



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

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LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION DESIGNATES THE FIELDSTON HISTORIC DISTRICT IN THE BRONX

“Fieldston is one of the most significant twentieth-century planned communities in New York City, with remarkable historic and modern buildings that take advantage of the area’s natural topography,” said Robert B. Tierney, Chairman of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. *“By designating this district today, the Landmarks Commission is preserving one of the City’s jewels.”*

The Fieldston Historic District is a rare, largely intact example of a romantic planned suburban community that has evolved over time. The land comprising Fieldston was purchased by Joseph Delafield in 1829 as part of a larger estate. In 1909, a year after subway services reached 242nd Street and Broadway, the owners of the Delafield estate decided to develop the property by selling several acres to Manhattan Teachers College, with the rest to be a “private park devoted exclusively to country homes.” The estate hired engineer Albert Wheeler, who finalized the layout in 1914. Wheeler’s plan, based on recommendations made by Frederick Law Olmstead and James R. Croes, who had surveyed the area in 1876, incorporated winding roads that followed the natural topography and preserved, as far as possible, its “wooded knolls, dells and hillocks.”



4630 Fieldston Road

By 1923, the residents of the area formed the Fieldston Property Owners Association (FPOA), in order to continue the original goals of private residential development. In 1928, it published a handbook containing names of approved architects, including, among others, Frank J. Forster, Julius Gregory, Dwight James Baum, Polhemus & Coffin, Electus D. Litchfield and James W. O’Connor. Most owners chose Baum or Gregory, but all of the architects working in Fieldston at the time designed the houses using the then popular picturesque revival styles, including the Medieval, English Tudor, Mediterranean, Dutch, and Georgian Colonial. Prominent materials included clapboard, brick, stucco, fieldstone and slate, and the buildings feature romantically composed facades with columns, porticoes, fanlights, chimneys and steeply sloping or gambrel roofs. Many of the homes were published in leading architectural journals and magazines such

as *Better Homes & Gardens*, *Country Life* and *House Beautiful*, giving the neighborhood a reputation as a showcase for good design. While the majority of buildings date from the early twentieth-century, there are also a number of significant modern buildings that were built after FPOA's relaxation of its design guidelines in the 1950s.

Today, the 257 buildings in the Fieldston Historic District create a unique sense of place in New York City, incorporating a large number of architect-designed houses with a rich palette of materials set amidst winding tree-lined streets and dramatic rock outcroppings.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is the New York City agency responsible for designating and regulating New York City's landmarks. To date, the Commission has designated 1,129 individual landmarks, 105 interior landmarks, 9 scenic landmarks, and 84 historic districts.