New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

Mott Haven East
Historic District

April 5, 1994

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

Mott Haven East Historic District

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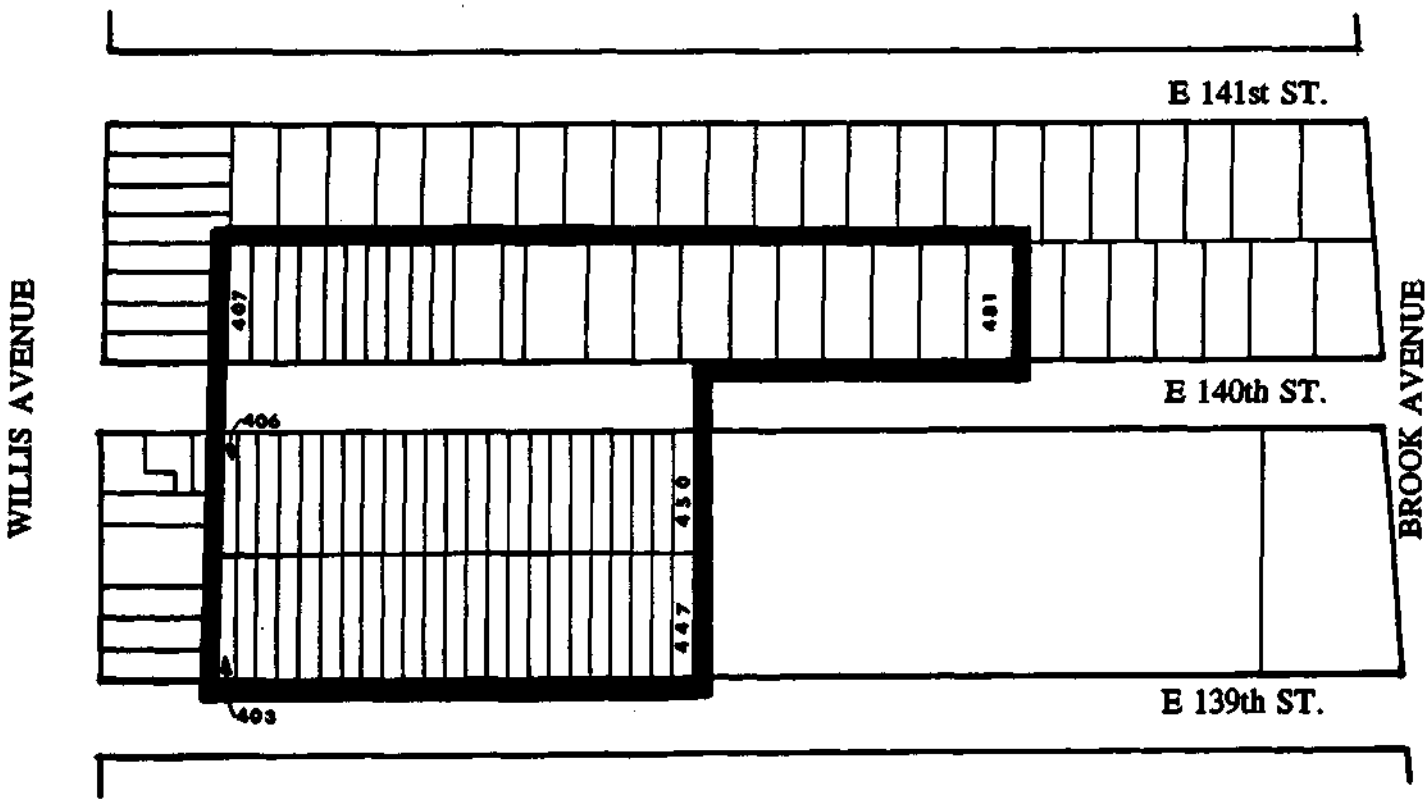

Note: Numbers indicate addresses within district boundaries.

District Boundary

North

MOTT HAVEN EAST HISTORIC DISTRICT
The Bronx
Designated April 5, 1994
Landmarks Preservation Commission

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Boundaries 1

Testimony at the Public Hearing 1

Introduction 2

Historical and Architectural Introduction 4

- The History of Morrisania 4
- The Early Development of Mott Haven 6
- The Urbanization of Mott Haven 8
- The Mott Haven East Historic District 9
- Subsequent History 15
- Recent Trends 16

Building Entries 17

- East 139th Street, north side between Brook Avenue and Willis Avenue 17
- East 140th Street, south side between Brook Avenue and Willis Avenue 18
- East 140th Street, north side between Willis Avenue and Brook Avenue 20

Selected photographs . . . . . [following page 23]

Findings and Designation 35

Cover photograph: 430 East 140th Street
Katherine Khan

Landmarks Preservation Commission
April 5, 1994, Designation List 258
LP-1899

MOTT HAVEN EAST HISTORIC DISTRICT

BOUNDARIES

The property bounded by a line beginning at the intersection of the northern curb line of East 139th Street and a southerly extension of the western property line of 403 East 139th Street, extending easterly along the northern curb line of East 139th Street, northerly along the eastern property lines of 447 East 139th Street and 450 East 140th Street, northerly across East 140th Street, easterly along the northern curb line of East 140th Street, northerly along the eastern property line of 481 East 140th Street, westerly along the northern property lines of 481 through 407 East 140th Street, southerly along the western property line of 407 East 140th Street, southerly across East 140th Street, and southerly along the western property lines of 406 East 140th Street and 403 East 139th Street, to the point of beginning; The Bronx.

TESTIMONY AT THE PUBLIC HEARING

On June 2, 1992, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Mott Haven East Historic District (Item No. 15). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There were seven speakers in favor of the designation. While no persons spoke in opposition to the designation, one person expressed reservations about the inclusion of city-owned multiple dwellings within the boundaries of the historic district and one other speaker was unsure of his position.

INTRODUCTION

The Mott Haven East Historic District consists of a small enclave of rowhouses and tenements on East 139th and East 140th streets, between Willis and Brook avenues, in the Mott Haven neighborhood of the Bronx. This section is one of the oldest settled areas of the Bronx and the first in the borough to be developed with rowhouses. Though common in Manhattan and Brooklyn, rowhouses from the nineteenth century are relatively rare in the Bronx.

Within the area of the district are three groups of single-family rowhouses (one row including a small multiple dwelling) and two groups of tenements. Erected between 1889 and 1903, these buildings serve as a virtual catalogue of speculatively-built housing types common to the South Bronx building boom of the 1880s and '90s. Complementing these residential buildings are the neo-Gothic St. Peter's German Evangelical Lutheran Church and Parsonage of 1911-12. As a whole, the buildings in the historic district include fine examples of neo-Grec, Queen Anne, Renaissance-inspired, and Flemish Revival design, illustrating the stylistic trends in residential architecture in New York City in the final decades of the nineteenth century.

Mott Haven, located in the historic township of Morrisania, takes its name from the village developed early in the nineteenth century by industrialist Jordan L. Mott, who opened an ironworks on the Bronx side of the Harlem River in 1828 and built his own house near the foundry. Industrial expansion occurred during mid-century, accompanied by sporadic residential construction, but the area remained relatively undeveloped until the opening of rapid transit lines in the early 1880s made it more accessible to Manhattan. Mott Haven was one of the few sections of the Bronx to attract nineteenth-century speculative developers, who sought to capitalize on the demand for new housing brought on by the increasing immigrant population in the metropolitan region. Soon the area became an urban extension of Manhattan and was known in the period as the "North Side," drawing middle-class families to its rowhouses, and working-class families to its numerous tenements and flats buildings.

The first two groups of rowhouses built in the Mott Haven East Historic District, one on the south side of East 140th Street (1889) and the other on the north side of East 139th Street (1892), were constructed by local developers William O'Gorman and Hermann Stursberg, who built other similar rows in the immediate area of the historic district. For these rows, O'Gorman acted as his own architect, designing the houses in a style known as neo-Grec. Typical of the style, the uniform brick facades are adorned with incised geometric ornament in stone and topped by bracketed metal cornices. As built, the long handsome rows of forty-nine two-and-one-half-story houses were terminated at each end by a house with an additional story; the eastern twenty-nine buildings of each of these rows were demolished to make way for the construction of P.S. 40 in the 1960s.

The third group of rowhouses, on the north side of East 140th Street, was built by O'Gorman in 1897-1900 to the designs of architect William Hornum. The picturesque row includes pairs of two-and-one-half-story houses separated by single three-story houses, and is terminated at the west end by a four-story tenement. The shorter paired houses are somewhat simply designed, with modest stone trim, door enframements, and modillioned cornices; by contrast, the three-story houses have varied window patterns, pedimented lintels, carved details, and stepped and gabled rooflines. O'Gorman's own house, distinguished from the others by its greater width and different face brick, was built as part of this row, at No. 427.

Further east on the north side of East 140th Street are two matching groups of "New Law" tenements built in 1902-03, one designed by the firm of Neville & Bagge and the other by George F.

Pelham; these architects were active practitioners in the field of multiple dwellings, designing numerous buildings throughout the city at the turn of the century and into the 1920s. Faced in brick with stone trim, each Renaissance-inspired building has an elaborate entranceway with a shallow projecting canopy, round-arched fifth-story windows, and an imposing metal cornice. Between the tenements and Hornum's row to the west stands the attractive, neo-Gothic St. Peter's German Evangelical Lutheran Church (1911-12), designed by Louis A. Allmendinger. Faced with brick and stone trim, it has a central tower which adds to the picturesque character of the streetscape.

The buildings of the Mott Haven East Historic District, like those of surrounding areas, were initially inhabited by immigrant or second-generation families of European origin. By the mid-twentieth century, demographics in the area shifted to include African-Americans; the neighborhood now has a predominantly Hispanic-American population. Throughout the twentieth century to the present time, residential redevelopment, increased industrial usage, and demolition have eliminated many of the South Bronx's examples of original nineteenth- and early twentieth-century improvements; however, the blockfronts of the district retain their architectural integrity to a high degree. The Mott Haven East Historic District remains a vibrant residential enclave dating to the region's original phase of urban development.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INTRODUCTION

The History of Morrisania[1]

Prior to its incorporation into New Netherland in the early seventeenth century, the land corresponding to Morrisania was occupied by Native Americans in the Weckquaesgeek and Manhattan branches of the Mohegan tribe, who had named the region Laaphawachking. In 1641, Jonas Bronck, a Danish Lutheran, bought from Native Americans a 500-acre tract at the very southern reaches of what is now the borough named for him, between the Harlem River and the Aquahung (Bronx) River. Bronck constructed a house and outbuildings near the mouth of the Harlem River, southwest of the area of the Mott Haven East Historic District. From 1664 to 1673, while the Duke of York had control over New Netherland, the area became the dominion of the English. "Bronckslands" was made subject to the government of the city of New York and Harlem.

In 1670, the English holding known as "West Farms," located between the Harlem River and Bungay Creek to the west and extending north to about the present 150th Street, was purchased by two brothers: Captain Richard Morris and Colonel Lewis Morris, Englishmen of Welsh descent. The Morrises had served in Cromwell's army, and upon the restoration of the monarchy (1660) in England, they immigrated to Barbados, where they became estate-owners and merchant sugar-planters. After falling from favor with local authorities, Captain Richard Morris moved to New York in 1668. He relocated to West Farms upon its purchase in 1670, and died two years later, leaving a wife and baby son, named Lewis after his uncle. Over the next few years, during a brief return of Dutch rule and ensuing resumption of English control, Colonel Morris secured claims to his holdings as well as adjacent unclaimed parcels, which totaled nearly two thousand acres. (The colonel also purchased at this time thirty-five hundred acres in New Jersey, later known as Morris County.)

The county of Westchester, including the Morris land and all of what is now the borough of the Bronx, had been formed in 1683 under an English charter, with the town of Westchester, east of the Morris property, as the county seat. Westchester became a borough-town in 1696, when a mayoral court was established. Colonel Morris's nephew and heir, Lewis, who became known as Lewis Morris, Sr., as well as Lewis Morris, Jr., and Lewis Morris III (who was actually the fourth Lewis Morris), all in turn served as Westchester county representatives to the Provincial Assembly.

Lewis Morris, Sr., settled for a time in New Jersey and became its first provincial governor. He returned to New York and secured in 1697 a royal patent for the manor of Morrisania, which he had inherited from his uncle. Judge Morris's second son, Lewis Morris, Jr., inherited the entire Morrisania estate. Lewis Morris, Jr., died in 1762, leaving his son, Lewis Morris III, to become the lord of the Morris manor. At that time, the vast majority of inhabitants of the relatively more-populated Westchester townships to the east of Morrisania, along the Long Island Sound, were conservative Loyalists. In contrast, Morris was a vocal critic of British taxation and control tactics, and he dominated a 1774 borough meeting held to elect delegates to a county convention. He was chosen as a representative, and later became a brigadier-general in the Congressional army; he resigned his army post to become a member of the Continental Congress, and was a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

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[1]For information on the history of Morrisania, see Stephen Jenkins, *The Story of the Bronx 1639-1912* (New York and London: The Knickerbocker Press, 1912).

