

RECEIVED

JUN 16 1992

CENTRAL INTAKE  
DEPT. OF CITY PLANNING

N920687HKX

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
June 2, 1992; Designation List 245  
LP-1809

**62nd POLICE PRECINCT STATION HOUSE** (now 41st Police Precinct Station House) 1086 Simpson Street, Borough of The Bronx. Built 1912-14; Hazzard, Erskine & Blagden, architects.

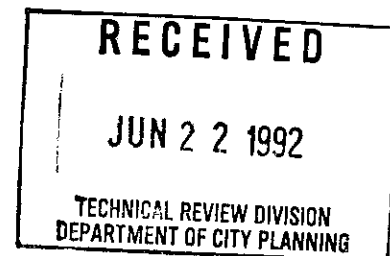
Landmark Site: Borough of The Bronx Tax Map Block 2727, Lot 17.

On September 11, 1990, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 62nd Police Precinct Station House (now 41st Police Precinct Station House), and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 9).<sup>1</sup> The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. One witness testified in favor of the designation. A letter was received from the Police Commissioner requesting that the Commission defer action on the proposed designation until after April 1992. A letter was received from a representative of Community Board 2 opposing designation.

## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### Summary

The 62nd Police Precinct Station House, with its monumental ground-story arcade of bold, bull-nosed rustication and contrasting upper stories of smooth-faced ashlar limestone, was built in 1912-14 for a new police precinct in the West Farms area of the Bronx, then undergoing rapid development and increase in population. Designed by the architectural firm of Hazzard, Erskine & Blagden in the neo-Renaissance style considered appropriate for an arm of municipal government, the station house reflects the vision of the City Beautiful movement. The three-story limestone Simpson Avenue facade is surmounted by a richly ornamented terra-cotta cornice and broad-eaved hipped roof (originally of green tile) evoking the fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century palaces of Florence and Rome. Submitted for the approval of the New York City Art Commission (itself founded in response to City Beautiful ideals), the design received subsequent academic refinement in the architecture committee, headed by Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes. This station house, commissioned by Rhinelanders Waldo, the new Commissioner of the Police Department as part of an ambitious building program for the department, appears to have been intended as a model for others. But contemporary political reverses made it the only example of Hazzard, Erskine & Blagden's work conveying the image city government wished to project in the recently urbanized boroughs beyond Manhattan just before World War I.



## The Development of West Farms in the Borough of The Bronx<sup>2</sup>

The 62nd Police Precinct Station House is located in a section of the Bronx historically known as West Farms (Plate 1). The history of the Bronx is part of the early history of Westchester County, formed in 1683. By an act of the State Legislature in 1788 the county was divided into townships, and West Farms, east of Morrisania, south of the present 177th Street, west of the Bronx River and bordering the Sound, became part of Westchester Township. This tract, purchased from indians in 1663 by two settlers, John Richardson and Edward Jessup, was divided into twelve farms, and was so designated. Since Twelve Farms lay west of Westchester, the tract came to be called West Farms. Richardson and Jessup (with a confirmatory patent from Governor Nicolls in 1666) divided the tract in half, that part below the present Westchester Avenue descending to the heirs of Jessup's daughter, Elizabeth J. Hunt, and the part above to the descendents of Richardson's daughter, Elizabeth R. Leggett (Leggetts, Foxes, and Tiffanys) until the beginning of this century; their names are now recalled in the names of the streets. The station house is located just north of Fox's Corners, the intersection of Westchester Avenue (the old Westchester Turnpike), Hunt's Point Road, and West Farms Road. West Farms became its own township in 1846. Although still essentially rural, by the mid-nineteenth century the old farms had been replaced by the country places of well-to-do Manhattan merchants. Southwest of Fox's Corners was "Ambleside," the estate of William and J. R. Simpson and southeast were "Brightside," the Richard M. Hoe estate (Hoe was an inventor of the rotary printing press), and "Sunnyslope," Hoe's younger brother Peter's place and the only remaining of these nineteenth-century country houses in the area (now a designated New York City Landmark). It was proposed to unite Morrisania and West Farms with New York City, first in 1864 and again five years later; both efforts were defeated by the inhabitants of West Farms. But in 1874 the townships of Morrisania and West Farms became a part of New York City, known as the Twenty-third Ward (the township of Kingsbridge became the Twenty-fourth Ward).

The rural character of this West Farms neighborhood was not immediately affected by this

political change. Nor did the advent of the railroads in 1841 or the horse-car in 1871 and trolley lines in 1892 immediately change the face of the area. But the Westchester and West Farms Avenues intersection gained in significance when Southern Boulevard was created in the 1870s.<sup>3</sup> In 1894 the Fox heirs had their tract platted and began to sell individual lots.<sup>4</sup> In 1900 the new Rapid Transit Commission started construction of New York City's first underground railway. The Fox heirs and recent purchasers of Fox property along Westchester Avenue and Southern Boulevard granted easements by deed to the City of New York in May and June, 1901.<sup>5</sup> The East Side IRT, or Lexington Avenue line, enters The Bronx through a tunnel under the Harlem River at West 145th Street in Morrisania. But east of Third Avenue at 149th Street, it becomes an elevated rail line, carried above Westchester Avenue and Southern Boulevard. Service to the terminus at West Farms began in 1905 and real-estate transactions became more lively. For example, lot 17 on Simpson Street -- the future site of the 62nd Precinct Station house -- was sold by the Fox heirs in 1904 to a realty concern which, in the same year, sold it to Carrie J. Weil. Seven months later Ms. Weil sold it to one Henry Nobel. Nobel sold lot 17 to the City of New York on November 10, 1911.<sup>6</sup> In 1912 Stephen Jenkins described the lower part of Southern Boulevard as flanked by factories and its middle portion as being more vacant lots than developed ones. But at Fox's Corners, apartment buildings were going up very rapidly, growth which he attributed to the elevated portion of the subway.<sup>7</sup> The increased population required the presence of more municipal services, including the police department.

