

Landmarks Preservation Commission
April 5, 1994; Designation List 258
LP-1886

VAN SCHAICK FREE READING ROOM / HUNTINGTON FREE LIBRARY AND READING ROOM,

9 Westchester Square, The Bronx.

Built 1882-83; Frederick Clarke Withers, architect.

Addition 1890-92; William Anderson, architect.

Landmark Site: Borough of The Bronx Tax Map Block 3981, Lot 2 in part, consisting of the land on which the described building is situated.

On June 2, 1992, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Van Schaick Free Reading Room/(now) Huntington Free Library and Reading Room (Item No. 2). The hearing was continued to Dec. 8, 1992 (Item No. 1). Both hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A total of six witnesses at both hearings spoke in favor of the proposed designation. A representative of the Library stated that the trustees of the Library would support the designation. The commission has received one letter in support of designation.¹

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Summary

Built in 1882-83, the Van Schaick Free Reading Room was designed by the prominent architect, Frederick Clarke Withers, and is one of his few surviving works in New York City. The library was a gift from Peter C. Van Schaick, a local philanthropist, to the village of Westchester, twelve years before its annexation to the City of New York as part of what became the Borough of the Bronx. Though Withers is best known for his work in the flamboyant High Victorian Gothic style, his design for the Westchester Square library, which dates to the latter part of his career, illustrates a return to the simpler monochromatic brickwork and asymmetrical massing of his earlier Gothic Revival designs, while the simplicity of form and round-arched tower entrance evoke the contemporary work of H.H. Richardson. Citizens of the village refused Van Schaick's gift, claiming the cost of building maintenance was too much for the village to absorb, and the library remained vacant until 1890 when railroad tycoon Collis P. Huntington, who lived in nearby Throggs Neck, purchased, enlarged, and endowed the institution, renaming it after himself. The sympathetic 1890-92 addition, designed by William Anderson, continues the materials and design details of the earlier building, and is distinguished by its robust chimney adorned with terra-cotta tiles. The Huntington Free Library and Reading Room stands today as a small, picturesque survivor of the old village of Westchester; it was the first library built in the area and continues to serve the residents of the east Bronx.

Early History of Westchester Square

The Van Schaick Free Reading Room/Huntington Free Library is located on Westchester Square which has a long and politically important history. The area around the square was originally settled as a Dutch outpost in the early 1600s and developed into a village called Oostdorp, a name which "meant East Village and denoted its location east of the colony of Nieuw Amsterdam."² After 1650 the village was absorbed by the British expansion southwest from New England and renamed West Chester.

The village, one of the first settlements in what later became the County of Westchester, was strategically situated at the head of Westchester Creek. When the province of New York was divided into counties in 1683, Westchester village became the county seat of Westchester County. By 1696 the village was such a vital commercial and social center that the colonial legislature incorporated it as a borough-town and a town hall was built very near present-day Westchester Square.³ Courts were held at this location until November 6, 1759, when the county seat and court were moved to White Plains. The town of Westchester became one of the twenty-one townships of Westchester County, following the 1788 decree by the New York State legislature that all counties be divided into townships. In 1895 the town of Westchester was annexed to New York City and in 1898 it was officially designated as part of the Borough of the Bronx.

One of the earliest references to the square and town as a social hub is in an Act of the Colonial Assembly, described as follows:

By an act of May 11, 1693, it was ordered that 'a public and open market' should be held on every Wednesday of the week in the same town, and further, that there should be a fair held in the said town yearly upon the second Tuesday in May and to last four days, or to end on the Friday following, 'to which fair it shall and may be likewise lawful for all and every person to go and frequent.'⁴

In addition to the town hall, the village green (in the area of present-day Westchester Square) was home to the St. Peter's Episcopal congregation, whose first church was erected around 1700. The present Gothic Revival style St. Peter's Church (1855) and

Chapel (1868) were designed by Leopold Eidlitz.⁵ Revolutionary period maps dating to 1776 show rebel encampments near the Square, and soldiers from this war were buried in Saint Peter's Cemetery.⁶

Westchester Square was located near the boat landing at the present-day juncture of Westchester and Tremont avenues. Westchester Avenue at the south and west side of the square was a very old road which partially overlaid a former Indian trail.⁷ In pre-Revolutionary times it connected the Manor of Morrisania to the town of Westchester. It was already known as the Southern Westchester Turnpike by the time it was semi-graded in 1867.

During the nineteenth century the number of businesses, public markets and fairs increased. On area maps of 1868 and 1872 many buildings (presumably businesses) line the perimeter of the square and School Number One is depicted on the site of the present-day subway station. The town hall was located on Tremont Avenue, north of the present square. Although commercial and institutional buildings were clustered in the immediate vicinity of the square itself, by the time the library was built in the early 1880s, the surrounding area was still rural, characterized by farms and estates.⁸

On nineteenth-century maps, the triangular lot upon which the library is situated was part of the property of the William Adees Estate. By the time the 1890-92 library addition was built, maps of the area delineate a street grid pattern and the subdivision of land into building lots. The configuration of the square and the street pattern as they exist today appear on a map from 1908. In 1917 the IRT Lexington Avenue elevated train was extended and a station was constructed at Westchester Square, spurring speculative residential development in the area. Today this area has a dense, urban character which is in marked contrast to its rural past.