During the first hundred years following the original Morris land purchase, or up until around 1770, the upper sections of Westchester County were fairly uniformly settled with farms and villages, while virtually no development occurred in the lower portions. Only a few houses, barns, and mills, on the banks of Mill Brook, which divided the Morris estate in two, had been extant. In about 1760, General Morris had developed a mill at the western recess of his lands.[2]

In 1788, an act of the state legislature caused Westchester County to be divided into twenty-one townships, one of which was called Morrisania, corresponding to the Morris lands and reaching north to what is now East 170th Street. At this time Morrisania was the least populated township in the county, and Lewis Morris III was one of only thirteen heads of families there. By 1790 there were a total of only 103 free persons and thirty slaves -- seventeen of which were owned by the Morrises -- in Morrisania.[3]

Lewis Morris III had lobbied for township status and the rights to make other improvements to Morrisania, concurrent with his unsuccessful campaign to have the new nation's capital established there. In 1790, the state legislature granted him permission to construct a stone-piered wooden dam-bridge at the base of present-day Third Avenue, to connect Harlem with the northerly Post Road; these improvements were known as the Coles Bridge and Road. Traffic through the northern Kingsbridge crossing slowed dramatically, as travelers to West Farms, Eastchester and beyond chose the more convenient and shorter route across the Coles Bridge and Morris estate lands. Despite Morris's efforts, however, the township of Morrisania was merged into the older, neighboring town of Westchester in 1791. Nevertheless, a village, known as Morrisania, had been formed on the Westchester side of the Coles Bridge.

Port Morris, at the southeast edge of Morrisania and southeast of the present-day Mott Haven East Historic District, was another early Morris manor improvement and a proposed site of the new national capital. The Morris family also hoped that Port Morris would rival the port of New York on Manhattan island, because of adjacent deep water, and for a time the port had its own custom house. However, the community was located in a lowland area which experienced regular tidal flooding. It remained a small anchorage and ferry terminal throughout the nineteenth century and, at the end of the century, was filled in and laid with sewers and streets to accommodate several large factories.

Soon after 1791, when it had been merged into the neighboring township of Westchester, Morrisania became part of the contiguous West Farms township. In general, development in what is now the southwest Bronx remained limited throughout the next half-century to the construction of estate structures and scattered frame houses, and the laying of additional private farm roads. When Lewis Morris III died in 1798 at the age of sixty-two, the division and redivision of the Morrisania manor lands, and resulting nineteenth-century urban development, began.

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[2]A Revolutionary War era map shows only two structures (presumably the Morris manor house and an outbuilding), at the southwest tip of "West Chester County." The area between the "Broonks River" and "Morrisena" was labeled a "Salt Meadows." Thomas Kitchin Senior, "New York in 1778," map published in *London Magazine*, 1778. New York Public Library, Map Division.

[3]Jenkins, 2. The last African slave to be held in New York, when slavery was abolished in the state in 1827, belonged to the Morris family, 93.

The Early Development of Mott Haven[4]

Substantive development began in the southwest corner of Morrisania in 1828 when Gouverneur Morris II sold a large tract to the inventor of the coal-burning stove, Jordan L. Mott, and several co-investors.[5] Mott, the first major industrialist to locate in the Bronx, established the Mott Iron Works on the Harlem River at Third Avenue and 134th Street, west and south of the present-day Mott Haven East Historic District. Mott built a residence near the foundry, and named his pocket of Morrisania "Mott Haven." Questioned about Mott's new designation of land linked historically with the Morris family, Gouverneur Morris II is said to have stated "I don't care what he calls it; while he is about it, he might as well change the name of the Harlem [River] and call it the *Jordan*."[6]

By 1839, the population of Westchester County as a whole was just over 3,000 people.[7] Evidence of Morrisania's slow development and rural character is provided by the fact that the area's first religious structure was not built until 1840. In a field near the Mill Brook, Gouverneur Morris, Jr., founded St. Ann's Episcopal Church (now a designated New York City Landmark) at the site of his parents' tomb, at what is now St. Ann's Avenue and East 140th Street, just to the east of the present-day Mott Haven East Historic District.

Mott Haven proper, in contrast to the rest of Morrisania, began to grow steadily in the mid-nineteenth century. Mott's firm was incorporated and expanded into new buildings constructed throughout the neighborhood. The Mott Ironworks began to manufacture a wider range of goods, including kitchen and bathroom fixtures as well as stable fittings, gates, statuary, and garden furniture, produced in brass, bronze, and nickel-plate, in addition to iron.

Though some considered his ventures an unwanted intrusion, in 1850 Mott proceeded with plans for the lower part of the Mott Haven Canal, which followed an underground stream running parallel to Morris Avenue, about halfway between it and the Harlem River. The canal enabled boats to travel inland as far north as 138th Street, about the distance of a dozen blocks, and encouraged local industrial development. New enterprises included other metal works, lumber yards, saw mills, stone yards, enamel works and a notable concentration of impressively-built piano factories. A corresponding residential building boom, resulting from the need for worker housing, occurred in areas immediately north and east of the burgeoning canal zone.

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[4]For information on the history of Mott Haven, see Jenkins; Harry T. Cook, *Borough of The Bronx 1639-1913* (New York: Harry T. Cook, 1913), 20-21; James L. Wells, Louis F. Haffen, and Josiah A. Briggs, eds., *The Bronx and Its People: A History 1609-1927* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1927), 330-331; New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Mott Haven Historic District Designation Report* (1969); and *Building a Borough: Architecture and Planning in The Bronx, 1890-1940* (New York: The Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1986).

[5]Mott may have had ancestral ties to Westchester County; it is interesting that his family name appears as the first grantor listed in the county Deed Index of the Bronx Register, in conjunction with a 1684 transaction.

[6]Jenkins, 367.

[7]The animal populations included about 2,000 swine, nearly as many cattle, 585 horses, and 352 sheep. Over half of the area's 16,000 acres had been "improved," mostly as farms. Westchester contained two post offices, one each in the villages of Westchester and West Farms; see David H. Burr, *Map of the County of Westchester* (Ithaca, NY: Stone and Clark, 1839).

Mott Haven's industrial and residential growth was facilitated by the advent of the railroad, and preceded a period of intense development following the introduction of mass transit lines which transformed the farmlands of Morrisania into the urban environment that remains today. The introduction of the railways and additional bridges over the Harlem River in the 1840s linked Morrisania and Westchester county with the city of New York to the south. The New York & Harlem Railroad, incorporated in 1831, had taken over the New York and Albany line in 1838 and received authorization from the state legislature to bridge the Harlem River in 1840. Thus, the first railroad in what is now the borough of the Bronx passed in 1841 through Morrisania along Mill Brook, to West Farms and northward. The industrial community of Mott Haven, with its own rail-line station-stop, was firmly established.

In the following decades, a railroad and streetcar boom resulted in a web of crossing lines, many radiating from the Harlem (previously Coles) Bridge. Morris family members and other local landholders pushed for infrastructure improvements which would stimulate interest in speculative land purchases, and began selling off their acreage to builders.[8] Mott Haven's industrial and commercial development and its proximity to Manhattan made it a favorable environment for real estate speculation. The earliest known rowhouses in the area, dating from the early 1860s, are located at 276 to 294 Alexander Avenue between East 139th and East 140th streets, in the Mott Haven Historic District. Though commonplace in Manhattan and Brooklyn, rowhouses were unusual in what is now the Bronx, where homes were customarily freestanding frame structures. Throughout the nineteenth century, Mott Haven contained the only concentration of rowhouses in the borough.

The new rail system was responsible for the evolution of a number of other South Bronx villages into well-established towns. By contrast, the area now constituting the Mott Haven East Historic District had yet to be developed by 1860. On a contemporary map, only the street grid plan, devoid of built improvements, characterized this section east of Third Avenue.[9] After 1856, the new township of Morrisania was consolidated, with its town hall located at 160th Street and Third Avenue.

By 1858, traffic over the old Harlem Bridge had far surpassed the structure's capacity. The second Harlem (or Third Avenue) Bridge, another drawbridge made of cast iron, was erected in place of the earlier structure in 1860. This bridge was extant until the 1890s, when the much larger, surviving drawbridge of steel and iron was constructed to accommodate the markedly increased traffic, which included trolley cars. The earliest streetcar rail line in the Bronx ran up Third Avenue to Fordham from the Harlem Bridge as of 1863. In 1870, the New York-New Haven freight yards moved to Port Morris and spread along the waterfront in the South Bronx.

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[8]For a discussion of the development of the infrastructure and transportation improvements, see Evelyn Gonzalez, "From Suburb to City: The Development of the Bronx, 1890-1940," in *Building a Borough...*, 8-18.

[9]M. Dripps, "Map of the Five Cities of New York, Brooklyn, Jersey City, Hoboken and Hudson City," in *Valentine's Manual of the Common Council of the City of New-York* (New York: D.T. Valentine, 1860).

The Urbanization of Mott Haven

In 1874 the townships of Morrisania, West Farms and Kingsbridge split from Westchester County and became the 23rd and 24th wards of the City of New York, and thus part of New York County. (The southeastern portion of Westchester County was joined to the city in 1895.) New Yorkers referred to the area as "The Annexed District."

The severe Financial Panic of 1873 caused a city-wide building hiatus which lasted most of the decade. In the late 1870s, as the depression lifted, construction resumed slowly in what had become known as New York City's "North Side,"[10] encompassing Mott Haven. Development began to creep inward from the loose ring of towns in the southwest Bronx toward the open area of the present-day historic district, adjacent to Mill Brook. Directly to the south, along East 136th Street, three adjoining rowhouses were built as early as 1877-78 (located in what is now the Bertine Block Historic District).

Large-scale improvements to the infrastructure in the Annexed District advanced the pace of development. Businessmen formed booster organizations such as the North Side Association, active through the 1880s, which pushed for the improvements. As a result, streets were paved, sewers dug, parklands purchased, and perhaps most importantly, rapid transit lines laid. In 1884, the Madison Avenue Bridge was built at East 138th Street to provide a further connection between Manhattan and the North Side. Rows of housing, churches, offices, a school, and a fire station appeared along Alexander Avenue and above 141st Street. Industrial works and manufactories continued to surround the lower Mott Haven Canal west of Lincoln Avenue. Spanning the two blocks between Lincoln and Willis avenues, below 132nd Street, was the vast Harlem River station rail yard of the New York, New Haven & Hartford line. Still, at this time, very little had been developed between Willis Avenue and the newly-formed Brook Avenue just to the east of the Mott Haven East Historic District.[11]

The first mass transit line to travel to the Annexed District was the Suburban Rapid Transit Company's Third Avenue El, begun in the early 1880s, which passed two blocks west of the area of the Mott Haven East Historic District. In 1886 the SRT began work on an additional North Side transit line, running through the blocks between Alexander and Willis avenues.[12] The line incorporated a stop at 138th Street, just south of the Mott Haven East Historic District. It reached 145th Street in 1887, and then swerved westward to Third Avenue. A network of streetcars leading to and from the transit line stops was soon established. In response to an act of the New York State Legislature which was implemented in 1890 to coordinate the borough's improvements, the Commissioner of Highways of the Bronx Department of Street Improvements ordered a grid-type street layout for remaining unpaved areas and worked quickly to complete the borough's network of roadways and sewers.[13]

Seventy-five percent of the area's population in the 1890s lived in close proximity to the El, which first served as a magnet for concentrated tenement construction south and west of the area of the

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[10]Gonzalez, 10.

[11]By 1885, Brook Avenue had only been completed as far south as 138th Street, below which the Mill Brook still flowed. All of Mill Brook finally disappeared in the 1890s when Brook Avenue was completed. Jenkins, 16.

[12]*Atlas of the City of New York and Part of the Bronx* (New York: E. Robinson, 1885).

[13]Timothy Rub, "Introduction," in *Building a Borough...*, 5.

Mott Haven East Historic District.[14] Development, however, soon fanned out from the rail line. Single-family rowhouses, and then more lucrative apartments and tenements, were built in surrounding areas. Examples of these building types exist in both the Mott Haven and the Bertine Block Historic Districts, as well as in this historic district. The South Bronx region at the end of the nineteenth century is described by historian Evelyn Gonzalez as follows:

> By 1897, just a decade after the el began operation, the once vacant blocks east of Third Avenue were almost completely built over with solid brick buildings. This area held a mixture of building types: single-family town houses built in the late 1880s; multi-story apartment houses, built with increasing frequency in the 1890s; and to complete the picture, various industrial and manufacturing establishments along the neighborhood's southern fringe. This newly built-up area demonstrated the importance of the urban features the North Side had so painstakingly acquired.[15]

The Bronx held the record as the fastest growing borough in the city between 1890 and 1940. The population of the North Side was 89,000 in 1890; ten years later it had more than doubled to over 200,000. By 1915, the number had increased threefold, to 616,000.[16]

The Mott Haven East Historic District

Within the compact, one- and one-half-block area of the Mott Haven East Historic District are three groups of single-family rowhouses and two groups of tenements. Erected between 1889 and 1903, these buildings serve as a virtual catalogue of speculatively-built housing types common to the South Bronx building boom of the 1880s and '90s. Complementing these residential buildings are the St. Peter's German Evangelical Lutheran Church and Parsonage of 1911-12.