## The City's Growth and the New York Police Department<sup>8</sup>

From the mid-seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century policing in New York City consisted of nocturnal patrols; the watch grew from the one "schout" provided for in the 1651 Charter of Nieuw Amsterdam to a constable and his band of watchmen in the English colonial city of New York. In 1798 an act of the State Legislature, providing for the regular policing of the city, laid the foundation for the present police force. By

1809 there were almost two hundred "roundsmen," un-uniformed disciplinarians, in three police districts, each district commanded by a captain. In 1843, with a population of 350,000 in the city, the force had grown to one thousand men. A Metropolitan District, governed by the Board of Police, was established for the counties of New York, Kings, Westchester and Richmond in 1857, and twelve years later this district was extended to include Newtown, Flushing and Jamaica; by this date the force was uniformed. But in 1870 a new City charter reorganized the police; a Police Board, comprised of four commissioners, appointed a Superintendent of Police. The city was divided into inspection districts made up of police precincts; each district was headed by an inspector and each precinct by a captain. The Greater New York Charter of 1898 mandated the consolidation of all of the police within the city limits. In 1901 the four-member Police Board was abolished, and its powers were vested in a single police commissioner. By 1913 there were seventeen inspection districts. The Seventh District, covering The Bronx, was headquartered at 1925 Bathgate Avenue, and within it there were five precincts, the 61st with its station house at 257 Alexander Avenue, the new 62nd headquartered at 1086 Simpson Street, the 63rd with its station house at Third Avenue and 160th Street, the 65th in the station house at 1925 Bathgate, and the 66th with its station house in Highbridge.

Rhineland Waldo (1877-1927), a protege of William J. Gaynor, Mayor of New York City from 1910 to 1913, was appointed Police Commissioner upon the retirement of the outspoken and independent James A. Cropsey and assumed office on May 23, 1911. Earlier that year Gaynor had assured the Board of Aldermen that police abuses -- not within the force itself, but in its middle management -- had been curbed in his first year of office. From 1910 to 1911 Waldo had been Commissioner of the Fire Department where, recognizing the rapid growth of the city and the need for fire companies in the outlying neighborhoods, he initiated a bold plan to build twenty-five fire stations. These were to be uniform in design, and their construction, to commence in 1911, would be inexpensive as a contractor would bid on all of them at once. Waldo carried this expansive stance with him to the police department where he accelerated his predecessor's program to

construct new and repair existing police precinct station houses. The Police Department's Annual Report for 1911 listed appropriations for the construction of three new station houses and the rebuilding of two more.<sup>9</sup> Increased population in The Bronx warranted a final appropriation for a new station house at Simpson and 167th Street. A reproduction of the architects' initial watercolor rendering of the former 62nd Precinct station house (Plate 1) appeared at the back of the Report.

In the Annual Report for 1913 seven new precinct houses were cited, all started between 1911 and 1912; five were occupied during the latter part of 1913 though finally completed in the early part of 1914. A composite photograph of five buildings, captioned "Modern Station Houses," included a photograph of the 62nd as built.<sup>10</sup> While designed by several different architects, all of these precinct station houses share the same general style, an academic neo-Renaissance. This style, translated from the urban context of its Renaissance prototypes, gives these station houses a uniform and official appearance appropriate for an arm of municipal government. It would appear that Commissioner Waldo was endeavoring to do for police station design what he had done for fire station design.

Waldo was an innovator as well -- he re-organized the precinct force into a three platoon system of patrol, abolished the rank of "doorman," elevating it to "patrolman," introduced a new uniform (including a warm overcoat with large pockets for which patrolmen were grateful), and he inaugurated the automobile within the department. But he underestimated the depth to which graft had undermined the integrity of the police force. The political impact of the Rosenthal-Becker scandal and the subsequent findings of the Curran Committee (initiated under Alderman Henry Curran, August 8, 1912) and the Citizens' Committee, appointed at a mass meeting at Cooper Union, August 15, 1912, destroyed his career in public service.<sup>11</sup> In the Curran Committee Report, published in June, 1913, Commissioner Waldo was found to be unfit and incompetent; his administrative blunders, his failure to suppress gambling and prostitution and to prevent blackmail and extortion prompted the Committee to recommend that he be removed from his office. Shortly after Mayor Gaynor's

assassination aboard the trans-Atlantic steamship *Baltic* in September 1913, Waldo was dismissed by the acting mayor, Ardolph L. Kline. Waldo's ambitious new building program was put aside.

The former 62nd Precinct  
and the 41st Precinct<sup>12</sup>

In 1913 when the new station house opened, the 1.80 square miles of the precinct contained a population of 48,000 people along its thirty-three miles of streets. The full complement of the precinct force in 1916 consisted of one captain, three lieutenants, nine sergeants, seventy patrolmen, and three matrons. An elderly resident remembered not only the opening of the new precinct station house but the vestiges of the gardens and orchards of old West Farms. The residents of the Fox's Corners area, took great pride in their neighborhood. Relatives from lower Manhattan came for a few weeks in the summer months. Entries from the police "blotters" of 1920-21 attest to an almost suburban ambience. Summons were issued for an unmuzzled dog, for violations to the Sabbath Law (selling on Sunday - many in the neighborhood were Jewish), for violations of the Sanitary Code (uncovered fruit), and for throwing garbage into a rear lot. Summons were issued to speeders, clocked at twenty-eight, twenty-nine and thirty-two miles per hour, on Southern Boulevard. There were routine raids on three speakeasies, at 935 and 1011 Southern Boulevard and 989 Westchester Avenue. Six neighborhood boys, thirteen to fifteen years of age, were brought in for playing in the street at Tiffany and 163rd Street. They were admonished and sent home with their parents. On the rare occasion, patrolmen's weapons were discharged -- to destroy a crippled horse at the request of the owner and to shoot a mad dog, again at the owner's request. Every day there were deliveries to the station house's commissary, eighty pounds of butter from Blue Valley Creamery, five cases of eggs, 100 pounds of bacon from Swift & Co., 100 pounds of coffee, and from the National Biscuit Co., two dozen fig newtons, three dozen graham crackers, three dozen Lorna Doones, one dozen marshmallows, and a half dozen ginger snaps.