The Van Schaick Free Reading Room (1882-83), later enlarged and renamed the Huntington Free Library and Reading Room (1890-91), was the first library edifice in this area of the Bronx. As a privately endowed reading room, it served the residents of the east Bronx and was Westchester Square's only library until 1937, when the New York Public Library established a branch which was built on the square proper (and is now demolished).

The History of the Van Schaick Free Reading Room/
Huntington Free Library⁹

The Huntington Free Library and Reading Room, at 9 Westchester Square, was designed and built in two stages; the original Van Schaick Free Reading Room was erected in 1882-83 with funds left in the will of Peter C. Van Schaick, a wealthy retired resident of nearby Throggs Neck (located within the area of the village of Westchester), and eight years later the building was enlarged and endowed by Collis P. Huntington.

The story of the library begins on February 24, 1880, with the death of Peter C. Van Schaick, who having pursued a successful career directing the firm of Van Schaick, Adams & Company, New York tobacco merchants, left a will with many generous donations (most were to Episcopal charities). One of these promised that \$15,000 from his estate was to be set aside for the erection of a free reading room which was to be donated to the citizens of Westchester upon its completion.¹⁰

The executors of Van Schaick's estate hired the prominent American architect, Frederick Clarke Withers, in 1882. In September of the following year an illustration of the completed picturesque building appeared in the *American Architect and Building News*. However, attempts to present the library to the citizens failed because the town fathers were unwilling to pay the \$1,200-a-year building maintenance cost, deemed to be too much for the village to absorb. Finally, on August 27, 1885, the executors made a final attempt to get the townspeople to accept the building and close the estate, but the gift was rejected unanimously. A *New York Times* editorial addressed the matter several days later:

The action taken by the people of the town of West Chester with reference to the Van Schaick library and reading room shows that it is not always safe for rich and philanthropic men to assume that the gifts for which their wills provide will be accepted. The Executors spent \$10,000. in erecting a handsome library building and are ready to spend \$5,000 more supplying reading matter and preparing the building for use, but the taxpayers have decided in public meeting . . . they will not take the gift simply because it would

cost \$1,200 a year to maintain. . . . It would have been money in the pockets of Mr. Van Schaick's heirs if this town meeting had been held before his death. The course taken by the town is a curious example of shortsightedness.¹¹

An equally critical editorial note, in the *American Architect and Building News*, referred to the situation as "One of those singular miscarriages of generosity which occur rather too frequently in this country . . ." and recommended that, "When a few more examples have accumulated, it will be worth while, we think for some one to write a book on the abortive charities of this country."¹²

Nothing was resolved and the building remained vacant for several years. By 1890 Collis Potter Huntington (1821-1900), a capitalist and California railroad magnate whose fortune derived from the Southern Pacific Railroad, had purchased a summer home which he called the "Homestead" (formerly the H.O. Havemeyer estate), at Throggs Neck. Huntington, who had few charitable or social interests outside of his railroad empire, was somehow informed of the Van Schaick Free Reading Room stalemate and decided to take over the project. He purchased the building and enlarged it with a two-and-one-half-story rear addition at an estimated cost of \$40,000. Additional funds were allocated to endow the library's future operation, without financial obligation to the community.

The Huntington Free Library and Reading Room was finally dedicated with great ceremony on October 7, 1891, and according to a souvenir pamphlet the occasion was "the crowning literary event in the history of old Westchester."¹³ Huntington's public address stressed the importance of youth choosing the right path early in life, and expressed hope that the basement gaming room would serve as a community center and ". . . draw away from the drinking saloons at least a part of the men who frequent them."¹⁴ He further stated that he had ". . . prepared this building for all who may desire to enjoy its advantages; but it will no doubt be used mostly by the young . . .," and concluded by saying, "This Library is for all creeds and nationalities -- share and share alike."¹⁵

Neither the souvenir pamphlet nor a contemporary *New York Times* article make mention of Frederick Clarke Withers as the architect of the original building, both crediting the entire building

to William Anderson, a local Bronx architect about whom little is known. Reference to Peter Van Schaick's bequest was obliterated by the change of the date in the terra-cotta rondels from 1882 to 1890, and by the replacement of the central plaque above the entrance from one with the name of the Van Schaick Free Reading Room to another bearing the name, Huntington Free Library and Reading Room.¹⁶

On August 15, 1892, Collis P. Huntington transferred the deed of the library building to the Trustees of the Huntington Free Library and Reading Room: ". . . a gift to 'a perpetual charitable trust for the benefit of the people of the Village of Westchester'"¹⁷ The privately endowed, non-circulating reading room with its general collection of books and billiard room finally opened to the public in 1893.

