avenue) was also a part of Boston Avenue, and Bailey Avenue formed part of the Albany Post Road, the station house is in close proximity to the intersection of two historically significant roads, and at the crest of Boston Hill.

From the street, the building appears as a massive two-story masonry block. In plan, however, it is a "U", oriented southward such that its eastern arm forms the principal or Kingsbridge Terrace facade, and its base (at the north) constitutes the secondary or Summit Place facade. The principal facade is 83 feet in length and two stories in height; the secondary facade is 119 feet in length and three stories in height, only two of which are expressed, corresponding to those on the principal facade. The juncture of the eastern and northern facades is mediated by a curved corner treatment. This transitional element, the articulation of whose second story departs from those of both street facades, constitutes the focal point of the composition if the building is viewed obliquely from the northeast. The focal point, shifts, however to the center bay of the principal facade if

the building is viewed directly from the east or obliquely from the south; from either vantage point, the corner construction is virtually invisible. In both cases, the corner element and the axis of symmetry (formed of the entry, the parapet directly above it, the window in the second story, the plaque identifying the building) provide vertical accents in an otherwise horizontally disposed composition. The principal facade consists of five bays, the central three flanked by projecting end bays in the north and south. This "ABA" rhythm is repeated in the secondary facade with the difference that the projecting end bays flank a central section of seven bays. Three bays define the curved corner section.

Gamboge bricks, which are variegated in hue and are laid in Flemish bond, constitute the veneers of the facades, including the southern wall of the eastern arm of the "U". The contrasting limestone members of the windows, door, stringcourses, and columns, the granite of the base, the terra-cotta ornament, and the green tin denticulated Doric cornice create an impressive polychromatic image.

Like the urban palaces of the Italian Renaissance, the two stories are differentiated in characteristic ways: a projecting stringcourse composed of a series of classical moldings (the lowermost of which is egg and dart) literally cuts the building in half horizontally; the elaboration of the second story contrasts with the relatively unadorned ground story; the individual bricks in the second story are slightly more saturated in color than those in the first; and the apparent rustication of the ground story, achieved by recessing one course in every seven, is abandoned at the first stringcourse, above which the wall is planar.

In keeping with the unadorned character of the ground story are the openings, which receive identical articulation in both facades, in the corner, and on the southern side of the eastern arm. They differ only in their proportions: those in the north facade are squatter than those in the projecting bays and in the principal facade, and those in the curved section and the eastern arm are more attenuated. The sash is one-over-one double-hung aluminum surmounted by a fixed pane of glass. The openings are unframed, vertically-oriented rectangles with flat-arch brick lintels and limestone sills with classical contours. A console at either end of the sill provides support, and a console serves as keystone in the flat arch (the console keystone is omitted in the outermost bays of the curved unit).

There are three distinct window treatments in the second story, although the sash remains constant. While the same size as those in the east, the windows in the north side are the least elaborate, treated in much the same way as those on the ground story. Replacing the consoles, however, are wedge-shaped limestone keystones that are articulated in three dimensions. One such opening marks the second story of the southern side of the eastern arm. The windows of the corner element are squeezed within the intercolumniations of four Roman Doric, unfluted columns on bases, the two end ones of which are engaged; a series of classical moldings constitutes the lintels. The surface bounded by the upper edge of each lintel and the lower edge of the second story stringcourse is pierced by a round window enframed with a terra-cotta wreath; the corners are enlivened with foliate terra-cotta forms.

All windows in the second stories of both the principal facade and the

projecting bays are aedicular in type. The aediculae, which frame the windows, are constituted of a series of freely interpreted classical elements including flanking pilasters, which are articulated with deep channels running vertically from the base, a capital, impost block, and lintel of classical moldings. The window sill is tripartite: at either end, a segment projects slightly to form a base for the pilasters. A console with pendant foliate and vegetal ornament decorates each pilaster from just above mid-height to the capital. The window extends from the sill to the top of the capital; in the space that is roughly the height of the impost block and extends from the capital to the egg and dart molding of the lintel, is a flat, blank plaque. The panel duplicates on a reduced scale the one crowning the axis of symmetry in the principal facade, which is inscribed with the name of the precinct. Each aedicula of the projecting bays is enframed by a larger aedicula, which is vestigial in that it is composed of thick pilasters that are simply projections of the brick fabric. Elaborating each pilaster are a cartouche, festoon, and pendant foliate form, placed in series within a vertically-oriented rectangular panel.

