

Landmarks Preservation Commission
October 14, 1965, Calendar No. 3
(LP-0003)

OLD UNITED STATES NAVAL HOSPITAL, Hospital Road between Squibb Place and Oman Road, New York Naval Shipyard, Borough of Brooklyn. Begun 1830, completed 1838, architect Martin E. Thompson.

Landmark Site: Borough Brooklyn Tax Map Block 2023 in part, consisting of the land on which the described building is situated.

On September 21, 1965, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Old United States Naval Hospital as a Landmark and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Calendar No. 3). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Four witnesses spoke in favor of designation of the building including the Deputy Borough President of Brooklyn representing the Borough President of Brooklyn. In a letter to the Commission, a local representative of the Department of the Navy asked that this building be deleted from the Calendar. In another letter the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Properties and Installations took the position that the Commission cannot exercise any authority over buildings owned by the United States.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Old Naval Hospital is a distinguished two-story Greek Revival structure by an outstanding architect of the period. This building of dressed granite is marked by extreme simplicity and refinement. The relationships between window and wall and the jointing of the masonry show a care and study which are truly Greek in their subtlety. The woodwork of the building maintains the high standard set by the stonework. The building has an "E" plan, and on the long side is a recessed portico with eight square classical piers of stone, two stories in height. These are an important architectural feature which set an example for many subsequent structures.

The question has been raised by the Federal Government as to whether this building should be designated by New York City as a Landmark. The Commission wishes to honor a building of which New Yorkers are proud. The Commission is cognizant of the jurisdictional question. Nevertheless, it is very important for the Government of New York City to state officially its deep concern that this building be preserved. There should be no uncertainty about this in anyone's mind.

The Commission would be negligent if it failed to act in this situation. At some time in the future this building may be in jeopardy. Our designation will be especially helpful in alerting New York City's elected representatives in Washington of the importance of saving this building. At present the Commission's specialists can be of service in providing advice so that the architectural integrity of this building is maintained. Indeed a fine relationship already exists with many local representatives of the Federal Government.

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 Old United States Naval Hospital 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 Old United States Naval Hospital is a Greek Revival building of the highest quality in design and construction and is the work of a celebrated New York architect and that the building is of national interest as a rare surviving example of early institutional design.

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 Old United States Naval Hospital, Hospital Road between Squibb Place and Oman Road, New York Naval Shipyard, Borough of Brooklyn and designates as its related Landmark Site that part of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 2023 which contains the land on which the described building is situated.