Frederick Clarke Withers¹⁸

Frederick C. Withers (1828-1901) was born and educated in England. His early architectural training consisted of an indentureship to Edward Monney in Dorchester (1844-1849) and as an assistant for several years in the London firm of Thomas Henry Wyatt and David Brandon.

In 1852 at the age of twenty-four, Withers immigrated to Newburgh, New York. He was invited by the famous American landscape architect, Andrew Jackson Downing, to assist him and collaborate with Calvert Vaux in producing a book of architectural designs. Downing soon died in an unfortunate steamboat accident and Withers and Vaux formed a partnership which lasted until 1856.¹⁹ Both architects were the obvious heirs of Downing's popularity, particularly with regard to his integration of Gothic Revival principles into a new kind of secular and domestic architecture.

When Vaux left Newburgh to assist Frederick Law Olmsted on the "Greensward" plan for Central Park in New York in 1856, Withers opened his own office in Newburgh and spent the early part of his career designing large country homes in the Downingesque tradition. Later, he again opened a practice with Vaux in New York (1864-65) and collaborated with Olmsted and Vaux on the Central Park project, remaining affiliated with their firm (Olmsted, Vaux & Company) from 1866 to 1872. During the last two-and-one-half decades of the

nineteenth century, Withers maintained an active practice in New York (after 1888 in partnership with Walter Dickson).

A productive and prominent architect, Withers is known for his conservative Gothic Revival churches in many cities in the East as well as for the progressive High Victorian Gothic designs of his secular work of the 1860s and 1870s. Examples of his church designs include Saint Luke's Episcopal Church (1869), Beacon, New York; the Church of St. Thomas (1872), Hanover, New Hampshire; the Chapel of the Good Shepard (1888), Blackwell's (now Roosevelt) Island, New York City; and the William Blackhouse Astor Memorial Altar and Reredos (1876) in New York's Trinity Church, where Withers also remodeled the chancel.²⁰ Through the examples of his churches and the publication of his book, *Church Architecture* (1873), Withers made a significant contribution to the scholarly phase of the Gothic Revival in the United States.

Withers also became a leader among East Coast architects in adapting elements of the inventive High Victorian Gothic style to the design of commercial and institutional buildings. This style was derived from mid-nineteenth-century English sources such as the work of architects William Butterfield, George Edmund Street, and George Gilbert Scott, and the principles espoused by theorist John Ruskin. While serving as supervising architect for the Commission of Charities and Corrections in New York City, Withers designed his most flamboyant and original masterpiece of institutional architecture, the Jefferson Market Courthouse (1874) which, with its polychromatic wall treatment and naturalistic ornament was ". . . a supreme example in the United States of Ruskinian ideals."²¹ For the same Commission, Withers worked with his partner, Walter Dickson, on the design of several buildings on Blackwell's (now Roosevelt) Island, among them Strecker Memorial Laboratory (1892) and three brick structures for the Almshouse. Institutions outside of the city designed by Withers include the Hudson River Asylum (1867), Poughkeepsie, and the Columbia Institute for the Deaf and Dumb (1867), Washington, D.C.

The Design of the Van Schaick Free Reading Room/ Huntington Free Library

The 1882 design for the picturesque, red brick reading room is an excellent example of a work dating from the latter part of Withers's career. As historian Francis Kowsky points out, the modest scale of the building, together with its monochromatic brickwork, asymmetrical massing, and varied roofline, mark a return to the simpler Dowingesque Gothic Revival designs of the architect's pre-Civil War residential work.²² In addition, its simplicity of volume and bold forms evoke the robust style concurrently being popularized by H.H. Richardson, particularly in the Romanesque appearance of the round-arched tower entrance way. "A snug little structure. . .it partook of the predilection for substantial comfort that pervaded middle class American taste in the 1880s."²³

The plan of the original library included an entrance foyer and stair in the tower, a small office behind the stair, a chess room in the projecting side pavilion, and a large reading room running the full length of the building. All rooms were grouped around a centrally-placed chimney.

The relatively few exterior alterations to the building date mostly to the time when Huntington replaced the terra-cotta name plaque and date rondels on the tower and built the rear addition in 1890-92. Otherwise, the removal of the roof finials at an unknown later date deemphasizes the Gothic Revival qualities of the building and accentuates the more austere Romanesque feeling of the design. The distinctive roof chimneys of both sections unfortunately were removed when the roof was replaced during the 1950s. The brick appears to have been repointed in a lighter shade, since the late nineteenth-century preference would have been for a darker shade of mortar.

