

WYCKOFF-BENNETT HOMESTEAD, 1669 East 22nd Street, Borough of Brooklyn. Built about 1766; architect unknown.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 6785, Lot 72.

On February 8, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Wyckoff-Bennett Homestead and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 74). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Two witnesses spoke in favor of designation including the owner, who said that during the previous year he had spent fifteen hundred dollars to maintain the excellence of his house. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Singularly distinguished by its fine scale and proportion, this one and one-half story frame dwelling is a handsome example of one of the few remaining Eighteenth Century Dutch Colonial farmhouses still standing in Brooklyn. It is modest in size and in an excellent state of preservation; two hundred years of wear have done little to diminish the simple beauty of its clear cut profile and the dignity of its related parts. It has been declared, by Maud Dilliard the historian, to be the most beautiful example of Dutch Colonial architecture in Brooklyn.

The house is rectangular in plan with an extension on the northern end containing a kitchen and a room that in earlier days was used for a milk house. In the late 1890's, when the land was divided into lots, streets were put through and the house, which faced south, was turned around to face the west. The structure was placed upon a brick foundation, and dormers were added. A long porch extends the width of the south exposure, and six slender columns support the roof which is swept down over the porch area in a gentle curve. The upper half of the horizontally divided front door (dutch door) contains two original thick, bluish green windows called bulls eyes. In the interior much of the handsome Eighteenth Century paneled woodwork is intact and is of excellent quality.

From an inscription found cut in a beam in the old barn, we can assume that the house was standing in 1766. It is believed the farmhouse was built by Henry and Abraham Wyckoff. During the American Revolution, Hessian officers were quartered there. At least one of them recorded a lasting impression on the four-by-seven window panes with a sharp instrument, possibly a diamond. Two of these original panes are carefully preserved by the owners of the house. One is inscribed with the name "Toepfer Capt. of Regt. de Ditfurth" and the other "M. Bach Lieutenant Hessen Hanau Artillerie".

In the two centuries of its existence, only two family names are associated with this house. In 1835 the farm, consisting of about one hundred acres and certain meadows and woodlands, as well as pew number sixty-two in the old Gravesend Dutch Reformed Church, were bought by Cornelius W. Bennett. The land was farmed by the family until the turn of this century. Four generations of the Bennett family have lived in the house since it was purchased from the Wyckoffs.

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 Wyckoff-Bennett Homestead 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 Wyckoff Bennett Homestead is an outstanding example of Eighteenth Century Dutch Colonial farmhouse architecture, that it has been continuously lived in for over two centuries by prominent Brooklyn families and that the house has associations of historic interest with the American Revolutionary War.

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 Wyckoff-Bennett Homestead, 1669 East 22nd Street, Borough of Brooklyn and designates Tax Map Block 6785, Lot 72, Borough of Brooklyn, as its Landmark Site.