In 1920 the 62nd Precinct became the 47th but four years later it was renumbered and became the 20th. In 1929 the renumbering of precincts

reoccurred and the 20th became the 41st, which number it has had ever since. In an effort to facilitate traffic regulation in the same year Traffic Precinct "G" was assigned to the 41st Precinct station house at 1086 Simpson Street.

The area began to change with World War II when the factories in the Port Morris section of The Bronx drew thousands into war-related industry. The war effort attracted large migrations from the southern part of this country and from Puerto Rico. Following the war public projects were constructed to house the influx. At the same time, more established residents moved away. But in the 1960s, many industries relocated. Unemployment ensued, housing maintenance declined, and poverty escalated.

By 1971 when the precinct had grown to 2.5 square miles,<sup>13</sup> the population within it was several times greater than it had been in 1913. The police blotter entries for 1971 reflect the change in the area. A robbery occurred at Bankers Trust early one spring afternoon; \$700.00 in fives and tens was removed. A bomb scare was reported at a military recruiting booth at 163rd Street and Southern Boulevard. In seeking the arrest of a man who had imprisoned his common-law wife and infant, both the arresting officer and the assailant were shot as a hostile crowd gathered. The majority of the arrests had become drug related. The precinct had begun to operate a narcotics patrol car and a patrolman was injured in an early morning narcotics investigation. Although some residents looked to the station house for aid, others saw it as a target for their scorn and rage; the building had become less a refuge and more a fortress and was dubbed "Fort Apache" in the popular press. As of the 1990 Census, the population within the 41st Precinct was 39,443, some 9000 less than when the station house opened in 1913.

Hazzard, Erskine & Blagden<sup>14</sup>

The 62nd Police Precinct Station House appears to be the only executed commission of Hazzard, Erskine & Blagden. Elliott W. Hazzard (dates undetermined) established his professional practice as an architect in New York City at 571 Fifth Avenue in 1905 but, in a short-lived association, moved to Room 903 of the Knabe Building at 437 Fifth Avenue with the more

experienced Hobart A. Walker two years later. In October, 1911, Hazzard was joined by Wendell P. Blagden and Harold P. Erskine. The expanded firm took the room next door (Room 904) as well and remained at the same address. The Hazzard, Erskine & Blagden firm existed for three years only, until 1914 when Blagden left to run a branch office in Rochester, N. Y., for the New York City architects, Foster & Gade. Hazzard & Erskine remained in business for two more years, when Hazzard turned to contracting -- Hinchman & Hazzard Co., Inc.; the two remained in the offices they had previously shared although only Erskine continued to practice architecture. But by 1920 neither Hazzard nor Erskine was listed at 437 Fifth Avenue.<sup>15</sup>

More is known about Wendell Phillips Blagden (1882-1938) than either of his partners in the short-lived firm. Born in Ogdensburg, New York, he attended the Groton School and was graduated from Harvard College in 1904. After two years preparation at Columbia's School of Architecture, Blagden moved to Paris and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, entering the ateliers of Pascal and Gromart. He received his diploma from the French government in 1910. On his return to the United States he took space at 432 Fifth Avenue. It is likely that he was a designer for Walker & Hazzard in 1910-11; a new facade and interior alterations for his sister-in-law, Lydia Laurence Jones Blagden, at 176 East 70th Street -- perhaps his first work -- are recorded as coming from the office of Walker & Hazzard at that time.<sup>16</sup> In the same year Blagden became a member of the Society of Beaux Arts Architects, serving on its Education Committee in 1913 and chairing this committee in 1914. After the year in Rochester, he returned to Foster & Gade's New York office. He had a brief military career in 1918. On his return to New York Blagden was unable to find a job in an architectural office and went to work for a brokerage firm, and, although he remained a member of the Society of Beaux Arts Architects, it is in the stock market that he spent the remainder of his professional life.

Harold Perry Erskine (dates undetermined) was an undergraduate in Columbia's School of Architecture between 1905 and 1908. In emulation of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, the School maintained three ateliers -- one housed at Columbia and led by W. A. Delano, one in the

McKim, Mead & White office under Charles F. McKim assisted by John Russell Pope, and the third at Carrere & Hastings under Thomas Hastings assisted by John Van Pelt. A member of the Columbia University Architectural Society, Erskine represented the Hastings atelier on the Society's executive committee. His drawing for "An Entrance Loggia," which recalls Hastings' work on the New York Public Library and was awarded a "Special Mention" in the Elementary Design course, was published in the Society's 1906 yearbook. In 1908 Erskine entered the atelier of Victor Laloux at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. It is likely that Erskine had made Blagden's acquaintance at Columbia and renewed it in Paris. When he returned to New York late in 1911 he joined Blagden at Hazzard's office. Following World War I, Erskine ceased to practice architecture, becoming a sculptor instead.

The Hazzard, Erskine & Blagden stationery letterhead in 1912 announced the firm as "Architects for the Police Department of the City of New York." How or why they were chosen is open to conjecture. However, there exists a network of family relationships linking Wendell Blagden to Rhinelander Waldo, the Commissioner of Police.<sup>17</sup> As the fledgling firm's fortunes were tied to Waldo's career, the Simpson Street station house was the sole commission the firm carried out for the Police Department.

#### The Design of the (former) 62nd Precinct House<sup>18</sup>

The design of the station house evokes the fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century palaces of Florence and Rome. Components of the three-story Simpson Avenue facade of the 62nd Police Precinct Station House have been compared with certain Renaissance prototypes, Michelozzo's Palazzo Medici-Riccardi in Florence and Raphael's Palazzo Vidoni-Caffarelli in Rome. Indeed, the choice of the neo-Renaissance style for this public building is a reflection of the City Beautiful movement, a vision of American cities comprising axial avenues along which stood buildings clothed in an harmonious classicism. The vision's earliest, though ephemeral, manifestation occurred at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, but gained momentum in the national effort to preserve the integrity of L'Enfant's plan for the