In 1887 and 1888, subsequent to the opening of the new transit line just west of Willis Avenue at the western edge of the historic district, speculative-building veterans William O'Gorman and Hermann Stursberg filed New Building applications for the construction of single-family houses in parallel rows along the entire south side of East 140th Street and north side of East 139th Street, between Willis and Brook avenues.[17] At the time the rows were constructed, there were vast, undeveloped tracts east of the area of the historic district, farther from the rail line and past the grounds of nearby St. Ann's Church, and many blocks neither demarcated by paved streets nor subdivided into lots.[18] The rows were completed in 1889 and 1892, respectively.

As built, the long handsome rows of forty-nine two-story-and-basement houses were anchored at each end by a house with an additional story; possibly multiple dwellings, the taller end buildings appear to have been planned in the course of construction. The eastern twenty-nine buildings of each of the rows were demolished to make way for the construction of P.S. 40 in the 1960s. Surviving structures

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[14]Gonzalez, 14.

[15]Ibid., 17.

[16]Ibid., 8, 17.

[17]New York City, Department of Buildings, Borough of the Bronx [NB 501-1887; NB 551-1888].

[18]*Atlas...* (1885).

are Nos. 406 to 450 East 140th Street and Nos. 403 to 445 East 139th Street. No. 447 East 139th Street, once adjacent to the school property, was demolished in 1973 due to unsafe conditions, and is now an empty lot within the boundaries of the district.

For these rows, O'Gorman acted as his own architect, designing the houses in a style known as neo-Grec. Typical of the style, the uniform Philadelphia brick facades are adorned with bold, incised geometric ornament in stone and topped by bracketed metal cornices having coved fascias decorated with large spade-shaped leaf motifs. The bold articulation and uniformity impart a strong, repetitive rhythm to the streetscapes. All of the houses in the two rows are sixteen feet, eight inches wide; the three-story houses were designed to project from the facade plane of the two-story houses by means of angled end bays. Each house is fronted by a stone stoop with heavy, ornate, cast-iron newels, balusters, and handrails. Sidewalks appear to have been originally bluestone, as bluestone pavers remain in front of empty lots just to the east of No. 403 East 139th Street.

O'Gorman seems to have based his design for the houses in these two rows on that of an earlier group of eight neo-Grec houses he and Stursberg erected in 1885 on the south side of East 139th Street, directly south of the historic district. The lone survivor from that prototype row is in every detail a match to the 1889 and 1892 rows included in the district. Neo-Grec houses with uniform cornice lines, flat facades, and even fenestration patterns, while less expensive to construct, were somewhat outdated by this time. In Manhattan, the style was supplanted in favor of the variegated and irregular forms of the Queen Anne style by 1880.

O'Gorman and Stursberg had completed other projects in the neighborhood in addition to the 1885 row across East 139th Street from the historic district. By 1885, they had erected a row of twelve houses along the east side of Willis Avenue between East 138th and 139th streets (demolished). In addition, the partners appear by 1885 to have developed both sides of the block between East 141st and 142nd streets (demolished), also bounded by Willis and Brook Avenues, due north of the Mott Haven East Historic District.

Little is known about Hermann Stursberg except that conveyance records show that his family had owned land in the southern block of the Mott Haven East Historic District as early as 1874, and that he formed a South Bronx building partnership with William O'Gorman. He later owned property under the name of Hermann Stursberg Realty Company.[19] The Department of Buildings documentation for the rows on East 139th and 149th streets lists his address as Staten Island.

William O'Gorman is known to have immigrated to New York from Ireland in 1863 or '64, at the age of 17. He obtained work with Daniel Crimmins, a builder, and quickly became his superintendent. In 1866 O'Gorman started his own architectural practice in Manhattan's Yorkville. He was the architect of two known rows of Italianate brownstone rowhouses in the same block in the Upper East Side -- a row of six at 165 to 175 East 70th Street (1871, two demolished; two altered), and a row of seven at 150 to 162 East 71st Street (one demolished; two altered) -- both for speculative builders. In 1875, after the annexation of the 23rd and 24th wards, O'Gorman joined Stursberg, transferred his business to the Bronx, and presumably began designing and building the rows of houses he planned with his new partner.[20]

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[19]Bronx County, Office of the Register, Department of Finance, Conveyances.

[20]William O'Gorman obituary, *New York Times*, June 26, 1903.

At least as early as 1887, O'Gorman and his family are known to have resided at 252 Willis Avenue just north of East 138th Street, in a house which was part of one of the rows that he had developed with Stursberg. The 1890 New York City Police Department census lists O'Gorman, age 45; his wife Julia, 43; sons William Jr., 22, Joseph, 16, Mort, 11, and Edward A., 5; daughters Lillie, 14, and Gertrude, 6; and Minnie Kane, 30, presumably a servant, as residents of 252 Willis Avenue.[21] According to an 1897 New Building application for the erection of the row on the north side of East 140th Street,[22] O'Gorman appears to have lived at 406 East 140th Street for some time between 1897 and 1900, when he is known to have moved to 427 East 140th Street. The U.S. census of 1900 shows that the developer's son, William J. O'Gorman, a thirty-one-year-old "Builder," lived at 497 East 139th Street.[23] O'Gorman, Jr.'s house was demolished together with others at the east end of the block.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Mott Haven was inhabited predominantly by people of either Irish birth or descent, while lower Melrose, to the north, was populated by Italian immigrants and their families. The two rows on East 139th and 140th streets in the Mott Haven East Historic District, which were occupied as rentals when first developed, contained both American-born residents and immigrant populations of European heritages. Turn-of-the-century census records show that occupants of these single-family rentals were typically first or second-generation German or Irish immigrants living with extended families and often a single servant. Head-of-household occupations included draughtsman, clerk, salesman, iron worker, assessor, wool importer, road inspector, tailor, picture framer, examiner, wood worker, adjuster, insurance agent, painter, horse dealer, glue broker and pilot. In addition, there was one fire chief, one newspaper editor, and a physician.[24]

Before O'Gorman and Stursberg had finished construction on the neo-Grec style rows, builder Edward D. Bertine had begun erecting three more fashionably-styled rows of houses on East 136th Street, in what is now the Bertine Block Historic District. In contrast to those of O'Gorman and Stursberg, Bertine's first houses, begun in 1891, were designed in the Queen Anne style, and were constructed of light-colored brick with an assortment of eclectic design features, a variety of textured facade materials, and picturesque rooflines including mansards, gables, and chimneys. Bertine's second group, begun in 1892, was designed in the Romanesque Revival style, with molded-brick and stone trim. The third Bertine group, constructed in 1895, exhibits Renaissance Revival design elements.

The next group of rowhouses built in the Mott Haven East Historic District exhibits stylistic elements found on the Bertine rows, including Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, and Renaissance Revival design features. This group, located at 407 to 427 East 140th Street toward the Willis Avenue end of the block, was built in 1897-1900. The houses were constructed on land also owned and developed by William O'Gorman, Sr., or perhaps by or with his son William, Jr. Records of the Department of Buildings show a William O'Gorman, of 662 (later 406) East 140th Street, as owner/developer of the row, which seems to refer to the younger O'Gorman. The architect for the row, in any case, was not the elder O'Gorman, as in the earlier rows, but rather Walter H.C. Hornum, who had offices in Harlem.

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[21]NYC, Police Department, *New York County Cenus*, 1890.

[22]NYC, Department of Buildings, Borough of the Bronx [NB 444A-1897].

[23]Co-residents included his wife, Addie, age 27; daughter Julia, 1, and Irish servant Alice Smith, 19; another child had died. U.S. Census Bureau, *Twelfth Census of the United States*, 1900.

[24]Ibid.

Having begun an architectural practice on lower Broadway in Manhattan in 1886, Walter H.C. Hornum (dates undetermined), apparently moved to East 125th Street to work with his brother, Louis A. Hornum, in 1888. According to New York City directories, the firm of Hornum Brothers seems to have dissolved by the turn of the century, when Walter moved first to midtown and then in about 1907 to West 125th Street, while his brother had set up in midtown as Louis A. Hornum & Co. By 1917 the brothers' addresses were again listed together in midtown. Walter Hornum's known work includes 425 to 451 West 162nd Street, two rows of Romanesque Revival style residences built in 1894-95 (now included in the Jumel Terrace Historic District).[25]

Begun in June, 1897, and completed in January, 1900, the row Hornum designed was planned as part of a larger development including eleven buildings to be built on through-the-block sites directly to the north, along the south side of East 141st Street. Construction on this parallel row, however, was suspended in 1899, and officially abandoned the next year. Area maps of 1893 and 1897 show the block divided into lots of equal size for rowhouses. However, the lots along East 141st Street were soon combined and larger, more profitable tenement buildings were constructed instead.

The completed row on 140th Street consisted of a varied yet harmonious group of two- and three-story-and-basement single-family dwellings, constructed of brick and stone and set back fifteen feet from the front lot line. The house at No. 409, toward the west end of the row, is only eight feet behind the lot line and adjacent to the end building at No. 407, a four-story brick multiple dwelling set back just five feet from the lot line. This "Old Law" tenement -- constructed in accordance with regulations in Tenement House Act of 1879 -- was built to house five families, each in one apartment per floor.

The two-story houses, grouped in pairs, the three-story residences, and the single multiple dwelling vary in width from about seventeen feet to twenty-two feet; No. 427, the three-story building at the east end of the row, is the widest house and the only structure in the group faced in Roman brick. It is probable that this house was built for William O'Gorman, Sr., for his family's use. The U.S. census of 1900 shows that William O'Gorman, a "Builder," now aged 55, owned and lived in No. 427.[26]

O'Gorman's residence has a rock-faced, rusticated stone basement, and has a red tile mansard roof, with a stone-trimmed pedimented gable. It is embellished with a rock-faced stone stoop having integrated carved newels, a carved stone entrance surround, and decorative stone trim. Windows contained stained glass sash. At the first story is a tripartite window with carved, figural wood mullions. At present, the building is in use as a school and staff residence. The neighboring lot to the east (No. 429), combined with this lot in 1966, remains undeveloped.

The projecting four-story tenement at the west end of the row joins the plane of its neighbor to the east by means of a curved corner return. The building, the darkest in color and heaviest in design detail, also contains a short, shallow stoop meeting the sidewalk. No. 409, the three-story-and-basement rowhouse to the east of the tenement, has a projecting bay that steps back to meet the flat plane of the

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[25]Dennis Steadman Francis, *Architects in Practice New York City 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1979); James Ward, *Architects in Practice New York City 1900-1940* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1989); and New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, Architect Files.

[26]O'Gorman was listed with his wife Julia, 52, also born in Ireland; daughters Lillian Smyth, 24, and Gertrude, 16; son Edward, 15; grandson William Smyth, 2; and three servants -- Minnie Kane, 40, and Catherine Nagle, 30, both New York natives of Irish descent, and Saria Sander, 19, born in Sweden. U.S. Census Bureau (1900).

building's neighbors to the east. All of the rowhouses have stone stoops set back from the sidewalk, which ascend from paved landings within the houses' large, planted areaways. The six paired, two-story-and-basement rowhouses have flat roofs and matching galvanized metal crested cornices (see No. 413). Facades contain slender lateral reveals anchored by carved stone bosses at the second story (see No. 417). Each pair is distinguished from the others by variations in brick color, trim design, and decorative detail. The even cornice lines are level with the bases of the tiled mansards atop the three-story buildings, each of which has a differently-styled stone-trimmed gable.

Typical of the fanciful late-nineteenth century fashion in residential design, buildings in this row combine classically-inspired carved, molded, incised and rock-faced detailing and decorative wrought-iron window and door grilles. A variety of window shapes, including shouldered and flat-, segmental-, and round-headed types, are found throughout the row. The three-story buildings generally exhibit decorative motifs that are more elaborate than those of the neighboring paired buildings -- these are nonetheless distinctively ornamented. Together, the group comprises a lively ensemble.

Upon its completion in 1900, the tenement building contained four rental households. They were composed of Seigmund Levey, a German-born furniture store proprietor, and his New York-born wife and daughter; Eli Partrige, an English real estate manager, and his New York-born wife and two daughters; James Morris, a club custodian from Virginia, his New York-born wife, who had one German-born parent, and his daughter, also born in New York; and the sixty-year old Charles Bates, a dry goods superintendant, and his wife Rachel, both New Yorkers.[27]

Besides O'Gorman's own residence, completed houses in the row in 1900 were owned and occupied by an Irish-born undertaker, his wife, four children and a servant; another undertaker, born in New York, his wife, son, a servant, and one roomer; and a linen store manager and his wife and brother-in-law, all German-born, with their four sons, the two eldest employed as a traveling salesman and a clerk, and a servant.[28]

In 1898, the entire annexed portion of Westchester County became the Borough of the Bronx within Greater New York City, in keeping with the terms of the city charter of that year. Highly influential in the turn-of-the-century development of the southwest Bronx was an organization called The North Side Board of Trade. Founded in 1894 as a successor to the North Side Association in order to attract manufacturing and other enterprises and a "superior class of residents," its membership included leading business and professional men with interests in borough.[29] The Board lobbied successfully for further improvements in the district, and the development of remaining open lands in the Mott Haven vicinity was soon accomplished with the erection of higher-density tenements and apartment buildings. Many such tenement buildings were constructed throughout the South Bronx at this time.