The 1890-92 rectangular rear addition was designed by William Anderson, a local Bronx architect, about whom little is known.²⁴ The plan included a large first-floor reading room and living quarters for an on-site librarian on the upper floors. Although the two-and-one-half-story, red brick addition is slightly larger and boxier than the original reading room, its materials and design details match those of the earlier building. The addition conveys a sense of substantial comfort which is appropriate to its function as a library with residential quarters.

This domestic quality is particularly conveyed by the robust end chimney adorned with terra-cotta tiles on the south side of this section.

Subsequent History

Collis Huntington's adopted son and heir, Archer M. Huntington, a philanthropist and Spanish scholar, founded the Hispanic Society of America in 1904 and built its gallery and library (1904-08) as the first component of the Audubon Terrace museum complex, between West 155th and 156th streets and Broadway in Manhattan, one of America's first planned cultural centers. The Hispanic Society was joined by the American Numismatic Society (1907), American Geographic Society (1911), and the Museum of the American Indian (1915-22) which was founded by Archer's good friend, George Heye. In 1930, when Heye required more room to house his American Indian library, Archer built a separate three-story, forty-foot by eighty-two-foot annex on the property of the Huntington Library at Westchester Square to accommodate the growing book collection. (That building is not subject to this designation.) Additional well-known and important collections of ethnology, archaeology and anthropology make it one of the leading research resources on aboriginal peoples of the Americas.

In 1937 the New York Public Library opened a circulating library branch on Westchester Square, and for a period of time the reading room and the lending library were duplicating some of their resources. However, in the 1960s the reading room began to specialize further in American and local Bronx history, in order to complement rather than compete with the other institution.

In June, 1990 the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, became a bureau of the Smithsonian Institution and the museum collections were transferred from New York to Washington, D.C. The proposed transfer of the museum's library collection was challenged in New York State Supreme Court; the judge ruled in favor of the Smithsonian, however, the decision is presently pending on the appeal.²⁵ The Huntington Free Library and Reading Room is still administered by its trustees and functions as a non-circulating library open to the public.

Description

The picturesque red and brown brick front facade of the original (1882-83) Van Schaick Free Reading Room building is comprised of the gable end of the main rectangular reading room and a squat entrance tower with a hipped roof. The approximate dimensions of the two-by-three bay library are thirty-three by forty feet.

The gable end is embellished by plain, wooden bargeboards with a central drop pendant and patterned brickwork. There are two tall double-hung central windows with two-over-four sash and plain stone lintels and sills. A decorative stringcourse molding passes under the window sills and extends around the original section of the building, including the spring line area of the compound arch of the doorway in the tower. The basement level is faced with brown brick and has above-ground windows with metal grates.

The square-in-plan, one-bay tower has an original red sandstone stoop leading to an arched entranceway. The round-arched double-leaf, paneled and carved wooden entrance doors are original. A small rectangular historic copper plaque on the south side is inscribed with the library name and hours. The two terra-cotta rondels above the arched entry collectively bear the date, 1890; a rectangular terra-cotta and marble plaque with the name, "Huntington Free Library and Reading Room," is located at the second-floor level of the tower, below a stringcourse. The hipped roof is topped with the remnants of an historic wind/weather vane. An historic wrought-iron fence surrounds the front yard and flanks the entrance walkway. (The fence and yard are not included in the Landmark Site.)

To the rear of the tower, behind a small office on the north side of the building, is a one-story projecting polygonal pavilion with a hipped roof. Each of the faces has a tall window with historic one-over-one sash and stone lintels and sills.

The rear two-and-one-half-story addition of 1890-92 measures twenty-seven by thirty-eight feet. Its facades of red and brown brick are embellished by decorative stringcourse moldings at the first and second stories. The gabled roof has wooden bargeboard trim and central drop pendants. The wooden features carefully match those of the original gable end; the features on the earlier section may have been redone in 1890. On the west side of the roof there is a central gabled wall dormer with the same bargeboard trim. There is a door at the ground level. The one-over-one double-hung windows have stone lintels and sills and tabbing along the sides in a lighter shade of brick. Decorative stringcourse moldings underscore the window sills at the first and second stories.

The most prominent feature of this section of the building is the robust chimney on its south side. At the first story is a tripartite projection with two windows flanking a central rectangular plaque (corresponding to the location of the interior fireplace). The second level has elaborate terra-cotta tiles and the third has a smaller panel of tiles. In the attic section the chimney is fluted.

Attached to the south side of the original portion of the library is a one-story enclosed corridor connecting the large three-story building built in 1930 to house the Museum of the American Indian library collection. Rectangular in plan, this Moderne style brown brick structure is embellished with white banding. (This portion of the library and with the detached one-bay garage built in 1931 are not included in this designation.)

Report prepared by Pat Garbe,
Research Department

NOTES

1. The Landmarks Preservation Commission had heard previously the Huntington Free Library and Reading Room [LP-0838] on Nov. 27, 1973 (Item No. 8) and March 26, 1974 (Item No. 2). At the second hearing one witness spoke in favor of the proposed designation and two trustees of the Huntington Free Library spoke in opposition to the proposed designation.