City of Washington, D.C., in 1901. Charles F. McKim, a principal in the architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White, was a great proselytizer for the City Beautiful movement. This vision of the City Beautiful prompted the founding of the New York City Art Commission in 1897 (McKim was the first architect member of the Commission, 1897-1901). Its jurisdiction was extended within the subsequent decade to review the designs of certain public structures and, by 1907, its charter was amended to include all structures constructed on City-owned property. It was to the Art Commission in December, 1911, that Hazzard, Erskine & Blagden submitted the plans and a watercolor perspective of the proposed "Simpson Street Police Station" (Plate 2).<sup>19</sup>

The Art Commission was comprised of twelve members.<sup>20</sup> Submissions -- sculptural, architectural, and landscape -- were reviewed first by smaller committees, made up of the commissioners and chaired by the appropriate professional commissioner, and then the whole commission. From 1911 to 1913 the commissioner representing architecture was Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes.<sup>21</sup> The Simpson Street Police Station required two meetings before Stokes' committee, the first on January 9, 1912, and the second on May 14, 1912. The make-up of the committee was not consistent; only Stokes, the chair, was present at both meetings.<sup>22</sup>

Comparison of the first water color perspective (Plate 2), the one submitted in December, 1911, and published in the Police Department's Annual Report for 1911, with the second water color perspective (Plate 3), submitted in May, 1912, to the Art Commission suggests that Stokes proposed changes in the design. Most apparent is the refinement of the first story rustication; there are eleven courses of equal height in the initial design and fifteen in the second (from the springblock up, the courses become gradually narrower in height); the voussoirs of the five-arch arcade number thirteen in the initial design and seventeen in the second. In the first, the keystones are prominent and are incorporated with the heavy molded belt course above. In the second, the keystones have been cropped just below a new dentil molding like their flanking voussoirs, and the voussoirs flanking these have been lowered one course. It is this change that has recalls the Michelozzo prototype from fifteenth-century Florence.<sup>23</sup> Single granite

blocks replaced the base course masonry visible in the December, 1911, design. The granite spandrels below the arcade windows were articulated as panels between consoles. The doorway pediment within the central arch was eliminated. The character of the fenestration within the arches was changed also. The horizontal iron muntins were replaced with concentric muntins and the windows below became casements. Window grilles were added. The consoles flanking the central second story window were articulated as scrolls and quoins were added to frame the smooth-faced ashlar of the upper stories. The initial description of the building as submitted in December, 1911, called for the outside walls to be of concrete stone in imitation of natural Indiana limestone; the second submission called for walls of brick and limestone ashlar. The terra-cotta cornice and the green tile roof of the initial submission were retained in the final design.

It is likely that if Hazzard, Erskine & Blagden had retained the title of "Architects for the Police Department of the City of New York", this design would have been repeated elsewhere throughout the city as new precinct station houses were needed. But as a consequence of Commissioner Waldo's dismissal, the Simpson Street station house is the sole example.

#### Building Description

The basement and ground story of the 62nd Police Precinct Station House are square in plan, 100 feet by 100 feet (Plate 1). A light-well indentation in the center of the back of the building admits daylight to the staircase (north elevation). The plans of the second and third stories show light-wells above the ground story in the building's sides (east and west elevations) that separate the three-story, limestone and hipped-roof front half of the station house from the four-story, yellow brick and flat-roofed rear half.

The three-story Simpson Street facade (Plate 4) is faced with limestone. Five large arches, springing from the building's granite base, distinguish the rusticated ground story. Within each of these arches, except for the garage entrance at the right, the framework is of iron and configured as a broad central bay and narrower side bays. This configuration is carried concentrically into the arch as well. The muntins

terminate as scroll brackets, the horizontal member is enriched with dentilled molding. The main entrance, through the central arch, is flanked by iron lanterns with spiked crestings; a cartouche superimposed on this arch's keystones carries an incised monogram incorporating the stylized initials "NYPD." The heavy paneled double doors are of oak, each with four panels. The sidelights are fixed. The outer eight lights of the semi-circular transom are fixed, but the center light is hinged at the bottom. The oak double doors of the garage entrance are wider than the main entrance doors (there are no sidelights); each door is panelled with paired and alternating short and long panels, three short and two long. The outer eight lights of the semi-circular transom are fixed; the central light is hinged at the bottom. The other three arches contain windows. Recessed granite spandrels below the windows are articulated to correspond with the iron window frame configuration above; consoles, separating a broad panel and flanking narrower panels, support the marble sills. The central windows and sidelights are hinged at their sides. The eight outer lights of the semi-circular transom are fixed, the central light is hinged at the bottom. The original iron grilles cover all three windows and all five semi-circular transoms; the bars of the semi-circular grilles form a radiating pattern, exactly corresponding with the rebates of the surrounding voussoirs. There is an inscription on the building's base to the left of the main entrance. Though in a spalled condition, it can be read: "Police Department, City of New York, R. Waldo, Police Commissioner, MCMXIII."

The second and third stories of the Simpson Street facade are of smooth-faced, ashlar limestone. Five windows light the rooms of the precinct's officers on the second story and five more the patrolmen's dormitories on the third story. The central, second story window is set in an aedicule. Flanked by consoles, it has a pediment supported on scroll brackets. An iron flagpole supported by thin metal braces projects from its sill. Each of the third-story windows has a molded sill. A muntin divides the central, third story window; half of the window lights the east dormitory, the other half the west. The broad, bracketed cornice above is terra cotta, richly detailed with dentil- and egg and dart moldings; the bracket surfaces are molded as double acanthus

leaves. The cornice soffit is articulated with coffers and roseate bosses. The hipped roof is covered with asphalt paper instead of the original green tile.

Both the east and west elevations of the station house's front section are in full view, and both are finished in the manner of the Simpson Street facade. Three windows light the rusticated ground story. They are iron one-over-one with transoms. Above the belt course three windows with wood one-over-one sash light the smooth-faced ashlar second and third stories. Quoins punctuate the corners of these side elevations. The broad terra-cotta cornice continues that of the Simpson Street facade.

Iron picket gates, part of the original design and about twelve feet high and seven feet wide, flank the Simpson Street facade. Iron picket fencing runs about twenty-four feet along the east and west lot lines.

