

LORILLARD SNUFF MILL, New York Botanical Garden (bounded by Bronx River, Bronx River Parkway and the Bronx & Pelham Parkway), Bronx Park, Borough of The Bronx. Built about 1800.

Landmark Site: Borough of The Bronx Tax Map Block 4336, Lot 1 in part, consisting of the land on which the described building is situated.

On January 11, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Lorillard Snuff Mill and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 23). One witness spoke in favor of designation. The Commission continued the public hearing until February 8, 1966 (Item No. 22). At that time one speaker spoke in favor of designation, the representative of the New York Botanical Garden. Both hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There were no speakers in opposition to designation at either meeting. In a letter to the Commission William C. Steere, Director of the Botanical Garden stated, "We are delighted to have you designate the Lorillard Snuff Mill as a Landmark". In a letter, Park Commissioner Thomas Hoving recommended designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

An historic Landmark of American industry, the Lorillard Snuff Mill, stands on the grounds of the New York Botanical Garden. It is one of the few surviving examples of the vernacular type utilitarian building, which was once so common in this area. Although completely altered to serve as a Park Department public cafeteria with indoor and outdoor dining areas, this building is a picturesque reminder of a bygone type of construction with its old stone walls and brick trim still intact. Located on sloping ground adjacent to the Bronx River, the structure is two stories high on the upland side with an extra story on the river side, where there is a stone terrace overlooking the river.

In 1792, the Lorillard brothers moved their main factory north of New York City to the country on the Bronx River where they bought a grist mill, dam, water rights, buildings and fifty acres. About 1800 the Lorillards replaced the old mill with a larger one built of native fieldstone. They harnessed the river to run the new mill and with large grinding stones produced their famous snuff. The mill was in operation until about 1870 when this family firm moved to a new plant in New Jersey. The City of New York acquired 661 acres of the Lorillard Bronx property including the Old Snuff Mill in 1884. The Park Department used the mill for a carpentry shop, although the machinery and water mill was left intact until about 1900.

Architecturally the building is important as an example of an early factory building. The fieldstone and brick masonry trim is of excellent quality and a very fine example of Nineteenth Century construction. In the restoration the original structure was restored and changed as little as possible. The century old beams were left exposed, showing where the machinery for the grinding stones had been attached. These beams now span the attractive conference room on the first floor.

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 Lorillard Snuff Mill 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, this vernacular type structure set a high standard of masonry construction for a factory building, that the Old Snuff Mill has been successfully converted into a useful public building, and that it is a picturesque reminder of an early type of industrial, masonry construction.

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 Lorillard Snuff Mill, New York Botanical Garden, Bronx Park, Borough of The Bronx and designates as its related Landmark Site that part of Borough of The Bronx Tax Map Block 4336, Lot 1 which contains the land on which the described building is situated.

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