The axis of symmetry in the principal elevation serves a dual function: it divides the facade into two equal and opposite parts, and it creates a strong central focus. The double doors are preceded by two granite steps set between granite blocks, upon which originally were lampposts. Rectangular hollow metal double doors, which have been painted bright red, with a transom on which the name of the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center has been painted in white, are placed within a basket or depressed arch with prominent brick voussoirs. A large, elaborate stone cartouche serves as the keystone. Flanking the arch, large ancones with foliate ornament, surmounted by impost blocks, support the stringcourse, which breaks forward from the plane of the building at the entry. Directly above, a parapet is elaborated by a blank panel flanked by two triglyph-like elements surmounted by scrolls. The triglyph/scroll unit (which resembles a section of fluted pilaster) supports a projecting molding along the upper edge of the parapet. Flanking each of the triglyph/scrolls is an S-shaped scroll in bas-relief. The uppermost element of the axis is a plaque identifying the building as the 50th Precinct Police Station House. The limestone plaque is a horizontally disposed rectangle; a continuous egg and dart molding serves as a border. A tripartite guttae-like feature dangles from each side of the lower edge of the panel. A block with a console in its center projects from the center of the lower edge of the inscribed panel.

The facade of the western arm of the "U" is undistinguished and virtually invisible from any street. The brick wall is punctuated by windows in the second story.

Alterations to the exterior have been few and have not significantly affected the street facades.³⁶ The police moved from the building to their current location at 3450 Kingsbridge Avenue in December 1974; the present tenant, the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center, took possession in summer 1975. In 1979, with funding from the New York City Capital Budget and the Federal Community Development Budget, the Community Center embarked on a major rehabilitative program, which was completed in 1981. Undertaken by the New York architects, Edelman and Salzman, most of the alterations were in the nature of adapting the interior spaces to new uses and upgrading

systems. The architects were sensitive to the original exterior; the north and east facades of the building remain virtually untouched. The terra-cotta band courses were partially repointed; the existing wooden entrance doors and frames were replaced with hollow metal doors and frame, and the transom was closed; a new wrought iron gate to the courtyard was installed at the south end of the Kingsbridge Terrace facade; the wooden windows were replaced with aluminum ones, and stainless steel security screens were placed on every opening.

Unfortunately, the material condition of the exterior appears to be steadily deteriorating. The cornice, a section of which is missing from the curved elevation, shows an advanced state of erosion especially on the underside. Spalling marks the limestone members of the windows, door, stringcourses, as well as the terra-cotta ornament, and large pieces of the window sills have broken off.

Report prepared by
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NOTES

1. The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago, with its "White City" of harmoniously designed and hierarchically grouped classical buildings, initiated a wave of new thinking about urban planning in the United States or the City Beautiful Movement. Attention was drawn to the aesthetic character of urban spaces, and the designs of cities and buildings alike were considered appropriate vehicles for the expression of civic pride. Scores of new classical buildings were constructed, both as part of civic or cultural centers or individually to house such public institutions as libraries, museums, courthouses, banks, and galleries.
2. The boundaries of the present community of Kingsbridge (the 50th Precinct Police Station House technically falls within Kingsbridge Heights) are not conterminous with those of the township designated in 1872. At that time, the northern boundary was the line from the Hudson River to the Bronx River separating the Bronx from Yonkers; the southern, the northern line of the old Fordham Manor, from the Harlem River at 230th Street to a point on the Bronx River between First and Second Avenues, Williamsbridge and Spuyten Duyvil Creek; the western, the Hudson River. Although the hilly character of Kingsbridge is much the same today as it was in the nineteenth century, other aspects of the geography have changed. Originally, the area of the present community was known as Kingsbridge Island, as it was entirely surrounded by water. Tibbett's Brook, (the Mosholu River) which was dammed to form Van Cortlandt Lake, flowed across Broadway at 240th Street and joined the Spuyten Duyvil Creek near 230th Street and Irwin Avenue. A tidewater inlet running north from the Harlem River east of and parallel to Broadway and eventually joining Tibbett's Brook formed the eastern boundary of the area. The aboriginal, or Weckguasgeek Indian, name for Kingsbridge Island was Papparimemo, which meant "Place of False Starts"; the allusion is to the tides caused by the Harlem and Hudson Rivers, which run counter to one another. For further information about the original communities, see William A. Tieck, Riverdale, Kingsbridge, Spuyten Duyvil New York City: A Historical Epitome of the Northwest Bronx (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1968); John McNamara, History in Asphalt: The Origin of Bronx Street and Place Names (New York: Bronx County Historical Society, 1984); and Benedict Fitzpatrick, The Bronx and Its People: A History 1609-1927 (New York: The Lewis Historical Publishing Company Inc., 1927).
3. "Completion of the railroad gave an impetus to the section through which it passed [Morrisania, West Farms, Fordham, Eastchester] and the growth of the borough may be dated from 1842, the lower portions building up first as being nearer the great city." Fitzpatrick, p. 295.