The four-story rear section of the station house is of yellow brick above and below a marble water table. At the foot of the eastern and western lightwells are lower one-story rooms. Each has a window with one-over-one wood sash the size of those above. The exterior walls of each of these one story rooms is coped with marble. Four windows light each of the stories on the east, west, and rear elevations. The windows on the ground story are the same height as those on the side elevations of the building's front section and are one-over-one with transoms. The upper-story windows are like those in the front section of the building. Three windows light each of the contiguous flights and landings of the staircase; their height was determined by their position on a flight or a landing. All of these window openings have marble sills and lintels and are set with one-over-one wood sash. The parapet and chimney are coped with marble also. There is an areaway at basement grade.

#### Subsequent History

Very little change has occurred to the exterior of the former 62nd Precinct Station House since it was officially completed in May, 1914. Following a fire in 1936, the station house was declared an unsafe building by the city's Buildings Department. It may have been at this time that the original green tile roof was removed. The building was

made safe and the complaint removed in 1937. Spot lights to illuminate the parking area in front of the building have been fixed to the grilles within the extreme left and right arches. Recently townhouses have been built on either side of the station house, leaving the side elevations of the front section of the station house fully visible.

A new station house for the 41st Precinct is nearing completion at Southern Boulevard and Longwood Avenue. The soon-to-be vacated

station house on Simpson Street will become a branch office of the Safe Streets Program.

Report prepared by Charles Savage,  
Research Department

Report edited by Marjorie Pearson,  
Director of Research

#### NOTES

1. The 62nd Police Precinct Station House (LP-1434) was first heard by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on June 14, 1983 (Item No. 9). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provision of law. One witness spoke in favor and three letters were received in favor of the designation.
2. The following sources were consulted for this section: Stephen Jenkins, *The Story of The Bronx* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912); Robert Jensen, *Devastation/Resurrection - The South Bronx* (Bronx, N.Y.: The Bronx Museum of The Arts, 1980); John McNamara, *History in Asphalt* (Bronx, N.Y.: The Bronx County Historical Society, 1984).
3. Southern Boulevard swung northeast from East 133rd Street across Port Morris across "Woodside," the E. G. Faile place south of the Simpson property, to the northernmost reach of Hunt's Point Road, crossing Westchester Avenue to cut through the Fox estate, and terminated at the Bronx Botanical Garden.
4. Simpson Street, north of Westchester Avenue, was but an extension of one of the Simpson driveways on the southside of the Avenue.
5. Bronx County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Section 10, Liber 27, pp. 280-281.
6. Bronx County, Office of the Register, Liber, Deeds and Conveyances, Section 10, Liber 74, p. 269.
7. Jenkins, *The Story of The Bronx*, p. 378.
8. The following sources were consulted for this section: Police Department, City of New York, *Annual Reports*: 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1916, 1918, 1920, 1924, 1929; Gerald Astor, *The New York Cops* (New York: Charles Scribners & Sons, 1971); Percy T. Chadbourne, "A Report on the Distribution of the Force of the Police Department," *Police in New York City - An Investigation - Board of Aldermen* reprinted. (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1971); Irving Crump and John W. Newton, *Our Police* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1935); Vina Delmar, *The Becker Scandal* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1968); John J. Hickey, *Our Police Guardians* (New York: privately printed, 1925); Lowell M. Limpus, *Honest Cop: Lewis J. Valentine* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1939); *Message of the Hon. William J. Gaynor, Mayor of the City of New York to the Board of Aldermen*, pursuant to Sec. 115 of the City Charter, Feb. 21, 1911; Louis Heaton Pink, *Gaynor* (New York: The International Press, 1931); Tom Walker, *Fort Apache* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1976); and Rhinelander Waldo, "The New York Fire Department," *Red Book: British Fire Prevention Committee*, no. 156 (London: The British Fire Prevention Committee, 1911).



9. The new station houses were: the 4th Precinct station house at 16-20 Beach Street; the 150th Precinct station house at Poplar Street, Brooklyn; and the 283rd Precinct station house at 275 Church Street, Richmond Hill, Queens. The rebuilt station houses were for: the 18th Precinct at 230 West 20th Street, and the 15th Precinct at 321-323 East 5th Street.
10. Police Department, *Annual Report, 1914*, p. 18; ff p.76. The other five station houses pictured were: the 283rd Precinct station house; the 4th Precinct station house; the 18th Precinct station house; the 37th Precinct station house at 229 West 123rd Street; and the 15th Precinct station house. The 150th Precinct station house on Poplar Street, Brooklyn, illustrated in the *Annual Report* of 1912, was not included. Funds for the 37th Precinct house had been appropriated in the previous administration.
11. Waldo's negligence before and after the gambler Herman Rosenthal's assassination on July 16, 1912, contributed to his downfall. Waldo had ordered Police Lt. Charles Becker to raid Rosenthal's establishment. Lt. Becker had been extorting regular "protection" payments from Rosenthal. Rosenthal went to District Attorney Whitman. Charges were brought against Becker for murdering Rosenthal. Naively Waldo assured Mayor Gaynor there was no substance to the charges brought against Becker. A jury determined otherwise; after several appeals Becker was electrocuted on July 30, 1915.
12. The following sources were consulted for this section: Police Blotter Book #32, 1920, Police Blotter Book #35, 1921, and Police Blotter Book (number obliterated), 1970, Storage Room, 41st Precinct Station House, 1086 Simpson Street, The Bronx; Tom Walker, *Fort Apache* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1976).
13. The boundaries of the 41st Precinct are encompassed by the bulkhead line along the East River on the south; the Bronx River on the east; on the north, working east to west, Westchester Avenue at Longfellow Avenue along 167th Street to Simpson Street, thence along 169th Street to Prospect Avenue; the western boundary runs south along Prospect to Southern Boulevard and East 149th Street.
14. The following sources were consulted for this section: Samuel Willett Comstock, *Blagden Family* (New York Public Library, typescript, 1939); *Harvard College, Class of 1904: Secretary's Second Report*, June 1910 (Cambridge, MA., 1910); *Secretary's Third Report* (Cambridge, MA., 1914); *Secretary's Fourth Report* (Cambridge, MA., 1919); *25th Anniversary Report* (Norwood, MA.: Plimpton Press, 1929); *30th Anniversary Report* (Norwood, MA.: Plimpton Press, 1934); Waldo Lincoln, *Geneology of the Waldo Family*, 2 vols. (Worcester, MA: Charles Hamilton Press, 1902; *Society of Beaux Arts Architects*, 1925; *Yearbook of the Columbia University School of Architecture* (New York: The Architectural Society, Columbia University, 1905-06); *Yearbook of the Columbia University Architectural Society* (New York: School of Architecture, Columbia University, 1904);
15. In the 1917-18 City Directories, Erskine is listed as an architect at 437 Fifth Avenue, Room 904, and Hinchman & Hazzard Co., Inc., contractors (with Hazzard as president and Jonathan R. Hinchman as vice-president and treasurer -- Edgar J. Wright was secretary) is listed in Room 904 also. Hinchman's name had been on the Hazzard, Erskine & Blagden firm's stationery as an associate in 1912. Two years later there is no listing in the City Directories for the Hinchman & Hazzard Co. and only a residential listing for Erskine. Most likely it was World War I and the general war effort that put a stop to the peacetime building trades.
16. Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Upper East Side Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1051), vol. 1, 1981, p. 521.
17. Blagden's sister-in-law was Waldo's first cousin-once-removed, Lydia Laurence Jones Blagden. Rhinelanders Waldo's first cousin, Cornelia Waldo, married Arthur Mason Jones (brother of Edith Jones Wharton) and their daughter Lydia Jones married Arthur Campbell Blagden, Wendell's younger brother. It is likely, too, that Waldo and Blagden may have met at Tuxedo Park where both the Waldos and

