



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

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LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION DESIGNATES THREE INDIVIDUAL LANDMARKS

Loew's Paradise Theater Interior, 2405-2419 Grand Concourse, the Bronx

"This theater interior is one of the most amazing spaces in New York City," said Robert B. Tierney, Chairman of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. *"We are so lucky that this gem has been restored to its original grandeur."*

The Loew's Paradise Theater, designed by John Eberson, is one of the most important atmospheric motion picture theaters to survive in the United States. Completed in September 1929, it was one of five so-called "Wonder" theaters built by the New York-based Loew's chain to serve major population centers outside midtown Manhattan. Located in the Bronx, on the west side of the Grand Concourse, just south of Fordham Road, the theater incorporates many richly-decorated interiors, including an auditorium that seats nearly four thousand. Eberson, who invented this type of theater in the mid-1920s, designed the Paradise to evoke the art and architecture of the late Renaissance or early Baroque period.



The studio of Caproni and Brother, from Boston, Massachusetts, produced most, if not all of the sculptures in the theater, including plaster reproductions of works by Michelangelo and Peter Visher, among others. To enhance the feeling that patrons were seated outdoors, Eberson embellished the room with artificial trees, vines and birds, and installed a machine that produced simulated clouds. In combination with sound, which had recently been introduced to the movies, the atmospheric theater offered a multi-sensory experience that has rarely been equaled. In subsequent decades, however, the Paradise was victim to the growing popularity of television and suburbanization. Though converted to a multiplex in 1973, ticket sales continued to decline and the theater closed in 1994. Over the past decade, however, most alterations have been reversed and the extravagance of the original interior has been restored. Considered by many to be Eberson's masterpiece, the Paradise re-opened as an entertainment venue in October 2005.

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Estey Piano Factory, 112-128 Lincoln Avenue, the Bronx

“The Estey Piano Factory is a reminder of the era when New York City was one of America’s piano-manufacturing centers,” said Chairman Tierney. *“This designation is a wonderful tribute to this important industrial history.”*

Featuring robust brick facades and a high corner clock tower, the former Estey Piano Company factory is a distinguished monument to an industry that was once one of the Bronx’s most important. Anchoring the northeast corner of Lincoln Avenue and Southern (now Bruckner) Boulevard since 1886, the Estey building is the oldest-known former piano factory standing in the Bronx today. Designed by the architectural firm, A.B. Ogden & Son, with a later expansion by John B. Snook & Sons, the building’s signature clock tower and expansive facades—simply but elegantly detailed



with terra cotta, patterned brick, and contrasting stone—are visible from the waterfront and nearby Harlem River bridges, making the Estey factory a true neighborhood landmark.

The Estey Piano Company was organized by Jacob Estey and John B. Simpson in 1885. Two decades before, Estey had established an organ works in Brattleboro, Vermont that had grown into one of the country’s largest producers of reed organs, thousands of which found their way into American parlors every year. Like other organ manufacturers in the late nineteenth century, Estey sought to diversify into the booming piano industry, and his partnership with Simpson—a pioneering North Side piano manufacturer—was a means to that end. When Estey Piano opened its factory, it manufactured upright and grand pianos which would become recognized for their “superior construction and workmanship.”

Theodore F. and Elizabeth J. De Hart House, 134 Main Street, Staten Island

“This charming house is a significant example of Staten Island’s residential development,” said Chairman Tierney.

The Theodore F. and Elizabeth J. De Hart House, built ca. 1850, is a rare survivor of early Tottenville, an important 19th-century town on Staten Island’s South Shore. This vernacular clapboard cottage merges older local building traditions with newer Greek and Gothic Revival modes. The richly ornamented 1870s front porch (which probably replaced an earlier porch) features articulated carved posts, cutwork spandrels and an exuberant railing. The entire house is substantially intact. Sharing



architectural forms with other Tottenville houses, this is one of the best-preserved houses representing South Shore Staten Island’s early building traditions.

Through its succession of owners, the house has close ties to the oyster business, which created the town of Tottenville. It was built as an investment on the newly laid-out Totten Street (later

called Main Street) by Henry Butler, of a Tottenville family whose ferrymen and millers went back several generations. Three years later it was owned by William H. B. Totten, a grocer, and four years after that by Joseph W. Totten, a partner in an oyster-opening firm. Theodore F. De Hart, an oyster planter, was the owner of longest duration, from 1874 to 1913. 134 Main Street is one of the two oldest houses on this important Tottenville street.

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 1,134 individual landmarks, 106 interior landmarks, 9 scenic landmarks, and 85 historic districts.