Reference to the Bronx as the North Side was commonplace from 1874 until about 1902. Edgar Allen Poe, a resident of Fordham between the years 1845 and 1849, observed: "the whole region of country bordering the Hudson River, north of Spuyten Duyvil was until a very recent period occupied by isolated residences and grand estates, some of them embracing several thousand acres. . . . Gradually these extensive tracts

were subdivided, leaving still, however, large areas in the possession of single individuals. Many of these smaller estates have undergone a process of improvement and embellishment, until the lordly mansions of the Hudson have become famed on both sides of the Atlantic for their beauty and picturesque surroundings." Quoted in Fitzpatrick, p. 310.

4. In 1789, Alexander Macomb purchased the island of Kingsbridge, and named it Island Farm. Sections of the land were passed through the family for generations, until 1847, when Mary C.P. Macomb sold the land, which bordered present day Broadway on both sides from about 230th to 238th Street. Tieck, p. 37.
5. Tieck, p. 3.
6. Fitzpatrick, p. 57. In other words, mainland.
7. Yonkers (the elision and corruption of de Jonkheers) was incorporated as a town in 1872; Kingsbridge remained a part of Yonkers until December of the same year. Then the area from the Bronx River to the Hudson River and from Yonkers to Spuyten Duyvil Creek and the Town of West Farms was designated as the Township of Kingsbridge. For a general history of the area, see Tieck and Fitzpatrick.

Although Adrien Van der Donck was the first European to settle north of the Harlem River and Spuyten Duyvil Creek, the name of the borough derives from that of Jonas Bronck. Bronck, a Dutch citizen of Swedish or Danish origin, purchased a total of five hundred acres on the southern shoreline of the Bronx from the Dutch West India Company and from the Wecksguasgeek Indians in 1640. His house was located in the vicinity of 132nd Street and Lincoln Avenue. The Bronx River, which had been known to the Indians as the Aquahung, was a natural boundary between the Wecksguasgeek Indians on the West and the Siwanoy Indians on the east. See Fitzpatrick, Chapter III "Settlement by Europeans", and McNamara.

8. The King's Bridge was located at 230th Street and Kingsbridge Avenue. It remained until 1916 when the Spuyten Duyvil Creek was filled in. (Tieck, xv.) In the vicinity of Gun Hill and White Plains Roads, and located within the 19th century settlement of Williamsbridge, the William's Bridge facilitated passage from the West Bronx to Eastchester. It was named for John Williams, who in the early 1700s, owned a farm on the east bank of the Bronx River. McNamara, p. 544.
9. In 1776, General Washington's army moved northwards on Manhattan Island and into the Bronx, retreating from the British. In anticipation of such an event, sections of the Bronx, including Kingsbridge and Morrisania, had been fortified by the Americans. September 1775 saw the evacuation of patriots from Manhattan, and by mid-October, the largest part of the American army, was stationed on the Kingsbridge heights. Nevertheless, by the end of October, the continued advance of the British forced the Americans to evacuate Kingsbridge for White Plains. Tieck, pp. 29 and 35.
10. McNamara, p. 319.

