

ST. MARK'S HISTORIC DISTRICT EXTENSION, Borough of Manhattan

BOUNDARIES

The property bounded by a line beginning at the northwest corner of 102 East Tenth Street, extending easterly to the northeast corner of 104 East Tenth Street, southerly and southwesterly along the eastern property line of 104 East Tenth Street, westerly along the southern property lines of 104 and 102 East Tenth Street, northerly along the western property line of 102 East Tenth Street, to the point of beginning.

TESTIMONY AT PUBLIC HEARING

~~On April 12, 1983, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a Public Hearing on the proposed designation of this extension to St. Mark's Historic District (Item No. 2). The hearing was continued to April 26, 1983 (Item No. 1) and June 14, 1983 (Item No. 4). All three hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Twenty-one persons spoke in favor of the proposed designation; no one spoke against it. Eight letters were received in support of designation.~~

Introduction

The St. Mark's Historic District Extension consists of Nos. 102 and 104 East 10th Street. They are the only two buildings on the south side of the block between Third Avenue and Stuyvesant Street which were not included in the Historic district as it was designated in 1969. Three stories high with sparse ornamental detail, the two brick dwellings document the neighborhood's evolving architectural form. Their sober facades harmonize with their Italianate neighbors whose more urbane massing they show to great advantage. In style, scale, materials and especially in shared history, St. Mark's Historic District is complemented by Nos. 102 and 104 East 10th Street; its residential coherence is also completed by their location at the end of the block.

History of St. Mark's Historic District

The history of the area around St. Mark's dates back to 1651 when Peter Stuyvesant (1602-1687), Director General of the West Indian Company in New Netherlands, purchased two farms ("bouweries" in Dutch) on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Separated by a lane (which in 1781 became Stuyvesant Street) his 600 acres ultimately passed to his great-grandson Petrus Stuyvesant in 1777.

The three oldest buildings in St. Mark's Historic District date from Petrus' lifetime (1727-1805); they are among the finest Federal structures in Manhattan. A residence for Petrus' son was built at 44 Stuyvesant Street in 1795, as was the nearby St. Mark's Church. After four years of construction (on land donated by Petrus) the Church became for eight generations the center of Stuyvesant family devotions. It ceased in this role in 1953 when the clan's lineage expired. The

third oldest structure, and perhaps the most celebrated, is located at 21 Stuyvesant Street.¹ It was built in 1803-1804 for Petus' daughter Elizabeth Stuyvesant and her husband, the Revolutionary War hero, Col. Nicholas Fish. Their son, the future governor of New York, Hamilton Fish, would later keep an office at 104 East 10th Street. He relocated after 30 years when the present brick dwelling replaced the original two story structure in 1879.

When Petrus Stuyvesant died in 1805 his property was divided among his six children.² To each of his four daughters he bequeathed a house and small parcel of land, while his sons inherited the bulk of his estate. Nicholas William (1769-1833) received the land south of Stuyvesant Street, while the remaining northern property passed to his younger brother Peter Gerard (177-1847). Imposition of New York City's grid in 1807 further subdivided, and then reduced, the children's inheritance by opening Third Avenue in 1816 and 8th through 12th Streets in 1826.

The cutting through of 10th Street cost Nicholas and Elizabeth Stuyvesant Fish a sizable portion of their rear garden at No. 21 Stuyvesant Street. Elizabeth's brother, Peter Gerard, compensated her loss with portions of his large inheritance from their father. In conveyances of 1828, 1834 and 1835 she amassed various properties, including the triangular lot between 10th and Stuyvesant Streets.³ Popularly called "Elizabeth Fish's Garden," it later became the site of "The Triangle," a distinguished group of Anglo-Italianate dwellings reputedly designed by James Renwick, Jr.

Large-scale development of the neighborhood, however, did not take place until several years after Mrs. Fish's death on September 26, 1854. Prior to 1859 her garden remained open, as did most of the land to its west. The notable exceptions were the two story buildings at 102 and 104 East 10th Street, the first buildings to be constructed on the block.

The Architecture of St. Mark's Historic District

The 36 buildings encompassed by the original St. Mark's Historic District provide a rich cross-section of New York's architectural development during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The three Federal structures, St. Mark's Church and Nos. 21 and 44 Stuyvesant Street, established the domestic scale out of which the neighborhood evolved. Their restrained detail and formal elegance were continued in the later Greek Revival residence at No. 42 Stuyvesant Street (1845) and in its numerous Anglo-Italianate neighbors. The latter are distinguished from the several Italianate buildings in the area by their lower stoops and raised English basements.

Both the Italianate and Anglo-Italianate styles are 19th-century interpretations of Renaissance prototypes. Rendered for the most part in pressed Philadelphia brick with limestone trim, the rowhouses in these styles are largely responsible for the district's distinctive residential character. Their brackets, portals and rusticated basements as well as their cast iron balustrades and boldly projecting cornices all combine to give the neighborhood an air of quiet formality. This ambiance was especially popular in the 1860s when an attempt was made to distinguish residential sectors within the larger and newly-industrialized city.