2. John McNamara, *History in Asphalt: The Origin of Bronx Street Names* (New York: Bronx Historical Society, 1984), 272. See also Harry Cook, *The Borough of the Bronx 1639-1913: Its Marvelous Development and Historical Surroundings* (New York, 1913), 173-182; Benedict Fitzpatrick, *The Bronx and Its People: 1609-1927* (New York: The Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1927), vol.I, 229-234, 334-335, 365-367.
3. The actual location of this non-extant building is probably on the site of the present-day St. Peter's Chapel.
4. Jerrold Seyman, *Colonial Charters, Patents and Grants to the Communities Comprising the City of New York* (New York: Board of Statutory Consolidation of the City of New York, 1939), 44-45; reprinted from Fowler's Bradford, *Acts of Assembly*, 69.
5. These buildings and Cemetery at 2500 Westchester Avenue are a designated New York City Landmark. LPC, *St. Peter's Church, Chapel and Cemetery Designation Report* (LP-0917) (New York: City of New York, 1976), 1, 3.
6. Revolutionary period maps include: Claude J. Southier, 1776, Map Division, New York Public Library; 1776 map in Otto Hufeland, *Westchester County During the American Revolution: 1775-1783* (Harrison, New York: Harbor Hill Books, 1974), 102-103.
7. McNamara, 269-270.
8. F.W. Beers, A.D. Ellis, and G.G. Soule, *Atlas of New York and Vicinity* (New York: 1868), plate 16; see also *County Atlas of Westchester, New York* (New York: J.B. Beers & Co., 1872), plate 50; G.W. Bromley & Co., *Atlas of Westchester County, New York* (New York: Geo. W. & Walter S. Bromley, 1881), plate 41; Joseph R. Bien, *Atlas of Westchester County, New York* (New York: Julius Bien & Co., 1893), plate 3; George and Walter S. Bromley, *Atlas of the City of New York, Borough of the Bronx* (Philadelphia, Pa.: G.W. Bromley & Co., 1905), plate 28; and Sanborn, 1908.
9. "Collis Potter Huntington," *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), 5, 411; Francis R. Kowsky, "The Huntington Free Library and the Van Schaick Free Reading Room," *Journal of the Bronx County Historical Society* VII, no. 1, Jan., 1970, 1-7; David Lavender, *The Great Persuader* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1970), 350; *Souvenir of the West Chester Library and Reading Room* (Westchester, New York: N.Y.C. Protectory Print, 1891), 5, 10-12; "Westchester Refuses a Gift," *New York Times*, Aug. 29, 1885, p. 5; *New York Times*, Jan. 19, 1891, p. 5; "Van Schaick Free Reading Room, Westchester," *American Architect and Building News*, Oct. 20, 1883, plate 408; Ruth N. Wilcox, "The Huntington Free Library and Reading Room," *Indian Notes* 8, no. 3, Summer, 1972, pp.102-103.
10. Peter C. Van Schaick was a member of a prominent New York family. His grandfather, Peter Van Schaick, was appointed by the State of New York to revise the state legal system in 1773. Being loyal to the British crown, he returned to England in 1776, but came back to New York in 1785. Peter C. Van Schaick obituary, *New York Herald*, Feb. 26, 1880, p 6.
11. Editorial, *New York Times*, Aug. 30, 1885, p. 6.
12. Editorial, *American Architect and Building News*, Sept. 5, 1885, p. 110.
13. *Souvenir of the West Chester Library and Reading Room*, 5.
14. Lavender, 350.
15. *Souvenir of the West Chester Library and Reading Room*, 10-12.
16. Kowsky, Jan. 1970, p. 6.
17. Bronx County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Aug. 15, 1892 [Liber 1295, pp. 265-269]. See also Edward A. Morgan, President of the Huntington Free Library, Testimony before the LPC, Dec. 8, 1992, 1.