In the Mott Haven East Historic District, examples of such tenement construction appear on the north side of East 140th Street, several lots to the east of the O'Gorman/Hornum row. While an earlier New Building application reveals that three-story buildings, thirty-five feet in width, may have been planned for the row, nine five-story tenements, each over thirty-seven feet in width, were constructed in

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[27]Ibid. The names are spelled as they appear in the handwritten census records.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Jenkins, 11. The North Side Board of Trade building was erected in 1911-12 at Third and Lincoln avenues and East 137th Street; the cornerstone was laid by Mayor Gaynor.

two groups in 1902-03; each building was planned to house ten families. The first group (Nos. 465 to 481) was designed by Thomas P. Neville of the firm of Neville & Bagge; plans for the second group (Nos. 441 to 461) were filed by architect George F. Pelham.[30]

These buildings were erected for Gaines, Roberts & Co.; little is known about the firm's President, Furman V. Gaines, and Vice-President, Hugh L. Roberts. The structures were designed and built in accordance with the provisions of the Tenement Law of 1901, which marked the end of the narrow, rowhouse-sized tenement building and mandated the construction of larger, better ventilated multiple dwellings, complete with hot water, heat, and electricity.[31]

After practicing on his own for two years at 47 West 66th Street, architect George A. Bagge (dates undetermined) formed a partnership in 1892 with Thomas P. Neville (dates undetermined) and set up offices at No. 250 and then No. 213-217 West 125th Street. In 1915 the firm moved south to midtown, and then from 1919 to 1930 to Bergen Avenue in the Bronx. After 1923 and until 1936 Bagge headed George A. Bagge & Sons, first located at 299 Madison Avenue and then at 157 and 7 East 44th Street.[32]

Neville and Bagge were prolific designers of a number of building types, including stores and lofts, hotels, banks, and churches, but specialized in tenements and apartment houses. Although examples of the firm's work exist throughout Manhattan and the Bronx, most are in the residential neighborhoods of Manhattan's Upper West Side and Harlem. Neville & Bagge's rowhouses and apartment buildings appear in the Chelsea, Hamilton Heights, Jumel Terrace, Mount Morris Park, West End Collegiate, and Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic Districts. Individually designated New York City Landmarks designed by the firm include the freestanding Shuttleworth residence at 1857 Anthony Avenue (1896) in the Bronx and the facade (1907) of St. Cecilia's Convent at 112 East 106th Street, Manhattan.

Neville & Bagge's tenements at Nos. 465 to 481 East 140th Street form a unified row of four five-story tan brick buildings with limestone trim, designed in the popular neo-Renaissance style. George F. Pelham, a prolific practitioner in the field of multiple dwellings, was the architect of record for the adjacent five buildings at Nos. 441 to 461, the design of which matches that of the four Neville & Bagge structures to the west. The buildings are topped by metal cornices and feature centered, ground-story entrances having a sequence of harmonious yet slightly varying limestone surrounds, with projecting stone canopies and low stoops. At the time of designation, original entrance doors and window sash had been replaced.

Each steam-heated building was planned with two six-room apartments per floor plus a four-room janitor's apartment and storage space in basement. Lots are a standard 100 feet deep, and the buildings extend back about eighty-six feet. Fire escapes were placed on the rear elevations.

Other types of buildings were constructed in the neighborhood to serve the needs of the residents. The Mott Haven East Historic District contains an example of a small, early-twentieth century religious

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[30]NYC, Department of Buildings, Borough of the Bronx [NB 1479-1901; NB 319-1902].

[31]For a discussion of the Tenement House Acts of 1879 and 1901, see Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City: Dwelling Type and Social Change in the American Metropolis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), Chap. 2.

[32]Francis; Ward.

complex, in this case, intended to serve a local congregation of Lutherans of German birth or descent. In the center of the north side of East 140th Street, separating the rowhouses to the west and the tenements to the east, are the church (No. 435) and parsonage (No. 437), designed by Louis A. Allmendinger, and constructed in 1911-12 for the Second St. Peter's German Evangelical Lutheran Church, previously located at 374 East 141st Street. Today, a Lutheran congregation continues to occupy the church, now known as St. Peter's-in-the-Bronx.

The one-story-and-basement neo-Gothic church, punctuated by a tower, is a freestanding gray brick structure set on a stone base course, with a peaked slate roof, terra-cotta and copper cornices, and tile coping. The church's facade is set back from the building line of the adjacent tenements to the east, but forward of the neighboring parsonage to the west. Steel lintels support the low, square tower, originally decorated with a group of attenuated spires. A low stoop leads to a pair of wood entrance doors hung on metal strap hinges. Surmounting the entrance is a stained-glass pointed-arch Gothic window.

The church's two-story-and-basement parsonage is also freestanding, and contains Gothic design elements. The gray brick facades are ornamented with brownstone, limestone, and terra-cotta trim. The brownstone stoop is lined with iron railings and posts, and leads to an entrance door surmounted by a round-shouldered transom. Round-shouldered window openings have one-over-one double-hung sash and stained-glass transoms. The galvanized iron cornice is decorated with Gothic arches pressed into the fascia.

Little is known about the life and career of Louis Allmendinger, whose address is listed as 926 Broadway, Brooklyn, on Department of Buildings documentation for the St. Peter's Lutheran Church and Parsonage. Allmendinger took over the commission after an initial design by architects Schaefer & Jaeger had been approved and withdrawn in 1911. It is not known how much of the original scheme was used in the Allmendinger design.[35] One other known building attributed to Allmendinger is the Byzantine style Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Transfiguration of our Lord, constructed between 1916 and 1921 on North 12th Street in Brooklyn (a designated New York City Landmark).

[35]NYC, Department of Buildings, Borough of the Bronx [NB 41-1911]. The New Building application, subsequently withdrawn, for the construction of the church, showing architects of record as Charles Schaefer and Frederick Jaeger of the Bronx, appears to have been filed slightly after that of Allmendinger, although in the same year.

Subsequent History[34]

During the early twentieth century, the population of the Bronx continued to expand. The United States census of 1900 reports the total borough population at 200,507; the 1910 census shows that number more than doubled, with the population at 430,980. This constituted the greatest percent increase for the decade -- 115 percent -- of any borough in the city.[35] To contend with escalating road and rail traffic between Manhattan and the South Bronx, the Willis Avenue bridge had been erected in 1901 and the Madison Avenue bridge was replaced in about 1910 with a larger structure. Two additional railroad bridges brought the total number of early twentieth-century crossings to the South Bronx to five.

The subway came to the Bronx in 1905, and caused a further real estate boom in the borough. Development spread north, as it had in Manhattan in the previous century. One subway branch reached Morrisania at 149th Street east of Third Avenue. This crossroads, nine blocks north of the historic district, became a major shopping hub. In 1912, historian Stephen Jenkins wrote that the subway was "the most important factor in causing the enormous increase in the population of the borough."[36] Industrial development also increased markedly, and by 1910 the South Bronx contained hundreds of factories of varying types, and was considered the nation's piano manufacturing capital. Industry was concentrated just south and east of the area of the Mott Haven East Historic District.

Although the South Bronx contained a growing African-American population in the 1920s and '30s, the 1940 U.S. census findings for Census Tract 39 (bounded by East 138th and East 141st streets, Third and St. Ann's avenues), indicate that the population in the immediate vicinity of the Mott Haven Historic District was virtually all white, with nearly one-half of the population foreign-born. Of the foreign-born white heads of families in the tract, the largest percentage, nearly half, were from the Irish Free State (Eire), with Germans, Italians, and Russians together comprising another quarter. Latin Americans and other non-Europeans were only a fraction.

Recent Trends

By the 1970s, a clear change in the population of the area of the Mott Haven East Historic District neighborhood was discernible. Spanish-speaking residents comprised well over one-half of the population of the census tract, with those of Puerto Rican birth or parentage about fifty percent. African-Americans now made up forty-three percent of the total population. The 1990 U.S. census reported that the Hispanic population has grown to represent nearly eighty percent of the population of Tract 39.

In the 1960s and '70s, when many residential buildings in the South Bronx were abandoned or demolished, the area became synonymous with urban decay. In the midst of the disintegration, the neighborhood of the Mott Haven East Historic District, and its historic structures, endured. The Mott Haven East Historic District remains a vibrant residential enclave. Its century-old rows of solid houses and tenements, representative of the area's first phase of urban development, are important as anchors for current and future renewal.

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[34]Information in this section is drawn from Gonzalez, 25-28; and U.S. Census Bureau, *United States Censuses*, 1940, 1950, 1970, 1980, 1990.

[35]Jenkins, 9.

[36]Jenkins, 246.

BUILDING ENTRIES

EAST 139TH STREET, NORTH SIDE BETWEEN BROOK AVENUE AND WILLIS AVENUE

403, 405, 407, 409, 411, 413, 415, 417, 419, 421, 423, 425, 427, 429, 431, 433, 435, 437, 439, 441, 443, 445 East 139th Street
Tax Map Block 2284/Lots 120, 119, 118, 117, 116, 115, 114, 113, 112, 111, 110, 109, 108, 107, 106, 105, 104, 103, 102, 101, 100, 99

Date: 1892 [NB 551-1888]
Architect/Builder: William O'Gorman
Owner/Developer: William O'Gorman & Hermann Stursberg
Type: Single-family Rowhouses (22 of 51)
Style: Neo-Grec
Stories: 3 with basement (No. 403)
2 with basement (Nos. 405-445)

A uniform row of twenty-one 16'8"-wide two-story-and-basement rowhouses (Nos. 405-445), anchored at the west end by one 16'8"-wide three-story-and-basement rowhouse (No. 403) with a projecting, angled west bay. **No. 447**, to the east of the No. 445, is a vacant lot where one of the original houses in the row was demolished in 1973 due to unsafe conditions.

Part of an original row of fifty-one single-family brick houses, originally rental properties, extending along the entire blockfront from No. 403 to No. 503 East 139th Street. Nos. 449 to 503 demolished in the 1960s for the construction of P.S. 40 and its playground, outside the eastern boundary of the historic district. Constructed in about a year's time, the row was virtually identical to a parallel row built three years earlier along the south side of 140th Street (see below). It matched also a row of eight houses built by 1885 across 139th Street directly to the south, one of which remains, outside the boundary of the historic district.

Philadelphia brick facades trimmed in stone. Galvanized metal cornices with angular, paneled brackets and coved fascias decorated with large spade-shaped leaf motifs. Flat roofs. Stone stoops with heavy, ornate cast-iron newels, balusters, and handrails (cast-iron elements are extant at most of the houses). Broad, incised stone basement window lintels supported on plain angled brackets, joined by a stone band course; carved and incised recessed stone panels below stone window sills at the parlor story; incised stone lintels above, connected by narrow stone band courses. Double-leaf round-headed paneled wood entrance doors (see Nos. 413, 415, 419, 427), with carved fan-shaped foliate decoration surmounting lowest panels. Double-hung one-over-one wood sash windows. Grid-pattern wrought-iron basement door and window grilles, all with scrolled edges (extant at many of the houses). Stone areaway curbing surmounted by wrought-iron picket fences with foliate finials and decorative cast-iron newels flanking centered gates (see Nos. 441 and 443). Two stone steps to cement-paved areaways. Sidewalks appear to have been originally bluestone. (Bluestone pavers remain just to the east of No. 403.)

Co-developer Hermann Stursberg's realty company retained the first five buildings in the row (Nos. 403 to 411) and six others (Nos. 425, 427, 429, 431, 443 and 445) through the mid-1940s; the company sold one other (No. 423) in the mid-1930s. Most of the other houses were sold in the first two

decades of the century, by O'Gorman's heirs. No. 403 is the only address on the block for which occupants are listed in the 1890 New York City Police census, though this is likely to be an incorrect listing. The census shows three couples, one single woman with a son, and three single men, ranging in age from 6 to 60, in residence. However, the listed building was likely in reality the adjacent building (now demolished), which appears as a tenement in later censuses. The census of 1900 reported that a single extended family (that of a Gas Company clerk of Irish descent), plus five boarders lived in the house. Not until 1941 are there Department of Buildings records related to the building's status as a multiple dwelling. In that year, an application for sprinklers, partitions, ironwork, and a cellar exit was made. Other records indicate that No. 421 was converted to a multiple dwelling in 1948, and that Nos. 439 and 441 were converted to two-family dwellings c. 1920.

447 East 139th Street
Tax Map Block 2284/Lot 98

Vacant lot; was occupied by a two-story-and-basement house, part of the row extending the length of the block front (see **403-445 East 139th Street**). House demolished in 1973 due to unsafe conditions.

EAST 140TH STREET, SOUTH SIDE BETWEEN BROOK AVENUE AND WILLIS AVENUE

406, 408, 410, 412, 414, 416, 418, 420, 422, 424, 426, 428, 430, 432, 434, 436, 438, 440, 442, 444, 446, 448, 450 East 140th Street
Tax Map Block 2284/Lots 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33

Date: 1887-89 [NB 501-1887]
Architect/Builder: William O'Gorman
Owner/Developer: William O'Gorman & Hermann Stursberg
Type: Single-family Rowhouses (23 of 51)
Style: Neo-Grec
Stories: 3 with basement (No. 406)
2 with basement (Nos. 408-450)

A uniform row of twenty-two 16'8"-wide two-story-and-basement rowhouses (Nos. 408-450), anchored at the west end by one 16'8"-wide three-story-and-basement rowhouse (No. 406) with a projecting, angled west bay.