The remarkable collection of Anglo-Italianate dwellings along "The Triangle" at Stuyvesant and East 10th Streets give the district a compelling sense of unity. Other buildings nearby enrich it with interesting variations in cornice levels and ornamental details. Among these are the two three-story brick residences at 102 and 104 East 10th Street. While distinct from their taller Italianate neighbors, they offer a happy contrast. They simultaneously record the stylistic evolution of the block.

The St. Mark's Historic District Extension

The present lot lines of Nos. 102 and 104 East 10th Street were established in 1836 by Peter Gerard Stuyvesant and his sister Elizabeth Stuyvesant Fish.⁴ Both properties comprise a single lot (Block 465, Lot 9). In that year an assessment notice of \$4,100.00 was sent to Thomas Macfarlan, manager of Peter Gerard's real estate for more than thirty years.⁵ In 1839 he received a \$400.00 tax increase corresponding to the construction of a house (No. 102) on the land.⁶

By 1851 the lot held two first class brick structures: No. 102 East 10th Street was the two story residence of Thomas Macfarlan and his family, while No. 104 served as his office.⁷ Macfarlan shared the latter premises with Hamilton Fish, the prominent nephew of Peter Gerard Stuyvesant and heir to a portion of his estate (including the neighboring properties at 106-110 East 10th Street). Forty-three year old Fish was himself a specialist in real estate, serving as counsel for some of the largest landowners in Manhattan. Presumably he occupied the ground floor office, as he always insisted that the real estate business was conducted through an open window.⁸ Fish maintained his office at No. 104 East 10th Street throughout his tenure as governor (1848-1850) and then senator (1851-1853) of New York, and likewise while United States Secretary of State (1869-1877). He relocated only in 1879 when his office was replaced by a "first class dwelling with hot air furnace."⁹

The new \$6,000.00 residence was constructed by Peter J. O'Brien & Sons, just one year after the elevated railroads had been opened on Second and Third Avenues. It was one of several speculative ventures undertaken by Rutherford Stuyvesant (1842-1909) the twenty-seven year old cousin of Hamilton Fish. Like his great uncle Peter Gerard Stuyvesant (from whom he inherited the 102-104 East 10th Street lot) in 1869,¹⁰ Rutherford was already a successful developer. Ten years earlier he had commissioned Richard Morris Hunt, America's most distinguished architect, to design the five-story "Stuyvesant" on East 18th Street. It was among Manhattan's earliest apartment buildings.

Development of East 10th Street was guided by a conscious effort to create an architecturally-integrated community. Each building was designed in sympathy with its neighbors, all of them ultimately relating back to their precursors at Nos. 102 and 104. When Rutherford Stuyvesant rebuilt the latter (thereby substituting the newest for the oldest building on the block), he was careful to maintain this stylistic unity. His new house at No. 104 acts as a bridge between the handsome late Italianate dwellings (1861) on its left and the modest eclectic structure (1839+) on its right. Indeed, Stuyvesant was so concerned

with architectural harmony that he commissioned the builders of No. 104 to "update" No. 102: he paid Peter J. O'Brien & Son \$1,000 to raise its facade to three stories and to add a metal cornice similar to the one they had installed next door.¹¹

Description of the Buildings

No. 102 East 10th Street is the oldest house on the block. It was probably built c. 1839 before being occupied by real estate agent Thomas Macfarlan in 1850-51. His two-story brick residence was apparently raised in 1858,¹² before reaching its present three stories in 1879. Each of its several modifications, including the recently installed Greek Revival entranceway, was executed in sympathy with the character of East 10th Street as a whole. Stylistically the house reflects a vernacular tradition of rowhouse design that looks to the Greek Revival period.

Four steps descend to the areaway and the dwelling's painted brownstone basement, the corners of which are emphasized by rusticated quoins. The original brownstone stoop survives, although its seven steep stairs have been covered with a layer of brown-tinted concrete. The stoop likewise retains its original iron railings and newel posts, heavily over-painted and cracking. The wooden Greek Revival portal is a singularly successful replacement. It was installed in the mid-1960s as one of the improvements undertaken by the present owner. Its double Ionic pilasters, fluted and ornately carved, support a blank frieze and five light transom above. One long-term block resident recalls that Ada Louise Huxtable approved the new entranceway enthusiastically.¹³ It helps to relieve austere facade, while giving to the building a dominant classical character.

To the right of the doorway are two windows with simple brownstone sills and lintels with projecting moldings. Like the three on the second and third stories, they contain six-over-six double hung wooden sash from the nineteenth century, now protected by aluminum storm windows. The carefully pointed natural brick facade retains traces of a previous coat of red paint (matching that of the neighboring facade at 104 East 10th Street). In its crowning metal cornice recessed panels alternate with four bold modillions. This neo-Grec feature was added in 1879 in order to integrate the dwelling more thoroughly with No. 104, then under construction. The western side wall has been exposed and is covered with tinted stucco.

The years have not been uniformly kind to the house at No. 102 East 10th Street. It suffered considerable deterioration as a single occupancy residence before being reclaimed in 1966. Recent work, however, has returned to the building a good deal of its charm, and has given it a tidy aspect which complements the rest of the well-groomed district.