18. For information on Withers, see: Dennis Steadman Francis, *Architects in Practice New York City 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1979), 83; Francis R. Kowsky, "The Architecture of Frederick C. Withers (1828-1901)," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 35, no.1 (May, 1976), 83-109; Kowsky, *The Architecture of Frederick Clarke Withers and the Progress of the Gothic Revival in America after 1850* (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1980); Kowsky, "Withers, Frederick Clarke," *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, ed. Adolf K. Placzek, vol. 4 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Free Press, 1982), 409-10; Talbot Faulkner Hamlin, "Withers, Frederick Clarke," *Dictionary of American Biography*, ed. Dumas Malone, vol. 10, part 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 435.
19. An influential book entitled, *Villas and Cottages*, authored by Calvert Vaux with illustrations by Vaux and Withers, was published in 1857.
20. For designated New York City Landmarks by Withers see: LPC, *Chapel of the Good Shepard Designation Report* (LP-0907) (New York: City of New York, 1976); LPC, *Greenwich Village Historic District Designation Report* (LP-0489) (New York: City of New York, 1969), vol. 1, 183-184; LPC, *Strecker Laboratory Designation Report* (LP-0909) (New York: City of New York, 1976).
21. *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, 410.
22. Kowsky (1980), 137-138, compares and contrasts the library to Withers's design for the Tioronda School of 1865 (Beacon, N.Y.), which is more characteristic of the High Victorian Gothic style.
23. *Ibid.*, 137.
24. A review of the New York City directories and *New York Times* obituaries has yielded no information regarding the architect William Anderson. Francis, in *Architects in Practice in New York City* (1979), lists a W. Anderson in the year 1882, practicing at 2281 Third Avenue, however, further research is necessary to verify whether this is the same architect.
25. John Roche, "Huntington Battles Smithsonian," *Bronx Times Reporter*, Dec. 31, 1992, vol.12, no. 53, pp. 1, 12; Also see Morgan Testimony, 1992, p.8.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

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 Van Schaick Free Reading Room/Huntington Free Library and Reading Room 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 original Van Schaick Free Reading Room, built in 1882-83, was designed by the prominent architect, Frederick Clarke Withers, and is one of his few surviving works in New York City; that the library was a gift from Peter C. Van Schaick, a local philanthropist, to the village of Westchester, twelve years before its annexation to the City of New York as part of what became the Borough of the Bronx; that the Westchester Square building is an excellent example of a work from the latter part of Withers's career, illustrating a return to the simpler monochromatic brickwork and asymmetrical massing of his earlier Gothic Revival designs, while the simplicity of form and round-arched tower entrance also evoke the contemporary work of H.H. Richardson; that the citizens of the village refused Van Schaick's gift, claiming the cost of building maintenance was too much for the village to absorb, and the library remained vacant until 1890 when railroad tycoon Collis P. Huntington, who lived in nearby Throggs Neck, purchased, enlarged, and endowed the institution, renaming it after himself; that the sympathetic 1890-92 addition, designed by William Anderson, continues the materials and design details of the earlier building, and is distinguished by its robust chimney adorned with terra-cotta tiles; that the exterior of the picturesque red brick original section and the later addition remains remarkably intact with few alterations; and that the Huntington Free Library and Reading Room, a small and picturesque survivor of the old village of Westchester, was the first library built in the area and continues to serve the residents of the east Bronx.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3021 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Van Schaick Free Reading Room/Huntington Free Library and Reading Room, 9 Westchester Square, Borough of The Bronx, and designates Borough of The Bronx Tax Map Block 3981, Lot 2 in part, consisting of the land on which the described building is situated, as its Landmark Site.