Part of an original row of fifty-one single-family brick houses, originally rental properties, extending along the entire blockfront from No. 406 to No. 506 East 140th Street. Nos. 452 to 506 were demolished in the 1960s for the construction of P.S. 40 and its playground, outside the boundaries of the historic district. Constructed in two phases (Nos. 406 to 484 were completed in January, 1889; the remainder in May of that year), the row was virtually identical to a parallel row built three years later, along the north side of 139th Street (see). It matched also a row of eight houses built by 1885 on the south side of 139th Street, one of which remains, outside the boundary of the historic district.

Philadelphia brick facades trimmed in stone. Galvanized metal cornices with angular, paneled brackets and coved fascias decorated with large spade-shaped leaf motifs. Flat roofs. Stone stoops with

heavy, ornate cast-iron newels, balusters, and handrails. Broad, incised stone basement window lintels supported on plain angled brackets, joined by a stone band course; carved and incised recessed stone panels below stone window sills at the parlor story; incised peaked and flat stone lintels above, connected by narrow stone band courses. Double-leaf round-headed paneled wood entrance doors (see No. 420) with carved fan-shaped foliate decoration surmounting lowest panels. (For original doors with ornament removed and top panels glazed, see Nos. 434, 420, 436 and 444.) Double-hung one-over-one wood sash windows; wood hopper windows at basement. Grid-pattern wrought-iron basement door and window grilles, all with scrolled edges. Stone areaway curbing surmounted by wrought-iron picket fences with foliate finials and decorative cast-iron newels flanking centered gates. Two stone steps to cement-paved areaways. Sidewalks appear to have been originally bluestone. (Bluestone pavers remain just to the east of No. 403 East 139th Street.)

The first group of completed houses were two-thirds occupied by 1890 according to the New York Police census of that year; residents were listed at Nos. 406 to 410, 414, 420, 424 to 434, 440, 446 and 448. Of the second group, only Nos. 468 and 470 were occupied in 1890.

No. 406 was occupied between 1897 and 1900 by developer William O'Gorman, who then moved across the street to 427 East 140th Street, also within the boundaries of the historic district. Department of Buildings records also show that No. 406 was converted to a two-family dwelling in 1921; by 1940, it was a multiple-family dwelling. No. 428 was converted to a two-family dwelling in 1953.

EAST 140TH STREET, NORTH SIDE BETWEEN WILLIS AVENUE AND BROOK AVENUE

407, 409, 411, 413, 415, 417, 419, 421, 423, 425, 427 East 140th Street
Tax Map Block 2285/Lots 82, 87, 81, 80, 86, 79, 78, 77, 85, 76, 75*
*[Lot numbers do not follow a regular numerical sequence]

Date: 1897-1900 [NB 444A-1897]
Architect: Walter H.C. Hornum
Owner/Developer: William O'Gorman
Type: "Old Law" Tenement (No. 407; 1 of 1)
Single-family rowhouses (Nos. 409-427; 10 of 10)
Style: Romanesque Revival/Renaissance Revival
Row Pattern: A-B-C-C-D-C-C-E-C-C-F
Stories: 4-3-2-2-3-2-2-3-2-2-3 all with basement

A varied, yet harmonious row of ten two- and three-story-and-basement brick and stone single-family rowhouses anchored at the west end by a projecting four-story-and-basement brick tenement building.

The tenement building (No. 407, "A") is 21' wide and set back approximately five feet from the lot line. Of the three-story-and-basement residences, No. 409 ("B") is 19'6" wide; Nos. 415 and 421 ("D" and "E") are each 17' 9" wide; and developer O'Gorman's own house, No. 427 ("F"), at the east end of the row, is 22' wide. The paired two-story rowhouses ("C") are each about 17' wide.

The projecting four-story tenement joins the facade plane of its neighbor to the east by a curved corner return. The building is the darkest in color and heaviest in design detail of the group. It has a short, shallow stoop meeting the sidewalk and a deep areaway with a long iron staircase descending to a basement entrance. Next to the taller tenement, the westernmost three-story house has a projecting west bay that meets the east bay, flush with the facade plane of the buildings to the east, by means of an angled return. All of these houses have stone stoops set back from the sidewalk, ascending from paved landings within large, planted areaways.

The six two-story rowhouses, grouped into three pairs, all have flat roofs and matching galvanized metal cornices (No. 413 retains a parapet balustrade). Facades have slender lateral reveals anchored by carved stone bosses at the second story (see No. 417). Each pair is made slightly different from the other two by variations in brick color, trim design, and decorative detail. The even cornice lines are level with the bases of the roofs at the three-story buildings, each of which has a differently-styled stone-trimmed gable set into a tiled mansard. (No. 409, pointed gablet; No. 415, stepped Dutch gable; No. 421, ogee gable; No. 427, shaped Flemish gable.)

All of the buildings in the row feature fanciful carved, molded, and incised detailing at masonry components; the primary stylistic sources for the ornamentation are the Renaissance Revival and Romanesque Revival, although the overall effect of the combination of details is one of eclecticism. The houses all have decorative wrought-iron basement window grilles. The two- and three-story houses have matching single-leaf glazed wood entrance doors with transoms (see Nos. 409, 415, 419, 421, 423, 425). Stoops are of stone, with brick cheekwalls at the two-story buildings, and all have low stone walls supporting cast-iron pipe handrails (missing at No. 425). A variety of window openings including curved-shouldered and flat-, segmental- and round-headed types are found throughout the row. The

three-story buildings contain stained-glass elements at various windows, and generally exhibit eclectic decorative motifs that are more elaborate than those of the neighboring paired buildings, though these are distinctively ornamented as well.

Department of Buildings records indicate that No. 413 was converted to a two-family dwelling in 1948.

The census of 1900 shows that developer William O'Gorman, a "Builder," aged 55, owned and lived in No. 427 with his wife Julia, 52, also born in Ireland, daughters Lillian Smyth, 24, and Gertrude, 16; son Edward, 15; grandson William Smyth, 2; and three servants -- Minnie Kane, 40, and Catherine Nagle, 30, both New York natives of Irish descent, and Saria Sander, 19, born in Sweden. By 1932 No. 427 was combined with the undeveloped lot to the east (**No. 429, formerly Lot 74**). In 1967 the property was owned by the the neighboring church and was converted to a school and staff residence. In 1981 the City of New York took over lots 73 (see below) and 75.

St. Peter's German Evangelical Lutheran Parsonage and Church
437 and 435 East 140th Street*
Block 2285/Lots 73 and 72
*[Address numbers are in reverse numerical order]

No. 437, Lot 73
Date: 1912 [NB 34-1912]
Architect: Louis Allmendinger
Owner/Developer: Second St. Peter's German Evangelical Lutheran Church
Type: Parsonage
Style: Neo-Gothic
Stories: 2 and basement

The Parsonage A freestanding residence with a gray brick facade trimmed in brownstone, limestone and terra cotta; concrete base. Galvanized iron cornice with pointed arches in fascia. Tile parapet copings; flat tar and slag roof. Round-shouldered facade openings surmounted by drip moldings. Tall brownstone stoop with iron handrails; step ends rough-faced. Entrance door (not original) with transom; one-over-one double-hung wood windows; stained-glass transoms at parlor-story windows. Basement door and window grilles. Iron areaway fence, set back from rowhouse fences to west. According to Department of Buildings records, a two-story brick rear extension was added in 1939. The building was acquired by the City of New York in 1981.

No. 435, Lot 72
Date: 1911 [NB 41-1911]
Architect/Builder: Louis Allmendinger
Owner/Developer: Second St. Peter's German Evangelical Lutheran Church
Type: Church
Style: Neo-Gothic
Stories: 1 with basement and tower

The Church The New Building application for the church gives St. Peter's address at the time of filing as 374 East 141st Street. Freestanding church with gabled front and

central tower. Gray brick facade with terra-cotta trim; front set forward from plane of neighboring parsonage to west, and back from plane of adjacent tenement buildings to east. Crenelated bell tower with angled buttresses, banded in terra cotta, and pointed-arch openings with terra-cotta trim at top portion; original attenuated spires have been removed. Pitched slate roof, terra cotta and copper cornices at raking walls of gable and tower, tile coping. Low stoop to pointed-arch portal with trefoil and quatrefoil ornamentation; wood doors on metal strap hinges. Pointed-arch window above portal with stained glass, covered with protective sash. Secondary entrances at east and west. The church remains in the ownership of the American Lutheran Church.

441, 445, 451, 455, 461 East 140th Street
Block 2285/Lots 70, 69, 67, 66, 64

Date: 1902-03 [NB 319-1902]
Architect/Builder: George F. Pelham
Owner/Developer: undetermined (possibly Gaines, Roberts & Co.)
Type: "New Law" Tenement
Style: Neo-Renaissance
Stories: 5 and basement
Entrance Surround Pattern: A-B-A-B-C

A uniform row of five, five-story "New Law" tenements, each five bays wide; row matches adjacent group at **Nos. 465-481**, built one year earlier. Each building is 37'6" wide, 86'5" deep, and 57' high. Tan brick fronts with limestone trim and painted bracketed and modillioned metal cornices. Keyed enframements at center bay; splayed stone lintels with acanthus leaf keystones; round-arched windows at top story. Centered entrances in classically-inspired limestone entrance surrounds with projecting entablatures supported on: paired pilasters with composite capitals ("A"); scrolled brackets ("B"); or columns with stylized Ionic capitals ("C"). No original entrance doors survive. Stairways in narrow areaway descending to basement entrances beneath low stoop platform of main entrance. Wrought-iron fences and railings at landings and areaways, all extant. Double-hung one-over-one windows. Tarpaper and iron slag roofs. Rear fire escapes.

Department of Buildings records show Neville & Bagge as architects for the adjacent, identical row of buildings completed in the previous year. However, elevation and plan drawings for this row are signed by George F. Pelham. According to Pelham's drawings, each building was planned for ten families, with two six-room apartments on each floor, plus one four-room janitor's apartment and storage space in basement.

Later records indicate that Nos. 451 and 455 were each subdivided in 1956 into four apartments per floor; in 1975 the rear yards of these buildings were paved and rear masonry walls erected. No. 461 was altered to a twenty-family dwelling in 1959, at which time fire escapes were added to the facade.

465, 471, 475, 481 East 140th Street
Block 2285/Lots 63, 61, 60, 58

Date: 1901-02 [NB 1479-1901]
Architect/Builder: Neville & Bagge
Owner/Developer: Gaines, Roberts & Co.
Type: "New Law" Tenement
Style: Neo-Renaissance
Stories: 5 and basement
Entrance Surround Pattern: A-B-B-A

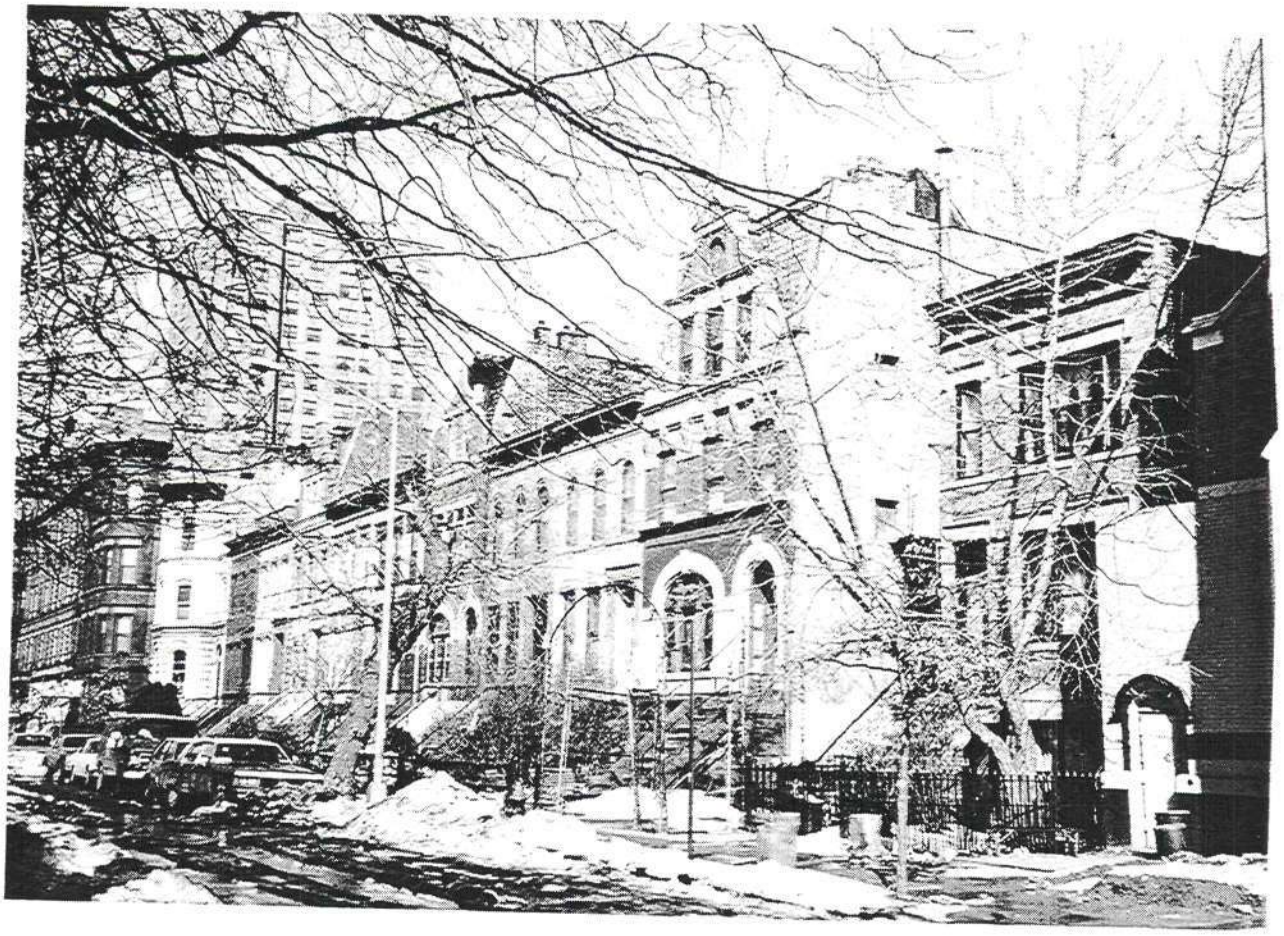
A uniform row of four, five-story "New Law" tenements, each five bays wide; row matches adjacent group at **Nos. 441-461**, built one year later. Each building is 37'6" wide, 86'5" deep, and 57' high. Tan brick fronts with limestone trim and painted bracketed and modillioned metal cornices (cornice removed from No. 471). Keyed enframements at center bay; splayed stone lintels with acanthus leaf keystones; round-arched windows at top story. Centered entrances in classically-inspired limestone entrance surrounds with projecting entablatures supported on: paired pilasters with composite capitals ("A") or scrolled brackets ("B"). No original entrance doors survive. Stairways in narrow areaway descending to basement entrances beneath main entrance platform. Wrought-iron fences and railings at landings and areaways, all extant. Double-hung one-over-one windows; center stairhall bays had stained-glass upper sash (extant at No. 481). Tarpaper and iron slag roofs. Rear fire escapes.

