

1968

NYC Parks

Landmarks Preservation Commission
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LATOURETTE HOUSE, Latourette Park, Richmond Hill Road, Staten Island. Completed about 1836.

Landmark Site: Borough of Richmond Tax Map Block 2320, Lot 50 in part, consisting of the land on which the described building is situated.

On September 13, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Latourette House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 57). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Two witnesses spoke in favor of designation, including the representative of the Parks Department. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Extremely dignified in appearance and imposing in size, the Latourette House is a good example of the Greek Revival style of domestic architecture. This spacious residence, once a showplace on Staten Island, now serves the community as a public clubhouse. The two and one-half story rectangular shaped house, built of brick with stone trim, has a bold sharp profile, with its pitched gable roof and four large chimneys silhouetted against the sky. Situated on high landscaped grounds with a commanding view of New York Bay, the property is now owned and operated as a golf course by the Department of Parks.

A flight of stone steps leads up to a raised veranda. This large L-shaped porch, constructed during the 1936 restoration, dominates the mansion. The roof of the porch is supported by box columns with plain caps and bases. Between the columns is a simple wooden railing which is repeated again, as a balustrade, at the edge of the porch roof. Paneled pilasters flank the handsome entrance door with its narrow side lights and transom. Imposing in character, the entrance shows the influence of the Greek Revival style. In the front elevation, the shuttered windows are placed directly above each other with tummy-on-the-floor windows located directly under the horizontal fascia board of the molded cornice, which adorns the structure at the roof line.

The 1836 Latourette House, which had belonged to David Latourette along with some five hundred acres of farmland, was sold by the heirs of the Latourette estate to the City of New York in 1928. The same year the residence was dedicated as a clubhouse, and the following year a nine-hole golf course was opened to the public.

David Latourette, (1786-1864) like his father before him, was a truck farmer and planter and did a thriving business. The farm continued in operation until 1910. During the second half of the Nineteenth Century it was considered the finest farm on Staten Island. The land is now part of Latourette Park, an area comprising six hundred and twenty-eight acres.

The Latourettes were active in the affairs of Staten Island for over two centuries. Jean Latourette's name first appears there in 1702, as a witness and a freeholder. A son, John, was in the South Company of Militia in 1715 and was a justice of the peace in 1738. Both Richard Latourette (1833-1910) and his father David, who built this house, had been county supervisors, and both had held political posts in Richmond County. Richard Crocheron Latourette, the last male member of the family, died November 26, 1910 with no issue.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Latourette 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 Latourette House is an important example of Greek Revival Style of domestic architecture, that as restored to its original appearance, it has superb proportions, is imposing in size and stately in appearance and that it has been successfully converted into a useful public building serving the community of Staten Island.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 8-A of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Latourette House, Latourette Park, Richmond Hill Road, Staten Island and designates as its related Landmark Site that part of Borough of Richmond Tax Map Block 2320, Lot 50, which contains the land on which the described building is situated.