The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

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MID-19TH CENTURY STATEN ISLAND ITALIANATE VILLA DESIGNATED AS A NEW YORK CITY LANDMARK

Landmarks Commission Honors Nathaniel and Ann Wyeth House in Lighthouse Hill for Its Distinct Design and Cultural and Historical Associations

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission today voted unanimously to designate the Wyeth House on Staten Island as a landmark. Crowned by an octagonal lookout and two chimneys with molded caps, the ornate, 2 ½ story Italianate villa was built c. 1856 on a hillside at 190 Meisner Avenue, and constructed of brick and stone, at a time when most of the buildings on Staten Island were built of wood. The house was erected by Nathaniel J. Wyeth, a prominent attorney and New York State Assemblyman whose clients included Cornelius Vanderbilt and son William H. Vanderbilt, both of whom were involved in the construction of the Staten Island Railroad.

"Today's vote to add the Wyeth House to New York City's growing collection of landmarks is an important step in the Commission's ongoing efforts to preserve significant reminders of Staten Island's 19th century past," said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. "This impressive, secluded villa is a reminder of the rural past of the Island, and it commanded sweeping views of the surrounding landscape and New York Bay."

Wyeth, a Baltimore native, started practicing law in New York City in 1853, and built a clientele that included inventors and oil and mining companies. In 1871, he served on a panel that was appointed by the state to plan roads, parks, avenues and other improvements on Staten Island to attract new residents.

Opera star Graham Marr, one of America's foremost baritones during the 1910s, bought the house in 1925, and lived there with landscape painter Norman Robert Morrison. They rebuilt the captain's walk around the lookout, and painted murals of Staten Island scenes in the former dining room. The house was purchased by its current owner in 1978.

More

The other 19th-century distinctive structures that are linked to the Island's development and are under consideration for landmark designation include: the **Elsworth House**, at 90 Bayview Avenue, Prince's Bay; the **Sprague House**, 6136 Amboy Road, Pleasant Plains; the **Wood House**, 5466 Arthur Kill Road, Tottenville; **3833 Amboy Road Rouse**, Great Kills; the **George Cunningham Store**, 173 Main St., Tottenville; **Standard Varnish Works**, 2589 Richmond Terrace, Elm Park; and **103 Circle Road House** on Todt Hill. Public hearings on the proposed landmark designations of these buildings were held on April 10, 2007.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is responsible for protecting and preserving New York City's architecturally, historically and culturally significant buildings and sites. Since its creation in 1965, LPC has granted landmark status to more than 23,000 buildings, including 1,161 individual landmarks, 108 interior landmarks, nine scenic landmarks and 87 historic districts in all five boroughs. Under the law, the Commission must be comprised of at least three architects, a historian, a realtor, a planner or landscape architect, as well as a representative of each borough. There are 11 commissioners, all of whom are appointed by the Mayor for staggered three-year terms.