The east elevation of No. 481 consists of an exposed party wall at the front portion of the building and a brick wall punctuated by windows at the narrower rear portion of the building.

The New Building application lists Neville & Bagge as architects for this group. However, elevation and plan drawings for the adjacent, later row of identical buildings, on file at the Department of Buildings, are signed by George F. Pelham. According to Pelham's drawings, each building was planned for ten families, with two six-room apartments on each floor plus one four-room janitor's apartment and storage space in basement. Developers Hugh L. Roberts and Furman V. Gaines also built tenements in several blocks south of the historic district, including a group on East 136th Street in the Bertine Block Historic District.

north side of East 139th Street, view west from No. 445

south side of East 140th Street, view west from No. 434

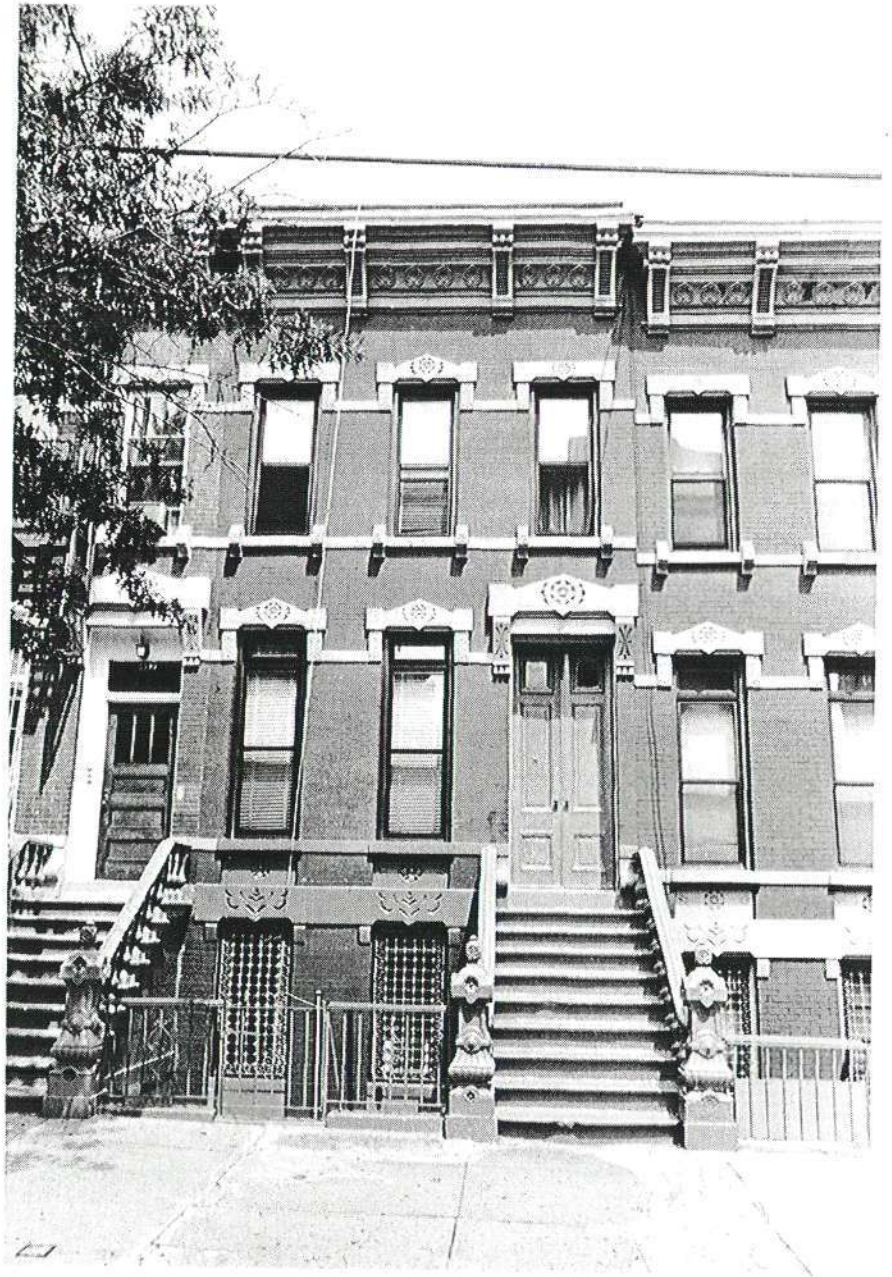


north side of East 140th Street, view west from No. 437

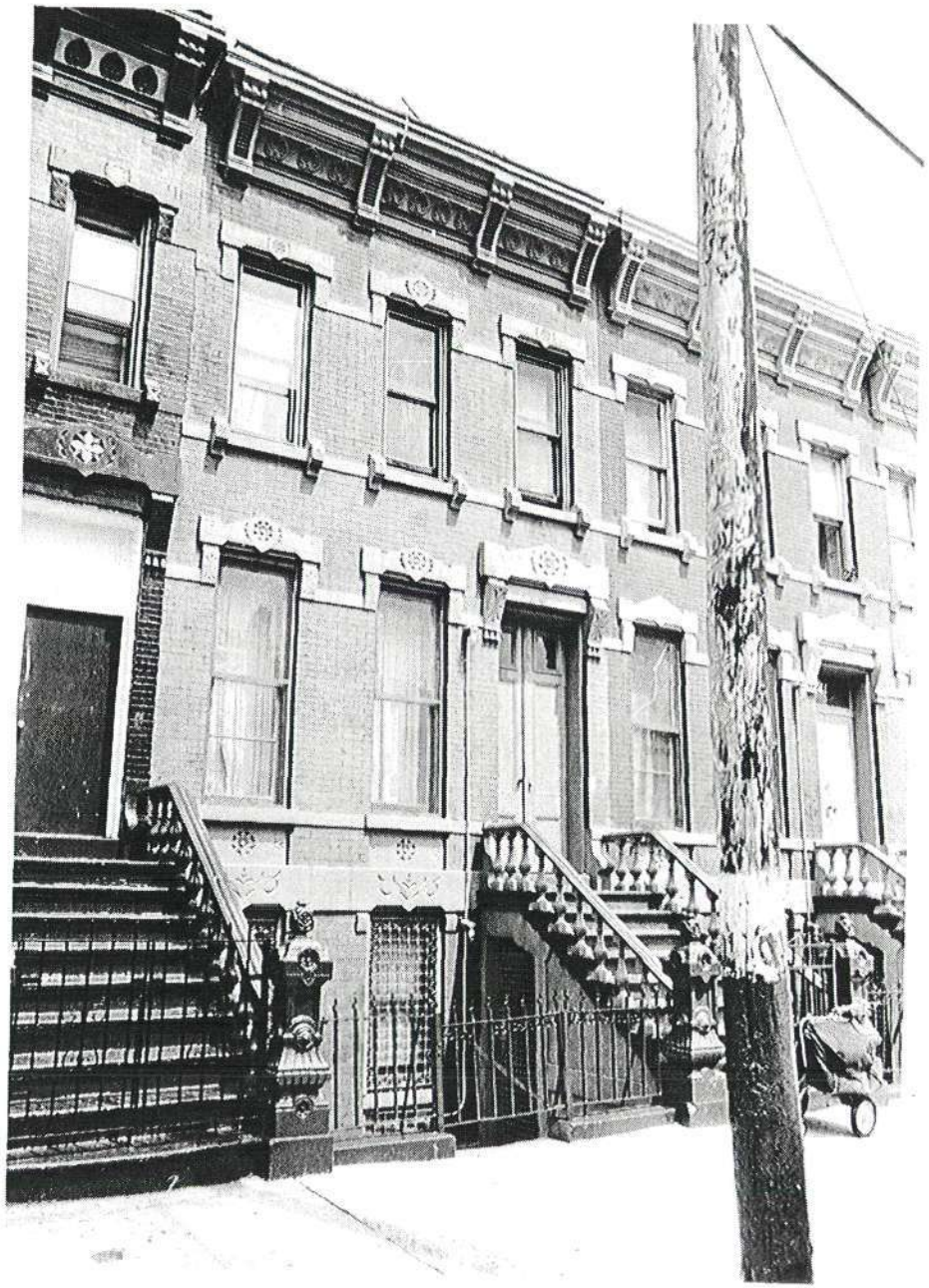
north side of East 140th Street, view west from No. 475