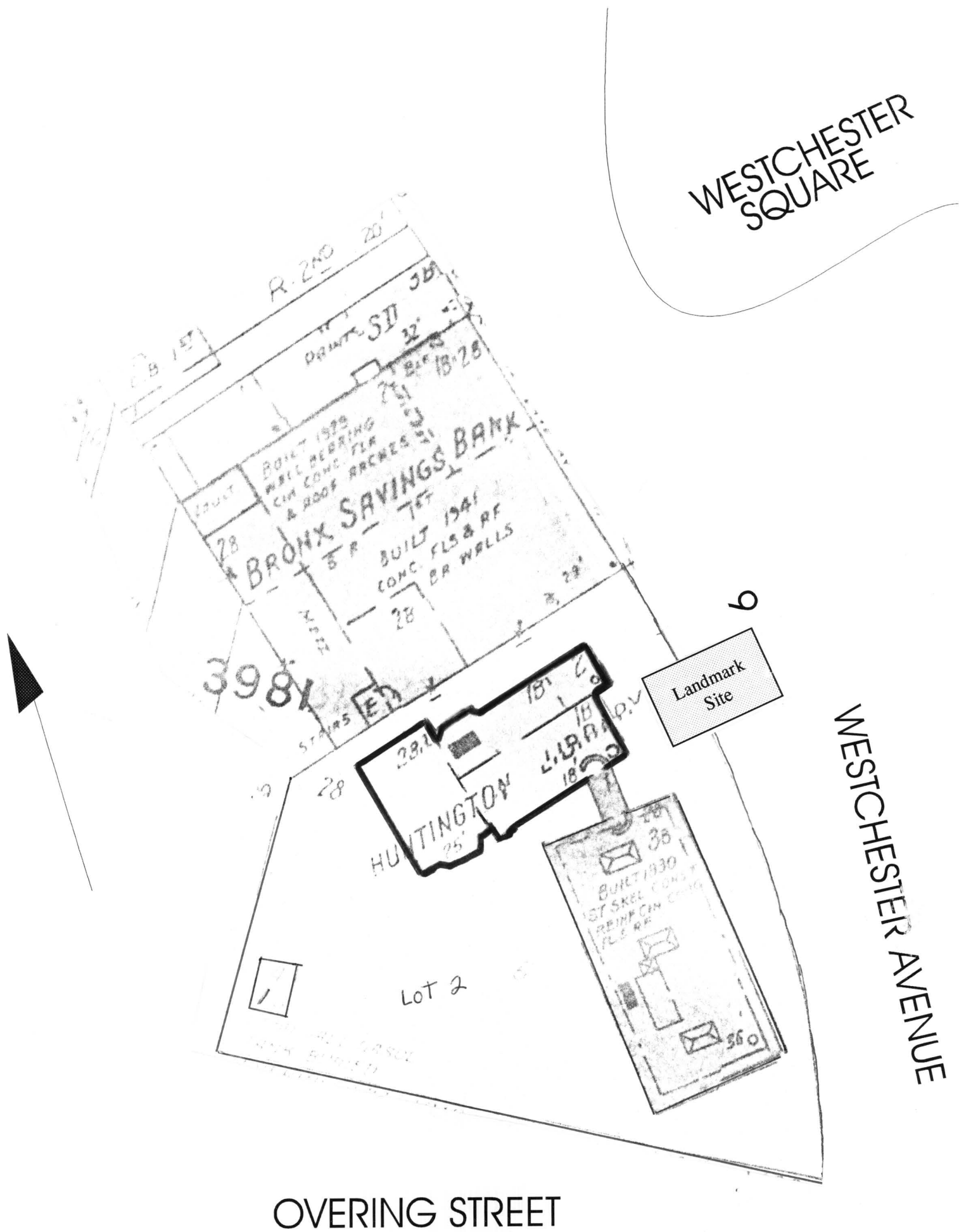
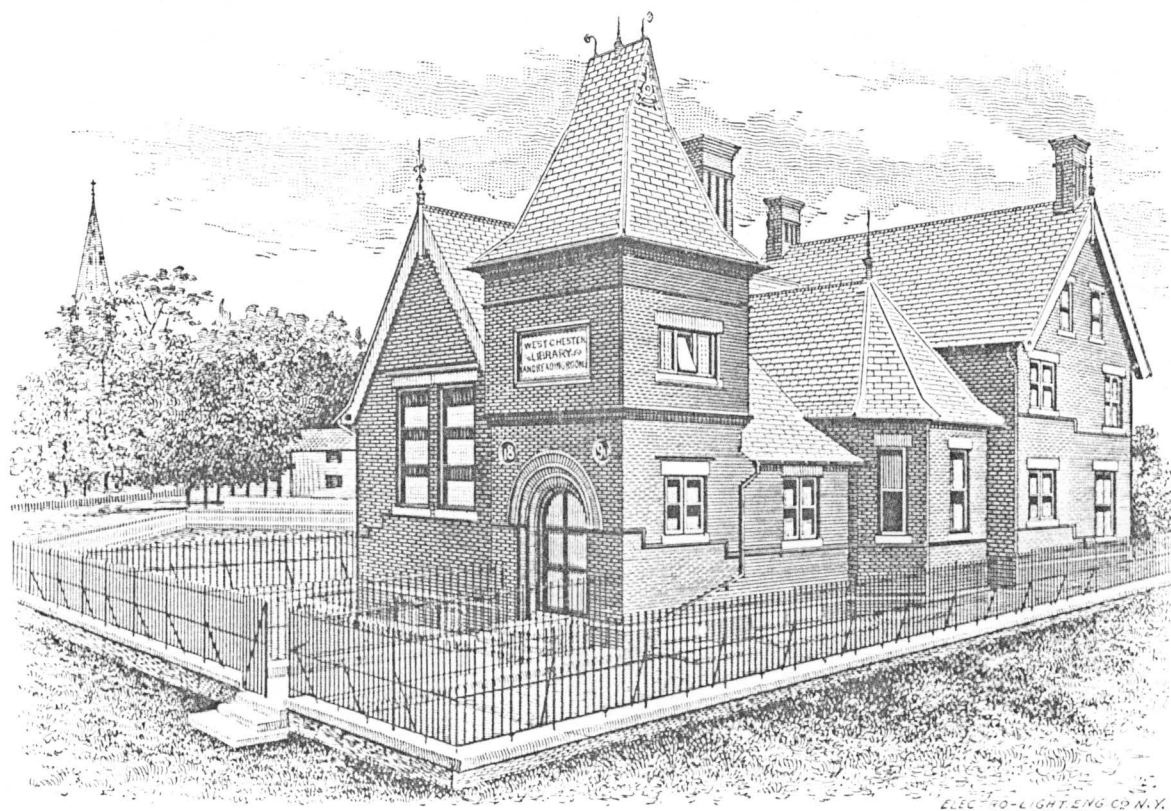


Fig. 1: Sanborn, Borough of the Bronx (1992), vol. 19, p.27.

not to scale



"This Library is for all creeds and all nationalities—share and share alike."—COLLIS P. HUNTINGTON.

