

Stuyvesant Square May Get An Official Historic Label

By ROBERTA B. GEATZ

Stuyvesant Square and the predominantly 1850s buildings that surround it are being considered for designation as a historic district at a Landmark Commission hearing today.

The square — bounded by Perlman and Rutherford Places and 15th and 17th Sts. — rests on land which was originally part of the farm of Peter Stuyvesant, the director general of the Dutch West India Company when New York was still New Amsterdam. Development of the facing blocks was begun in the 1840s and several of the rowhouses remain in nearly original condition.

Two prominent religious institutions — the 1856 St. George's Church at Rutherford Place and 16th St. and the 1860 Friends Meeting House and Seminary at 221 E. 15th St. — are dominant features of the proposed district. They exemplify the early phase of the Romanesque Revival and late Greek Revival periods.

3 Buildings, 2 Interiors

Three buildings and two interiors are also being considered for designation at today's hearing in the commission's offices at 305 Broadway.

The interior proposals are for the 1748 Van Cortlandt Mansion in Van Cortlandt Park in The Bronx and the Great Hall (the central unit) of the late 19th century

American Museum of Natural History at Central Park and 78th St. The exterior of the Van Cortlandt Mansion, a well-preserved fieldstone house whose simple exterior hides a richly decorated interior, was designated a landmark in 1966 before the law provided for interior designations. (A 1973 amendment to the law provided for interior and scenic designations.) For a short time during the Revolutionary War, Washington used the mansion as his headquarters.

Included in the interior proposal are the mansion's kitchen, with its large brick hearth and fireplace typical of the early 18th century, and several of the first and second floor rooms, which are considered to have the finest Georgian architectural features surviving in any 18th century house in the city.

The Proposed Designations

Until 1889, the mansion was occupied by members of the Van Cortlandt family and then given to the city as a museum. It has been maintained since 1896 by the National Society of Colonial Dames.

The three proposed building designations are the 1912 Administration Building at 481 Morris Park Av., The Bronx, which is the former New York, Westchester and Boston Railroad Building and now the East 180 Street IRT station with subway offices; St. Paul's P.E. Church and Rectory on Stater

Island; and the 1902 Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Church on West 142d Street adjacent to the Hamilton Heights Historic District.

St. Paul's is a small, 1866 stone-walled country church in Stapleton that was designed by Edward Tuckerman Potter, a noted church architect of the Victorian era who designed several important New York City buildings of which only this church survives. It was consecrated in 1870 by the architect's uncle Bishop Horatio Potter.

With its steeply pitched roof, rough-faced granite walls and rose window containing Victorian stained glass, St. Paul's retains much of its original detailing.