403 East 139th Street

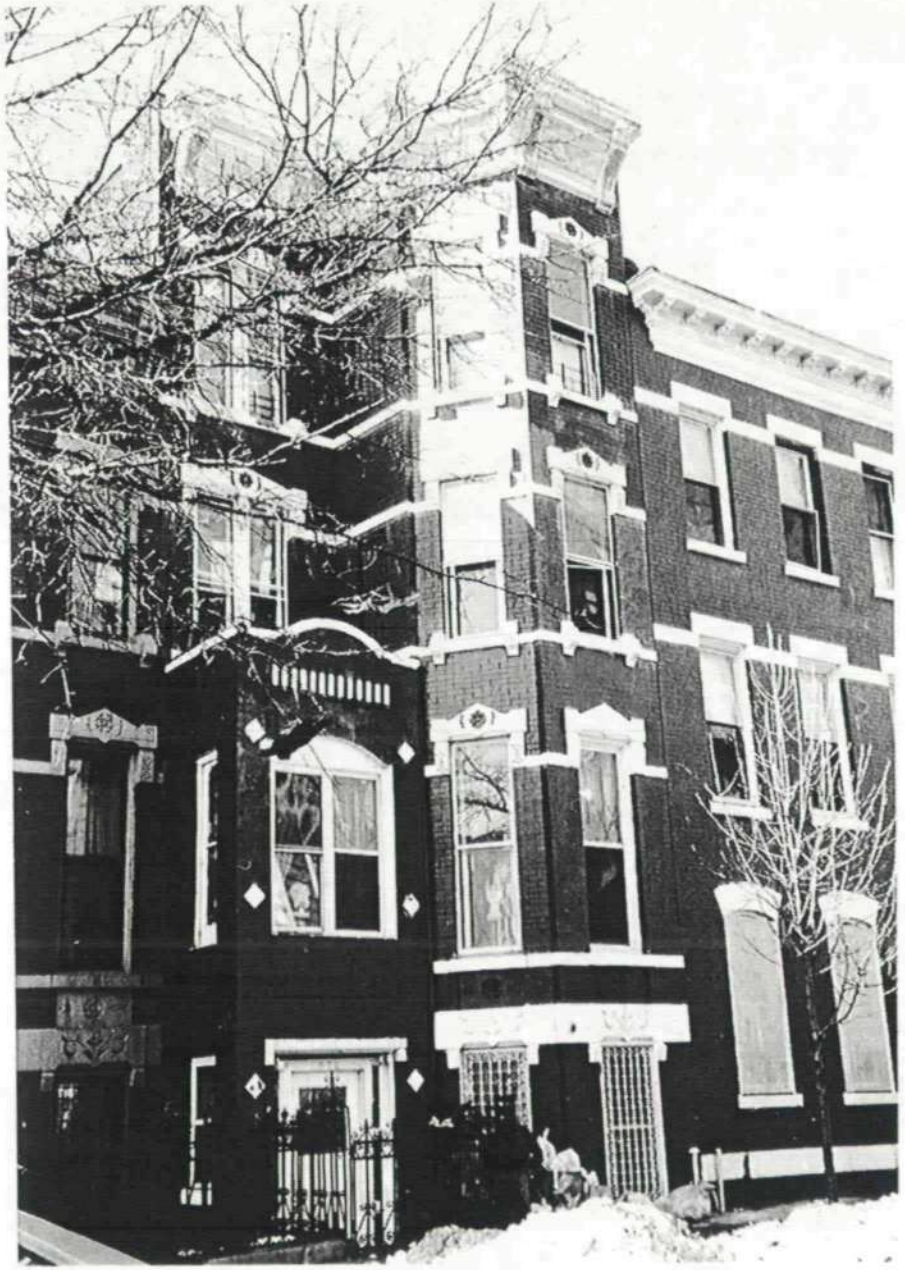
415 East 139th Street



419 East 139th Street

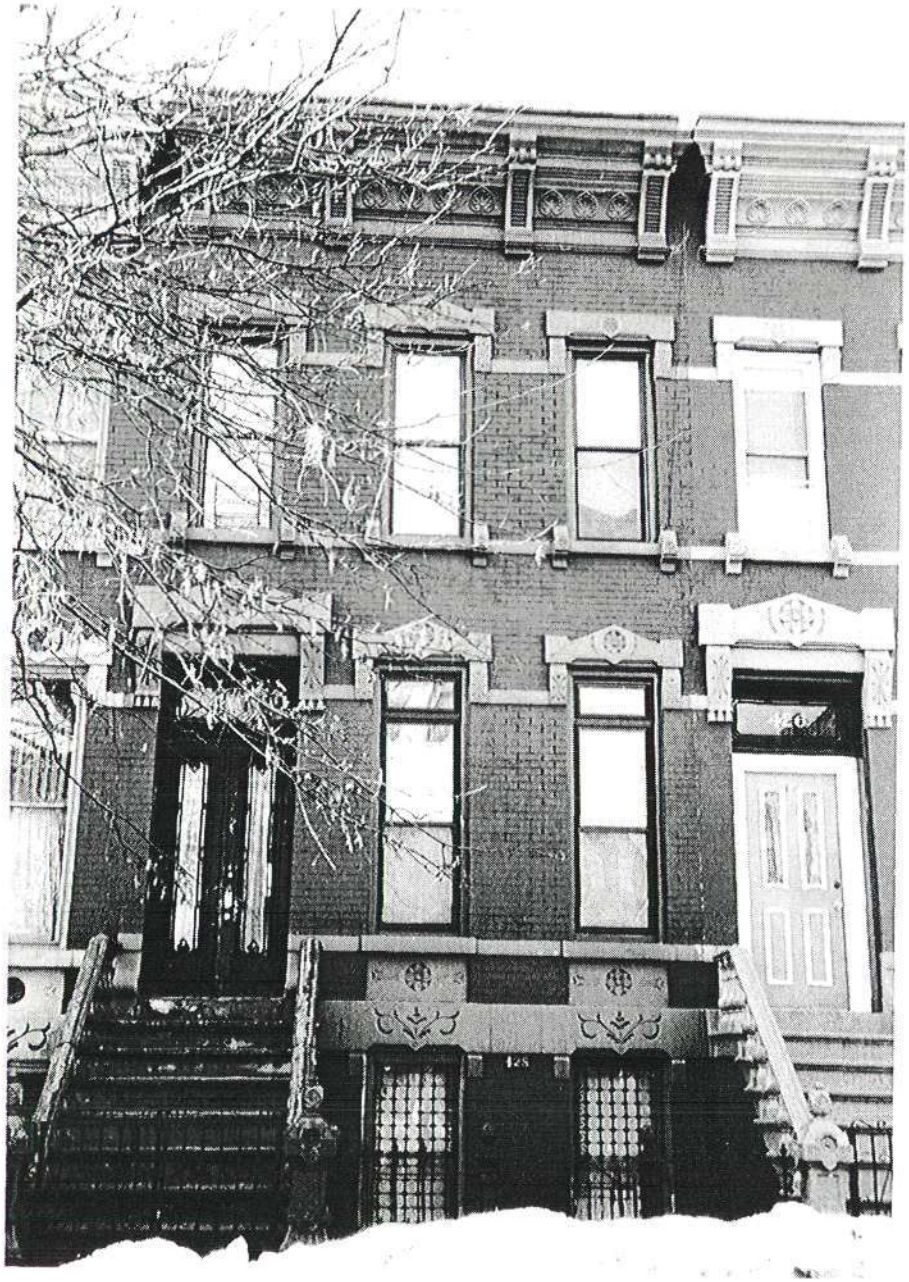


439 East 139th Street

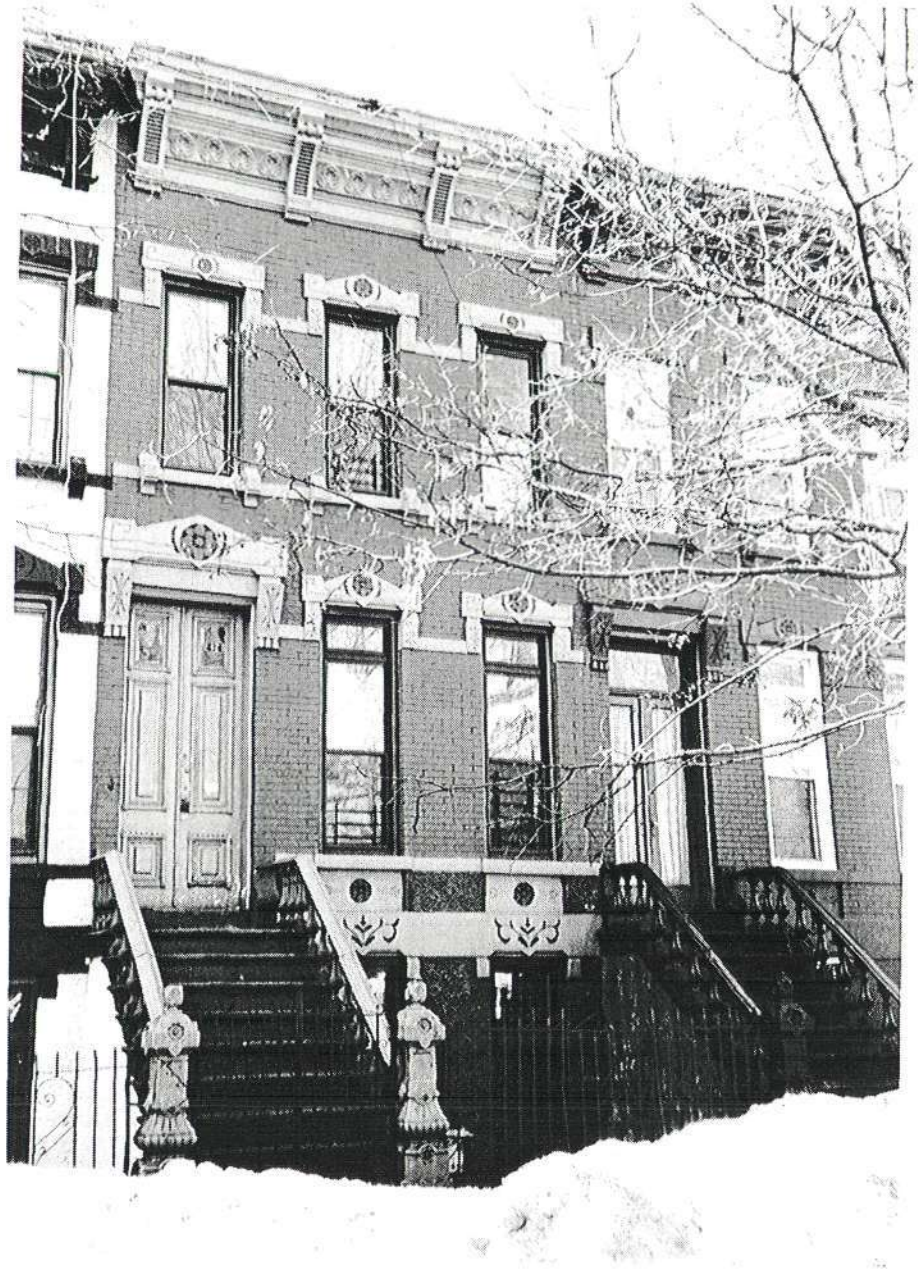


404 East 140th Street

420 East 140th Street

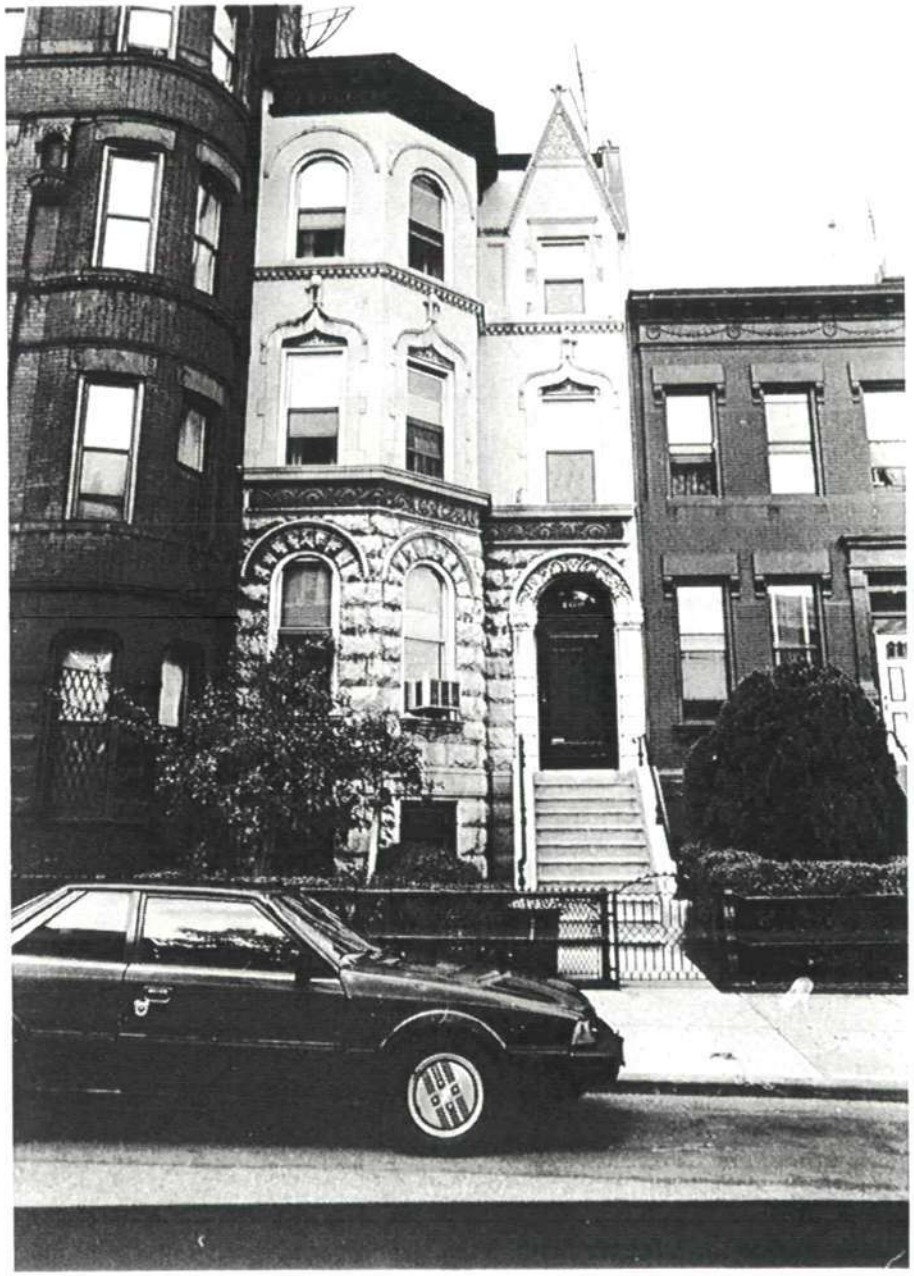


428 East 140th Street



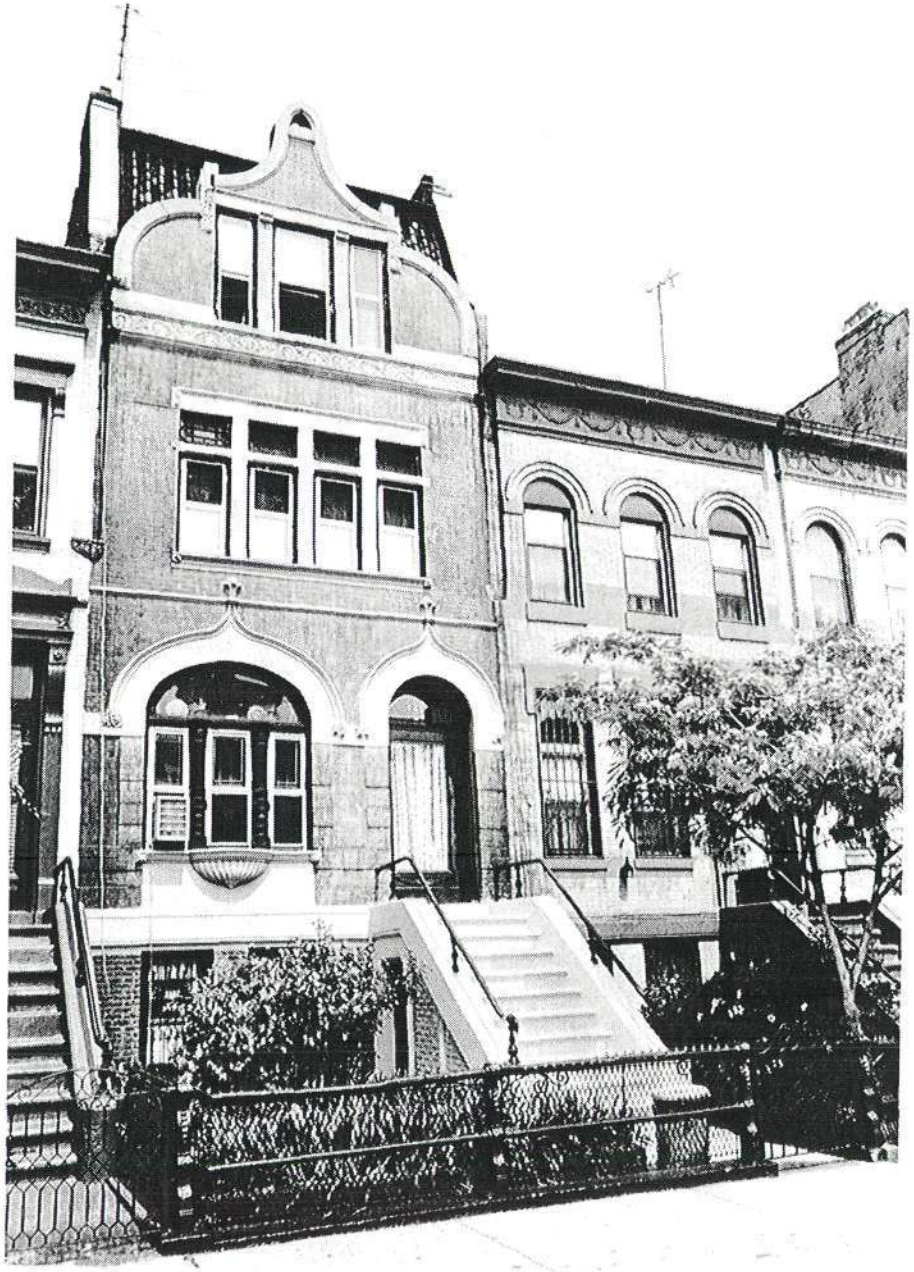
434 East 140th Street

407 East 140th Street

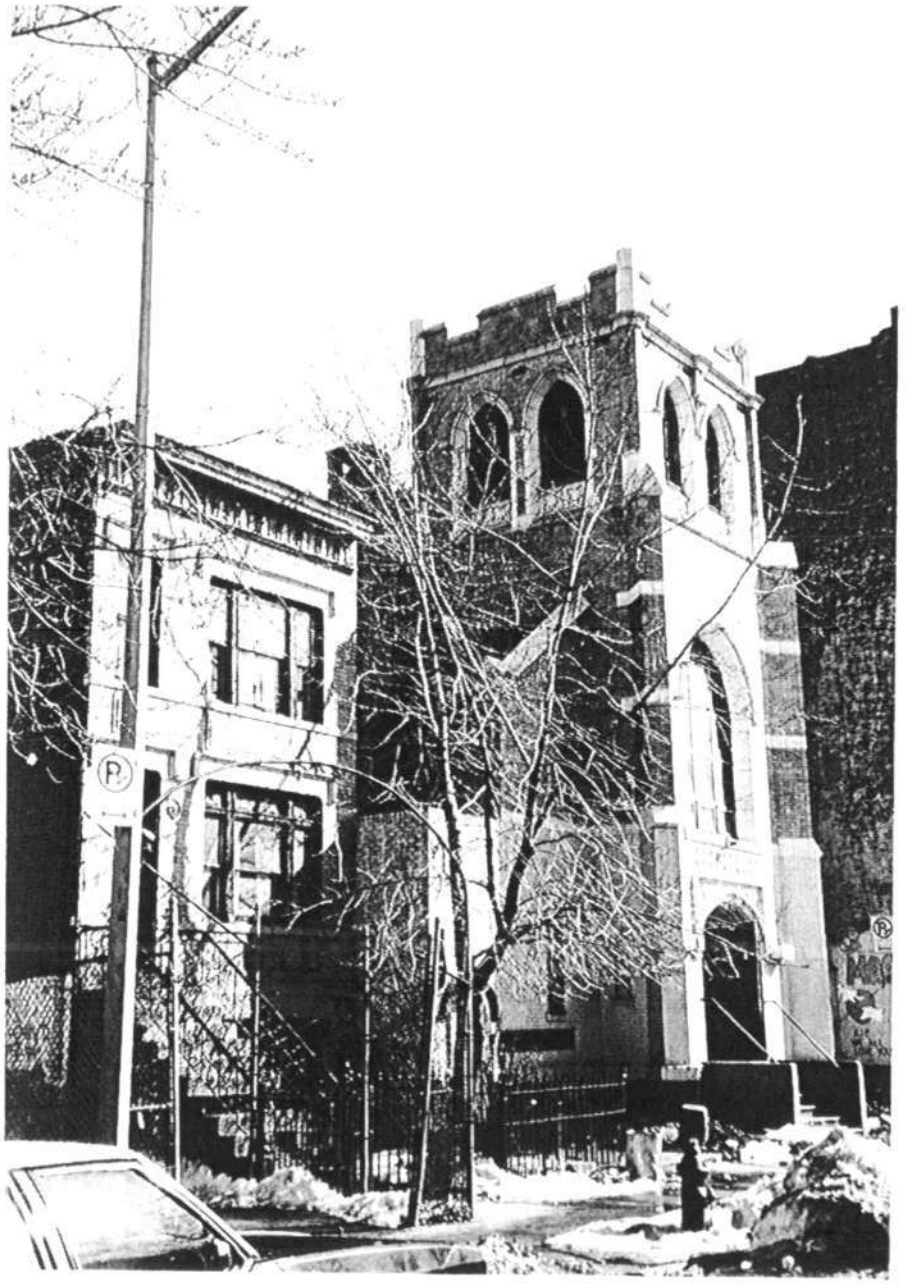


409 East 140th Street

415 East 140th Street



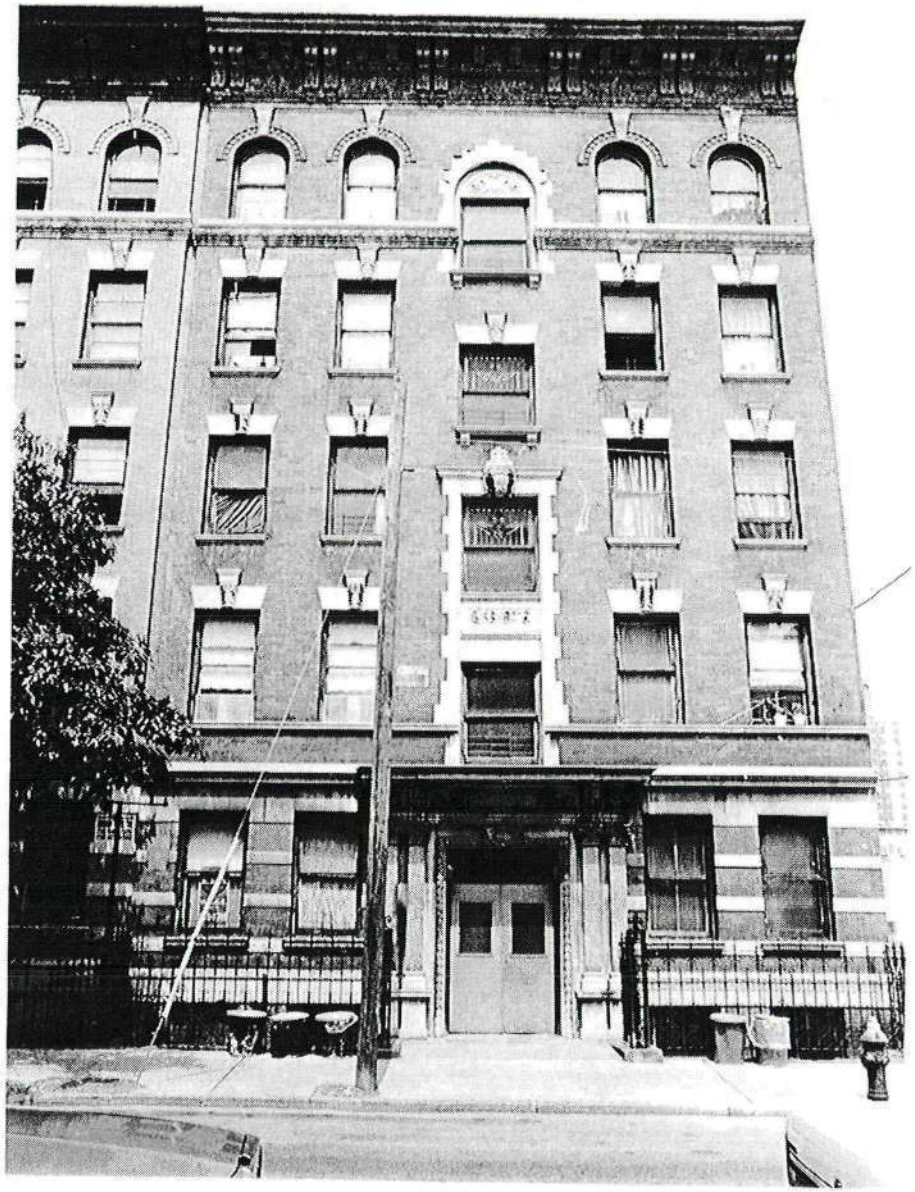
421 and 423 East 140th Street



St. Peter's Lutheran Church and Parsonage
437 (Parsonage) and 435 (Church) East 140th Street

St. Peter's Lutheran Church
435 East 140th Street

455 East 140th Street



481 East 140th Street

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this area, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Mott Haven East Historic District contains buildings which have a special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value and which represent one or more eras in the history of New York City and which cause the area, by reason of these factors, to constitute a distinct section of the city.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Mott Haven East Historic District consists of a small enclave of rowhouses and tenements on East 139th and East 140th streets, between Willis and Brook avenues, in the Mott Haven neighborhood, one of the oldest settled areas of the Bronx and the first in the borough to be developed with rowhouses; that the development of this district, which was closely linked to the opening of transit lines connecting Mott Haven with Manhattan, is reflected in its three groups of single-family rowhouses and two groups of tenements which serve as a virtual catalogue of speculatively-built housing types common to the South Bronx building boom of the 1880s through the early twentieth century; that the brick and stone residential buildings in the historic district include fine examples of neo-Grec, Queen Anne, Renaissance-inspired, and Flemish Revival design, illustrating the contemporary stylistic trends in residential architecture in New York City; that the first two groups of rowhouses, built in 1889 and 1892 by local developers William