Fig. 2: The original Van Schaick Free Reading Room (1882-1883) with addition (1890-1892). *From Souvenir of the West Chester Library and Reading Room (1891).*

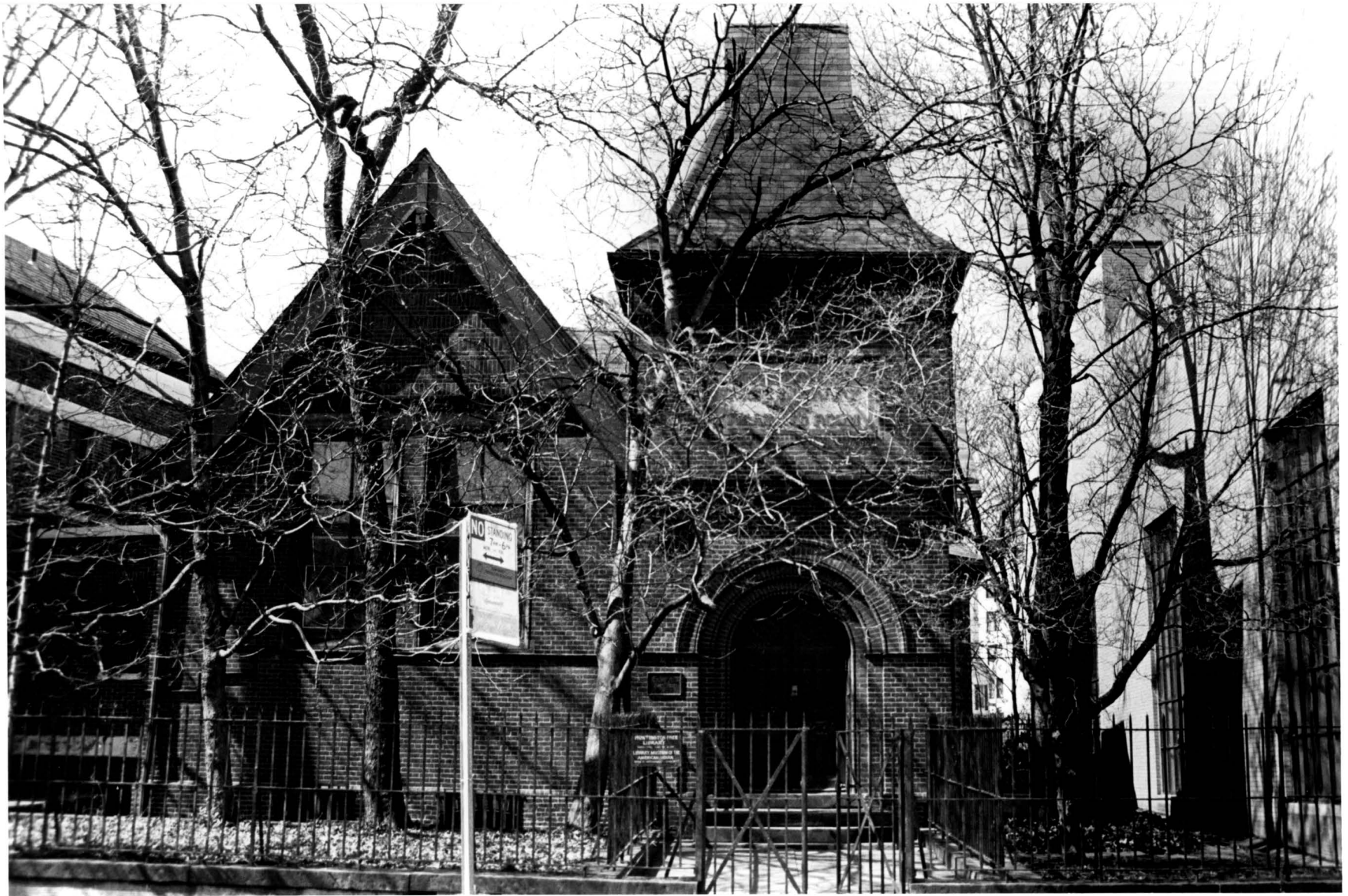


Fig. 3: Original Van Schaick Free Reading Room/(now) Huntington Free Library and Reading Room. Facade (1882-1883). Architect: Frederick Clarke Withers. Photo Credit: Pat Garbe.



Fig. 4: Van Schaick Free Reading Room/(now) Huntington Free Library and Reading Room. Detail tower and entranceway (1882-1883). Architect: Frederick Clarke Withers. Photo Credit: Pat Garbe.



Fig. 5: Huntington Free Library and Reading Room. Rear Addition (1890-1892). Architect: William Anderson. Photo Credit: Pat Garbe.