No. 104 East 10th Street replaced the two-story offices of Hamilton Fish and Thomas Macfarlan. Built in 1879 as one of Rutherford Stuyvesant's speculative ventures, this three-story brick residence adopted an austere version of the neo-Grec style that was popular in the 1870s.

The site of the oldest building on East 10th Street, the 1879 dwelling became its newest addition. The integration it achieved with its pre-existing neighbors is noteworthy. Rather than emphasizing its individuality, No. 104 continued the brick facades, raised basements, steep stoops and uniform fenestration patterns of the buildings between which it was sandwiched. It creates an effective bridge between the small vernacular structure on its right and the taller, more recent Italianate buildings on its left, essentially repeating the proportions of No. 102.

Like its neighbor at 102 East 10th Street, No. 104 retains much of its original ironwork. Especially notable are the newel posts and basement window guards whose geometric pattern is repeated in the iron door grille beneath the stoop. The stoop itself rises from a convex bottom step on top of which are five straight brownstone stairs. At the top of the landing are paneled double doors (painted an unsightly orange), framed by a handsome neo-Grec wooden enframement of vertical moldings and broad entablature.

As at No. 102, each of the facade's eight windows has a simple brownstone sill and lintel with projecting molding. The building is likewise finished by a galvanized iron cornice which matches that of No. 102.

Conclusion

As the first properties on East 10th Street to be developed, the buildings at Nos. 102 and 104 helped to determine the architectural character of the block. In subsequent years they respected the integrity of that character, as various modifications to the two buildings amply demonstrate. In style, scale and materials and especially in shared history, the two brick houses are an intrinsic part of the St. Mark's Historic District. They enrich the neighborhood historically, while their position at the western end of the block insures its residential cohesiveness. Nos. 102 and 104 form a noteworthy addition to the St. Mark's Historic District.

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FOOTNOTES

1. No. 21 Stuyvesant Street was designated a New York City Landmark in 1965. St. Mark's Church was designated in the following year.
2. Liber 46, p. 106.
3. Liber 312, p. 171 (4/19/1834) and Liber 328 p. 248 (3/27/1835).
4. Liber 362, p. 609 (9/7/1836).
5. Tax assessment records for 1836. Macfarlan is first identified as an "agent" in the New York City directory for 1837-38. Prior to his removal to Nos. 102 and 104 East Tenth Street in 1850-51, he occupied premises on Tenth Street, east of Third Avenue. Macfarlan's sons joined the family real estate business about a dozen years before his final New York City directory listing in 1863.

6. The 1839 tax map 21 shows a lot and house, assessed at \$4,500. Macfarlan's letterbook from 1843-50 records a number of his real estate transactions from his Tenth Street offices.
7. New York City directories, 1850-51. Tax assessments for the lot were increased to \$5,000 in the same year, the \$500 increase reflecting the new construction.
8. The Ancestors of Hamilton Fish, cited by Carol Barnes, "No. 21 Stuyvesant Street: The Stuyvesant Fish House and History Surrounding it," p.12.
9. NB 396-79.
10. Liber 1109 p.356 (5/6/1869).
11. Alt. 233-79.
12. Tax assessment records for 1858 refer to the house as a 2½ story structure.
13. Marilyn Appelberg, President, Tenth and Stuyvesant Street Block Association, telephone conversation with Janet Adams, LPC, 3/20/1984.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this area, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the St. Mark's Historic District Extension contains two buildings which have a special character and special historical interest and value which represent one or more periods or styles of architecture typical of one or more eras in the history of New York City and which cause this area, by reason of these factors, to constitute a distinct section of the City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the St. Mark's Historic District Extension is an integral part of the community planned and developed by the heirs of Peter Stuyvesant; that these houses have similar historical associations and a related architectural character to those within the historic district as designated in 1969; that these buildings initially set, and in subsequent modifications followed, the architectural and aesthetic standards for East 10th Street and are related to St. Mark's Historic District at large; that these buildings were constructed under the control of the same type of covenants and agreements through which a harmonious uniformity was achieved in building types, materials, scale and quality of construction; that the two dwellings complement and complete the residential character of the existing district; that the relation of these buildings to each other and to the streetscape furthers the architectural coherence of St. Mark's Historic District and adds to its significance as a residential area of exceptional charm and historic importance.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 21 (formerly 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 an Historic District, the St. Mark's Historic District Extension, Borough of Manhattan, containing the property bounded by a line beginning at the northwest corner of 102 East Tenth Street, extending easterly to the northeast corner of 104 East Tenth Street, southerly and southwesterly along the eastern property line of 104 East Tenth Street, westerly along the southern property lines of 104 and 102 East Tenth Street, northerly along the western property line of 102 East Tenth Street, to the point of beginning; Manhattan.

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St. Mark's Historic District Extension
Manhattan

Photo Credit: Janet Adams
Landmarks Preservation Commission



St. Mark's Historic District Extension
102 East 10th Street
Manhattan

Built: c. 1839+

Photo Credit: Janet Adams
Landmarks Preservation Commission



St. Mark's Historic District Extension
104 East 10th Street
Manhattan

Built: 1879

Photo Credit: Janet Adams
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