O'Gorman and Hermann Stursberg to designs by O'Gorman, are designed in the neo-Grec style and form uniform parallel rows; that the third group of rowhouses, built by O'Gorman in 1897-1900 to designs by William Hornum and including O'Gorman's own house, is a picturesque and varied ensemble distinguished by stepped and gabled rooflines; that the nine "New Law" tenements, built in two groups in 1902-03, were designed in a Renaissance-inspired style by Neville & Bagge and George F. Pelham and typify tenement construction planned for working class families of the era; that complementing the residential buildings in the historic district are the neo-Gothic St. Peter's German Evangelical Lutheran Church and Parsonage (1911-12), designed by Louis A. Allmendinger, which add to the picturesque character of the streetscape; that the early residents of the rowhouses and tenements in the historic district represent a cross section of the population that came to settle in the Bronx in the late nineteenth century, including those who were American-born as well as European immigrants; and that the buildings in the Mott Haven East Historic District retain their architectural integrity to a high degree and the district remains a vibrant residential enclave.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3021 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as an Historic District the Mott Haven East Historic District, containing the property bounded by a line beginning at the intersection of the northern curb line of East 139th Street and a southerly extension of the western property line of 403 East 139th Street, extending easterly along the northern curb line of East 139th Street, northerly along the eastern property lines of 447 East 139th Street and 450 East 140th Street, northerly across East 140th Street, easterly along the northern curb line of East 140th Street, northerly along the eastern property line of 481 East 140th Street, westerly along the northern property lines of 481 through 407 East 140th Street, southerly along the western property line of 407 East 140th Street, southerly across East 140th Street, and southerly along the western property lines of 406 East 140th Street and 403 East 139th Street, to the point of beginning; The Bronx.