11. Fitzpatrick, p. 805.
12. Fitzpatrick, p. 349.
13. Tieck.
14. "Prosperity of the Bronx," The New York Times, December 17, 1899, p. 15.
15. The Real Estate Record and Guide, Untitled, September 7, 1901, p. 287.
16. Subsequent to their withdrawal from Yonkers, the communities of the Bronx initiated elections for their own town officers.
17. The Metropolitan Police District brought various functions of the municipal police departments of New York, Brooklyn, Queens, Westchester, and Richmond counties under state control. In addition to the most obvious justification -- to improve police protection due to increased crime -- a political issue facilitated the change. The predominantly Republican state legislature hoped to prevent the Democratic administration of New York City (then composed only of Manhattan Island) from using its control of the police force to guarantee political victories. For obvious reasons then, it was in the interest of the Tweed administration to reclaim control of the police force. For a complete history of the New York City police department from its origins to the turn of this century, see James F. Richardson, The New York Police: Colonial Times to 1901 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Sol Elbaum, "The Police Precincts of the Bronx," Bronx County Historical Society Journal, 21 (Spring 1984); James J. Green and Alfred J. Young, "The Finest -- A Brief History of the New York City Police Department," FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, December 1976, pp. 16-26.

The Republicans had viewed the consolidation of Greater New York City in much the same light: they hoped to increase Republican influence in city affairs. Their hopes were dashed however in 1897 with the extension of the mayoral term from two to four years and with the election of the Tammany candidate, Robert Van Wyck, as the first mayor of Greater New York City.

18. The number, which in 1874 was the highest of any precinct, signified its being the northernmost post of the city's police department. Tieck, p. 84.
19. Quoted in Tieck, p. 89.
20. "New Station for Kingsbridge," The New York Times, February 10, 1901, p. 14.
21. "New Fire Engine Houses," The Real Estate Record and Guide, November 5, 1898, p. 652. The author is not indicated.
22. "50th Precinct: Past. . .and Present," The Riverdale Press, 2/27/75, pp. 5-17. Evidently, plans to replace the station house at Verveelen Place were initiated in 1898.

The lot, which is essentially rectangular save its attenuated northeast corner, is situated at the southwest corner of the intersection of Summit Place and Kingsbridge Terrace. In each of the documents, the dimensions of the lot are given from the corner formed by the intersection of the westerly line of Boston Avenue (Kingsbridge Terrace) and the southerly line of Summit Place running west along Summit Place 139 52/100 feet; then south and at right angles to Summit Place 104 feet; then east and along the land formerly belonging to Charles Darke 116 feet 6 inches to the westerly side of Boston Avenue; and finally north along Boston Avenue and to the point of beginning 102 57/100 feet. There are slight discrepancies between the dimensions as described in the deed and those outlined on Bronx land maps and on documents relating to the building of the police station. In each of the latter, the dimension along the southern line of the lot is 119 feet, exceeding that described in the conveyance by something less than three feet; the 1893 land map records the western side of the lot as 104.76 feet and the eastern as 103.57 feet; the New Building Application described the dimension along Summit Place as 140 feet.

All of the land within the bounds of the ellipse formed by Albany Crescent at one time belonged to Charles Darke. Already by 1885, according to the 1885 Atlas of the City of New York, some of the land had been subdivided including that parcel on which the station house would be constructed. Evidently, Darke was the first butcher in Kingsbridge and had built a slaughterhouse in the vicinity of Summit Place and Kingsbridge Terrace. He had purchased the land in 1845 from James Cole, whose father, Jacob (the postmaster of Fordham), had bought forty-six acres north and east of the intersection of Bailey Avenue and Albany Crescent in the 1820s. Tieck, p. 39.

Four different conveyances were recorded on 2 October 1900 for the same parcel of land: \$4,250 each was awarded the estates of Arthur Clinchy and Jennie Clinchy Johnston; both Jennie P. Clinchy (Arthur's widow) and Robert B. Johnston (who served as executor for the estates of Arthur Clinchy and Jennie Clinchy Johnston) ceded their claims to the property for one dollar each. Evidently, two buildings were on the site at the time of purchase, although there is no mention to this effect in the deeds; the New Building Application specifies demolition of two frame buildings, one of them a stable.

New York City, Department of Buildings, Bronx. New Building Permit 1259 of 1900, Plans, Permits, and Dockets.

See also Bronx County. Liber Deeds and Mortgages.

