

Landmarks Preservation Commission
October 14, 1965, Calendar No. 7
LP-0007

STUYVESANT-FISH HOUSE, 21 Stuyvesant Street, Borough of Manhattan. Begun 1803, completed 1804, architect unknown.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 465, Lot 29.

On September 21, 1965, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Stuyvesant-Fish House as a Landmark and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Calendar No. 7). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Four witnesses, including a representative of the owner, spoke in favor of designation of the building, and another witness was recorded as favoring the designation. In his testimony, former Representative Hamilton Fish, President General of The Order of Lafayette, announced plans for his organization to purchase the building and to use a portion of it for a museum. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Twenty-One Stuyvesant Street is a brick Federal Style residence with three full floors and an attic. In its architecture, the Stuyvesant-Fish House displays beauty of proportion, notable restraint and those details that indicate an outstanding Federal house. Inside the building many original features have survived testifying to its authenticity -- the stairway, the archway in the hall, ceiling decorations and the side windows that were used when the house was first built and had no adjoining building to the east. The exterior of 21 Stuyvesant Street is a hallmark of the Federal style; above the windows are their original splayed stone lintels. On the top floor of the house are two early arched dormer windows; at the center of each arch is a doubled keystone. The Stuyvesant-Fish House stands today as an all but unique example of a fine New York urban dwelling of the period.

The house is rich in historical associations. It was built by Peter Stuyvesant, a great-grandson of Peter Stuyvesant, the last Dutch Director-General of New Netherland. It is located on a piece of the large tract of land which the Dutch West India Company granted to the first Peter Stuyvesant in 1651 and which passed to his descendants. The younger Peter Stuyvesant built the house for his daughter, Elizabeth, at the time of her marriage to Nicholas Fish.

Nicholas Fish served at Valley Forge and throughout the Revolutionary War. He was commissioned a Major at the age of eighteen and is believed to have been the youngest Major in the history of the United States Army. Fish was a close friend of Alexander Hamilton and was one of the executors of his estate. Fish was also an intimate friend of General Lafayette who was entertained at 21 Stuyvesant Street on the evening of September 10, 1824, during his famous return to America 50 years after the Revolutionary War. Nicholas Fish's son, Hamilton Fish, was born at 21 Stuyvesant Street in 1808. Hamilton Fish served as Governor of New York, as a United States Senator and for eight years was the Secretary of State.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this house, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Stuyvesant-Fish 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 Stuyvesant-Fish House is one of the few outstanding urban houses remaining on the Island of Manhattan dating from as early as 1804 and that it has important associations with the history of New York and the United States.

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 Stuyvesant-Fish House, 21 Stuyvesant Street, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Tax Map Block 465, Lot 29, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.