Joneses maintained country places.

18. Sources consulted for this section include: Michael Cheilik and David Gillison. *Public Buildings in The Bronx*. (New York: Herbert H. Lehman College, The City University of New York, n.d.), n.p.; Collections of the Art Commission of the City of New York, "Simpson Avenue Police Station," Exhibits 605 1(A-G) & 2(H-Q); David Gray, *Thomas Hastings, Architect* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1933); "The Work of Carrere & Hastings," *Architectural Record* 27, no. 1 Jan., 1910). Thanks are due to both Deborah Bershad, Art Commission, and Gail Adiss, Safe Streets Project Director, Building Maintenance Section, Planning, New York City Police Department, for their assistance.
19. Art Commission Submission #1359, Series 605, December 26, 1911.
20. The mayor, the president of the Metropolitan Museum, the president of the New York Public Library (Astor, Lenox and Tilden foundations), the president of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, one painter, one sculptor, one architect, one landscape architect, all of whom must be residents of the city and three other city residents, none of whom could be active in the fine arts.
21. Stokes had graduated from Harvard in 1891 and attended the Architecture School at Columbia University in 1893-94. That same year he departed for Paris, returning to New York in 1897. The Witheys indicated that he attended the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in 1896-97, Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathbun Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970), pp. 575-576. Shortly after he formed his twenty year partnership with John Mead Howells, a former assistant in the McKim, Mead & White firm (and nephew of William Rutherford Mead).
22. Commissioners at the first meeting on January 9, 1912 were the painter Francis C. Jones, a lay member John Bogart, and I. N. P. Stokes in the chair; at the second meeting on May 14, 1912, the committee was comprised of Charles Howland Russell, a trustee of the New York Public Library, lay member R. T. H. Halsey, and again Stokes in the chair.
23. The rusticated courses to the level of the third voussoir are one foot, three inches in height, to the fourth and fifth voussoirs the courses are one foot, two inches in height, the sixth voussoir course is one foot, one inch in height, the seventh is an even foot, the second to the top course is ten inches high, and the top course is eight inches high.

Incorporating the keystone into the belt course is a detail characteristic of the "Modern French" style advocated by Thomas Hastings. It is not surprising to see in the work of students from Hasting's atelier at Columbia. A writer, differentiating between the work of the Carrere & Hastings firm from that of McKim, Mead & White, stated that McKim, Mead & White's predominant sympathy, though they did not identify their work specifically with any one of the different forms the Renaissance passed through, was for the early Italian Renaissance. Carrere & Hastings were loyal to a certain phase of the French Renaissance. "The Work of Carrere & Hastings," *Architectural Record* v. 27, no. 1 (Jan., 1910), p.1. Stokes' more archaeological changes reflect his training and consequent bias for the Italian Renaissance.

## 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 62nd Police Precinct Station House (now the 41st Police Precinct 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 62nd Police Precinct Station House was built in 1912-14 for a new police precinct in the West Farms area of the Bronx, then undergoing rapid development and increase in population; that designed by the architectural firm of Hazzard, Erskine & Blagden in the neo-Renaissance style considered appropriate for an arm of municipal government, the station house reflects the vision of the City Beautiful movement; that the three-story limestone Simpson Avenue facade with a monumental ground story of bold, bull-nosed rustication and smooth-faced ashlar second and third stories, richly ornamented terra-cotta cornice, and broad-eaved hipped roof (originally of green tile) evokes the fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century palaces of Florence and Rome; that submitted for the approval of the New York City Art Commission (itself founded in response to City Beautiful ideals), the design received subsequent academic refinement in the architecture committee, headed by Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes; that this station house, commissioned by Rhinelander Waldo, the new Commissioner of the Police Department as part of an ambitious building program for the department, appears to have been intended as a model for others; and that contemporary political reverses made it the only example of Hazzard, Erskine & Blagden's work conveying the image city government wished to project in the recently urbanized boroughs beyond Manhattan just before World War I.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 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 62nd Police Precinct Station House (now 41st Police Precinct Station House), 1086 Simpson Street, Borough of The Bronx, and designates Tax Map Block 2727, Lot 17, Borough of The Bronx, as its related Landmark Site.