23. New Building Application 6 December 1900. The building is listed in a pamphlet published by the Roebling Construction Company and entitled Fireproof Buildings: The Roebling System. One of a number of fireproof construction methods developed in the late 19th century, the Roebling System was based on the use of Portland Cement concrete for floors and partitions.
24. "Then came the Tammany deluge and the attempt to convey to a firm of insolvent incompetents absolutely all the public architecture of the city. The new City Prison was more or less horganized and slatterified

as to its interior, and a strong attack was made upon the new Hall of Records." "Hall of Records," The New York Times, September 1, 1900, p. 4.

25. The editorial in The New York Times goes on to suggest that were Horgan and Slattery architects of standing, they would have been subject to professional discipline for "the shameless way in which they allowed themselves to be used to put architects of unquestioned standing and ability out of appointments which they had fairly earned by professional labor. They would not have allowed themselves to be put forward as universal solvents, as experts in all fields of architecture and landscape gardening, when they had no reputation in any. Most of all, they would not have allowed themselves to be surrounded in all their professional work for the city by the odor of jobbery and the suspicion of rake-off." "Horgan and Slattery," The New York Times, January 25, 1902, p. 8.
26. "Horgan and Slattery Succeed J.R. Thomas," The New York Times, September 12, 1901, p. 5. The commissions on public buildings ranged from a \$100 alteration to a \$4,000,000 Hall of Records. "Horgan and Slattery Chuckle with Glee," The New York Times, March 8, 1903, p. 12.
27. "Why should these persons be regarded by the City Government of New York not merely as the leaders of a profession in which not one reputable practitioner in a hundred ever so much as heard of them before the city took them up, but as the universal specialists in that profession?" "Horgan and Slattery," The New York Times, August 2, 1899, p. 6.
28. "Horgan and Slattery", The New York Times, March 4, 1902, p. 8.

It must be mentioned that the practice of commissioning a particular architect or firm to design a series of city buildings was not, in itself, unusual. As early as 1887, Napoleon Le Brun was retained to design firehouses, and C.B.J. Snyder is known for his New York City public schools. The appointment of Arthur J. Horgan and Vincent J. Slattery, who enjoyed semi-official status as city architects during the years of the Van Wyck administration and thus received numerous commissions from the City, must be seen within this context.

29. Editorial reply to a letter from Hugh J. Barron, The New York Times, January 28, 1902, p. 6.
30. The New York Daily Tribune, 9/12 and 9/17/01.
31. "Horgan and Slattery," The New York Times, January 25, 1902, p. 8.
32. "Board of Estimate's Work," The New York Times, March 4, 1902, p. 16.
33. "The New Hall of Records," The Architects' and Builders' Magazine, 39 (January 1907), 154.
34. The Mazet Committee was mandated to investigate corruption in city government, and, in this instance, to establish exactly the nature of the relations between Horgan and Slattery and the City. "Mazet

Committee's Work: Relations between Horgan and Slattery and the City Looked Into," The New York Times, August 2, 1899, p. 5.

35. Born in England, Arthur Crooks arrived in the United States sometime prior to the Civil War. He worked as a draftsman in Richard Upjohn's office and completed work on St. Thomas' Church following Upjohn's death. Shortly thereafter, he established his own office. Crooks designed the parsonage for the Sacred Heart of Jesus Roman Catholic Church at 457 West 51st Street (1880); Napoleon LeBrun designed a new church in 1884. Information respecting Horgan's tenure in Crook's office is unavailable. Withey, p. 150.
36. In 1913, the addition of a one-story forage house to the carriage house extended the building about twenty feet to the south along the west side. Also in that year, the parapet walls of the forage house were brought into line with those of the adjoining carriage house, defective sections of the south wall of the wagon house and of the retaining wall were removed, and the northerly wall was faced with Portland Cement mortar. The carriage and forage houses were converted to garages to house the precinct's automobiles, which were acquired around 1930.

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 former 50th Precinct Police Station 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 former 50th Precinct Police Station House is an impressive example of turn-of-the-century civic architecture by Arthur J. Horgan and Vincent J. Slattery; that the monumental character forcefully symbolized the presence of municipal government and the authority of the New York Police Department in the rapidly expanding community; that the scale of the building relative to the two- and three-story frame structures that originally surrounded it, its prominent site, its materials of construction, the architects' choice of historic prototypes, and the adherence to Beaux-Arts principles of composition contribute to its monumentality; that the skillful combination of brick, terra-cotta ornament, tin, and stone results in impressive polychromatic and textural effects; and that the building is among the best surviving works of an architectural firm whose connections with city government secured it a great number of architectural commissions between 1898 and 1902.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 21, Section 534, 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 former 50th Precinct Police Station House, 3101 Kingsbridge Terrace, Borough of the Bronx and designates Tax Map Block 3257, Lot 111, Borough of the Bronx, as its Landmark Site.