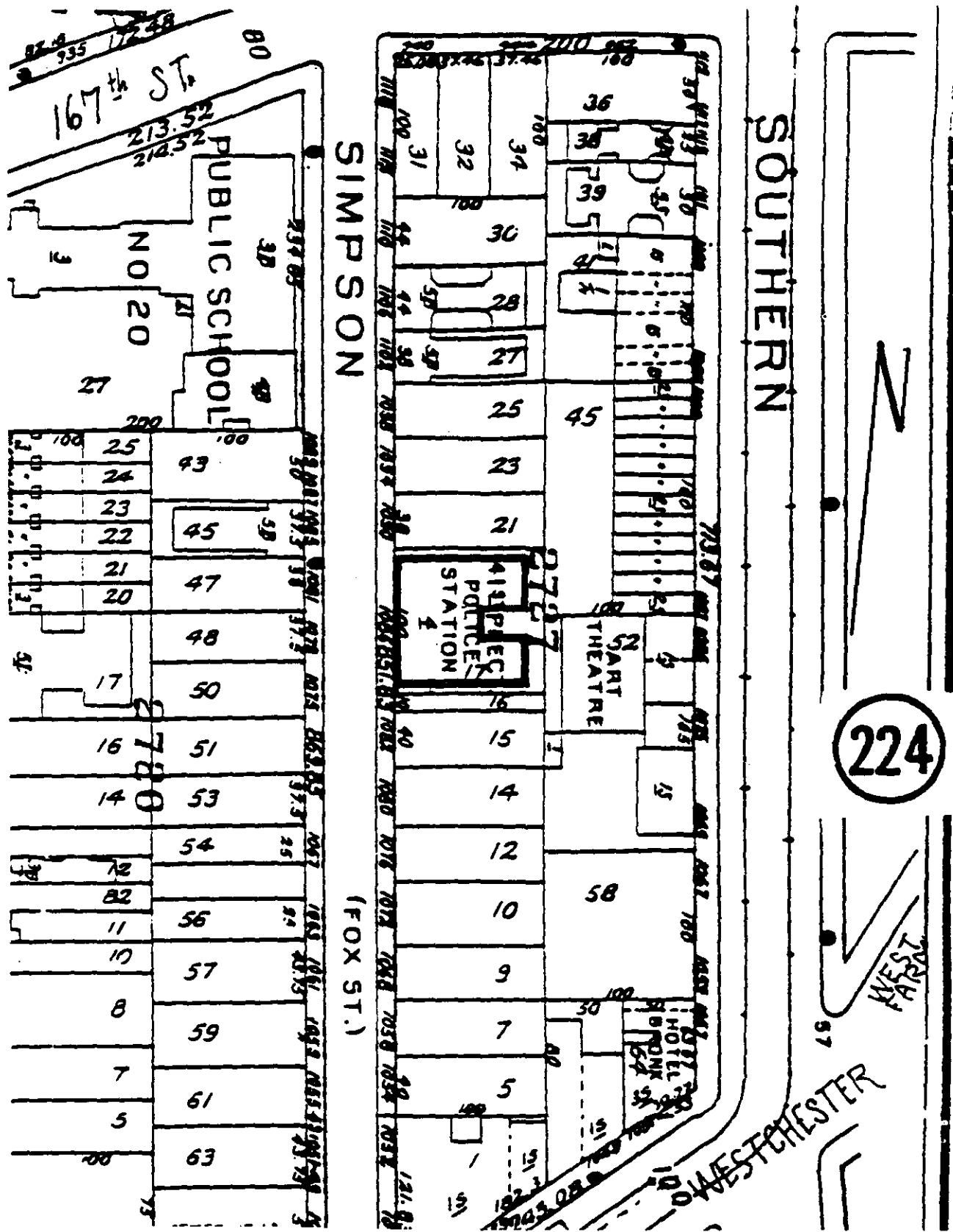


Plate 1. Site Plan. Former 62nd Police Precinct Station House, 1086 Simpson Street, The Bronx.

Landmark Site: Bronx Tax Map Block 2727, Lot 17.

Graphic Source: *Bronx Land Book* (New York: Real Estate Data, Inc., 1982), vol. 1, plate 225.

*Simpson Street Police Station  
Exhibit "605-B"  
Alfred Janssen*

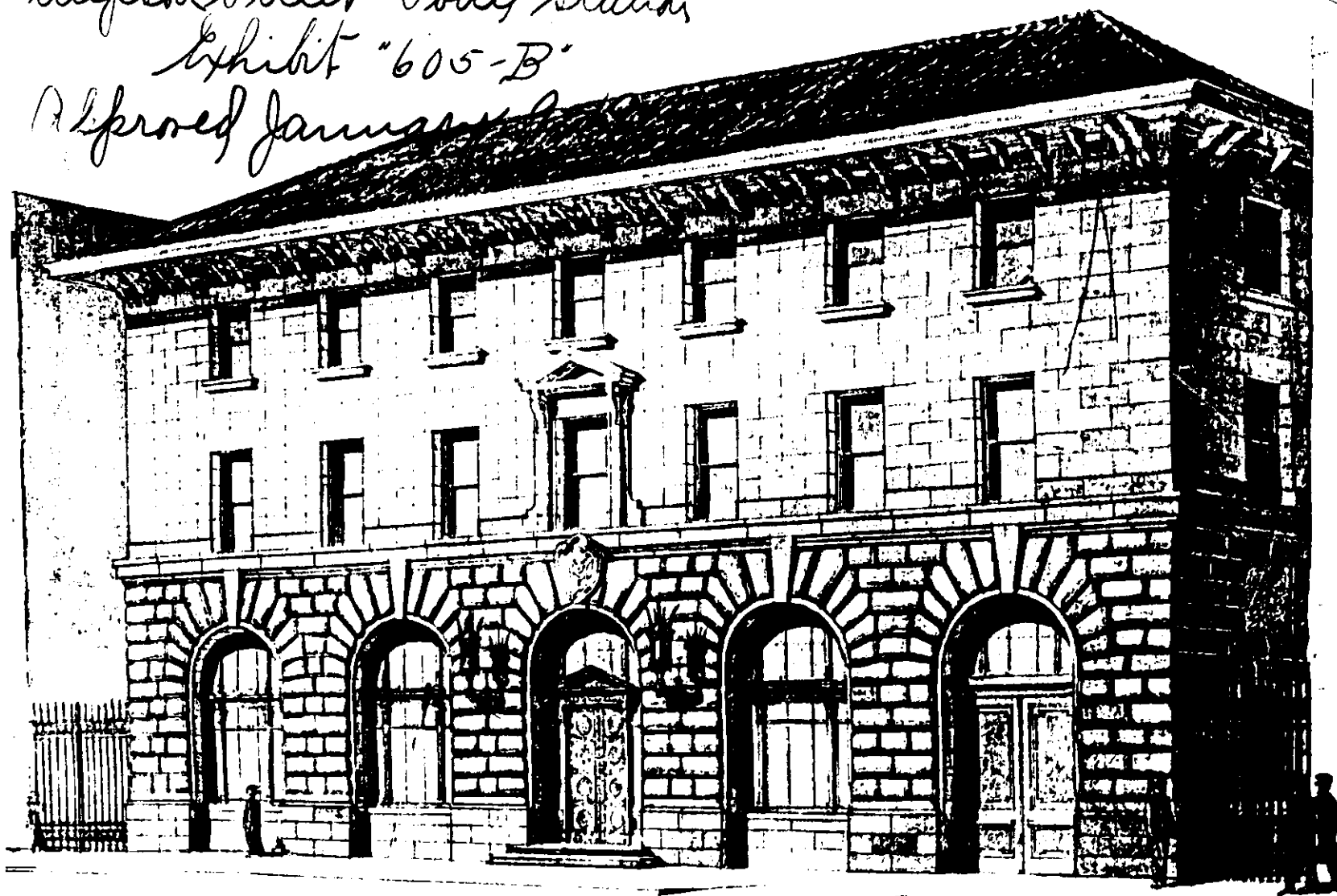


Plate 2. "Simpson Street Police Station," the initial design for the 62nd Police Precinct Station House. Hazzard, Erskine & Blagden, 1911. Collections of the Art Commission of the City of New York, Submission #1359, 605-A.

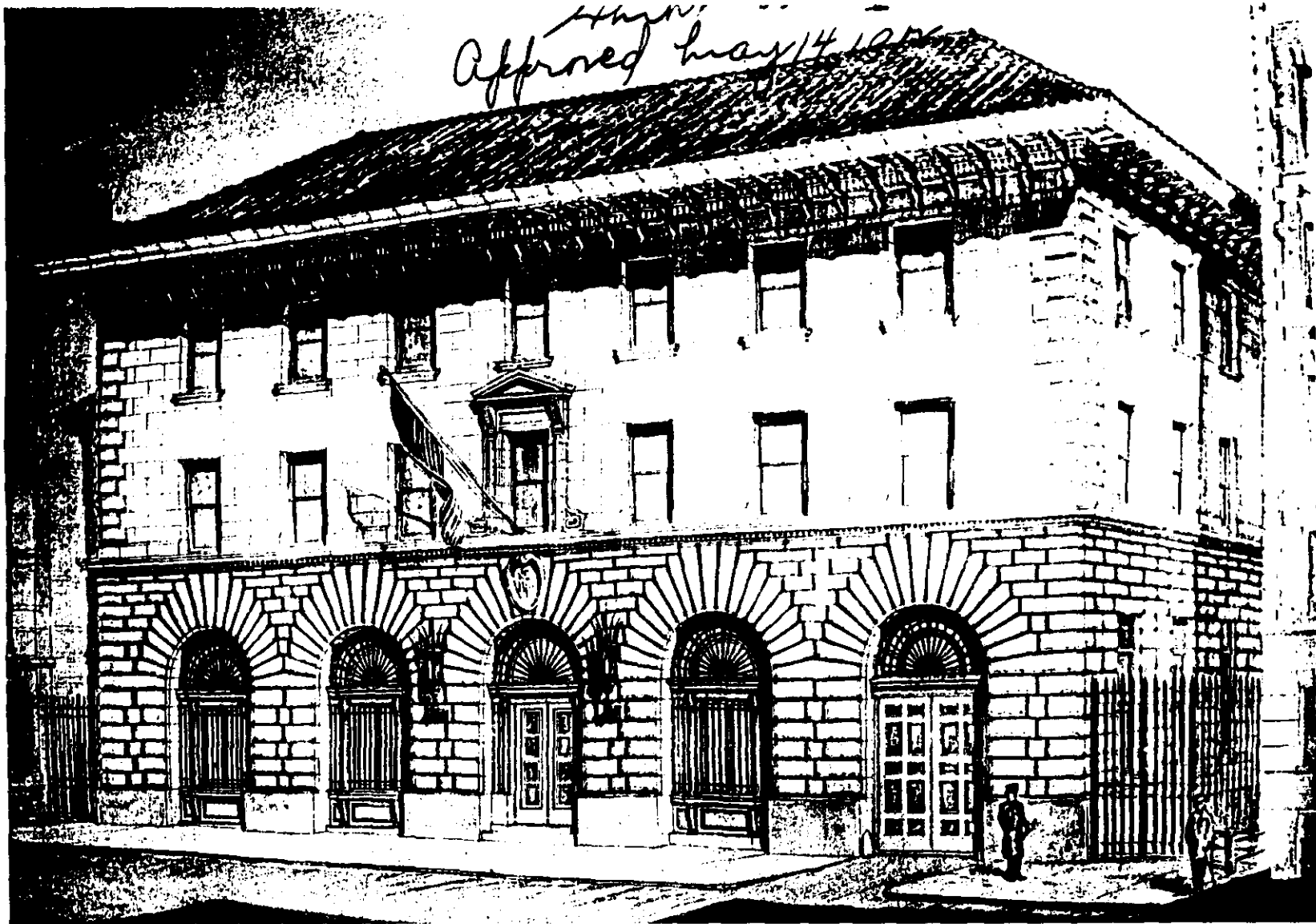


Plate 3. "Simpson Street Police Station," the accepted design for the 62nd Police Precinct Station House. Hazzard, Erskine & Blagden, 1912. Collections of the Art Commission of the City of New York, #1359, 605-1.



Plate 4. 62nd Police Precinct Station House, 1086 Simpson Street, The Bronx. Hazzard, Erskine & Blagden, 1912-1914.  
(Carl Forster)