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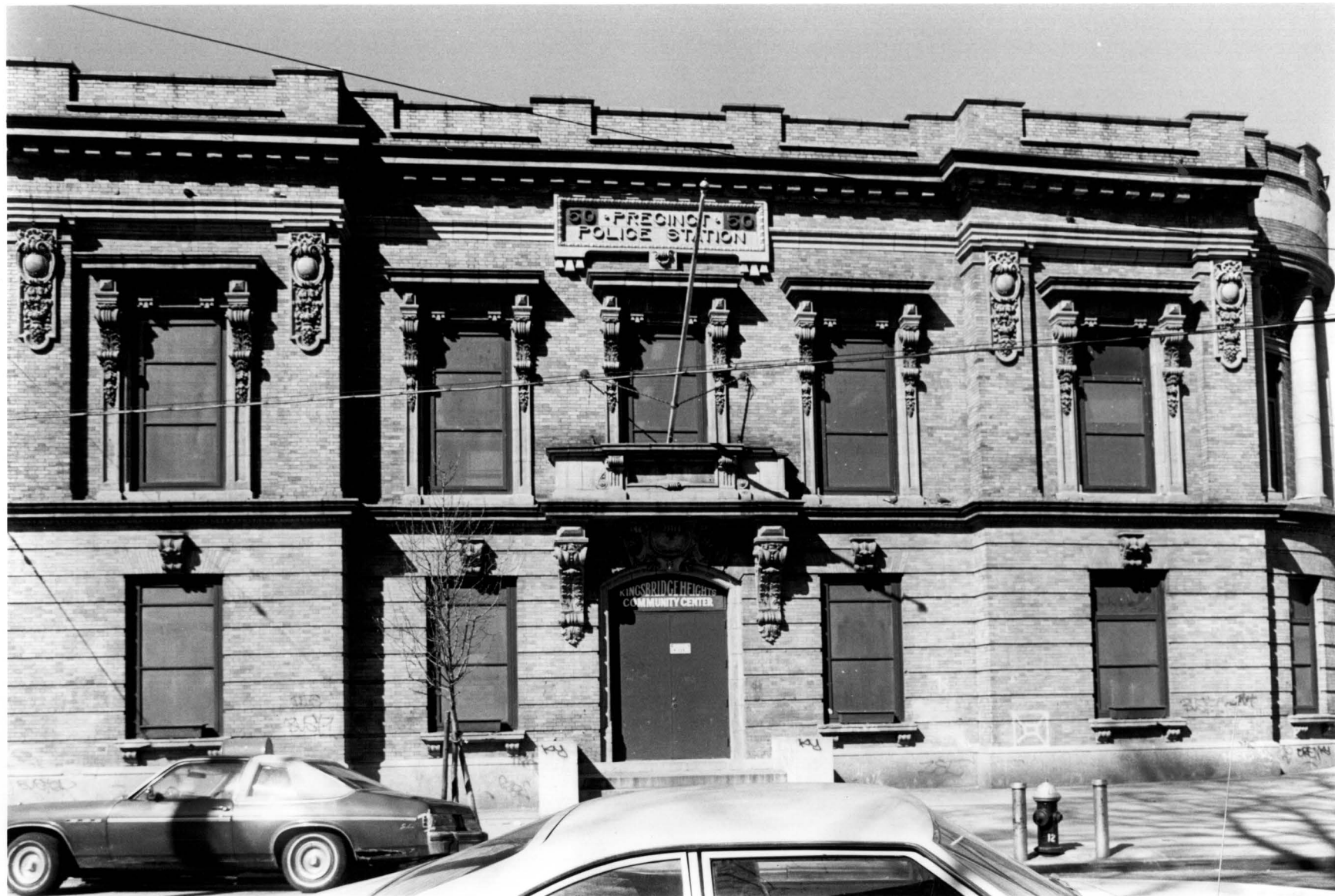


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