

BROUGHAM COTTAGE, 4746 Amboy Road, Staten Island. West wing built c. 1725; mid-section, c. 1790; kitchen wing, early 19th century; architect not determined

Landmark Site: Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 5391, Lot 2.

On May 16 2000, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Brougham Cottage and the proposed designation of its Landmark site (Item No. 6). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Five people spoke in favor of designation including representatives of the Historic House Trust/New York City Parks Department (which were in negotiations to acquire the property), the Preservation League of Staten Island, Historic Districts Council, and Society for the Architecture of the City. No one spoke in opposition. A few days after the hearing, a representative of the owner sent a letter opposing designation. The property was subsequently acquired by the Parks Department as part of the Blue Heron Park Preserve.¹

On October 22, 2015, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a special public hearing on Backlog Initiative items in the Borough of Staten Island, including Brougham Cottage and the related Landmark Site (Item 6 - Staten Island Group 3, E). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A representative of the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, owner of the property, expressed support for the designation. In addition to the owner's representative nine people spoke in favor of designation including a representative of New York State Assembly Member Joseph Borrelli, representatives of the Historic Districts Council, New York Landmarks Conservancy, Society for the Architecture of the City, Four Borough Preservation Alliance; and three individuals. There was no testimony in opposition.

Statements about support for the Brougham Cottage during the backlog process reflect specific testimony given or submitted during the hearing or while the record was open. In addition, the Commission received numerous more general communications about the backlog that were directed at all items on the backlog. These items were not specifically submitted while the record was open. Due to the volume and variety of these more general emails they are not tallied for individual buildings.



Summary

The Brougham Cottage is a rare Dutch-American farmhouse significant as a reminder of Staten Island's rural heritage and its vernacular architectural traditions. The historic house is composed of a one-room-deep, one-and-one-half-story H-framed western wing that appears to date from the first half of the 18th century, likely the 1720s or 1730s, a center one-and-one-half-story H-framed stair hall section that probably dates to the 1790s or early 1800s, and a taller one-and-one-half-story eastern wing that probably was erected prior to 1840. The first-story fieldstone chimney wall, the Dutch H-framing with its attic "knee walls" and small windows are characteristic features of Dutch-American architecture. The low ceiling height and modest size of the house are indicative of the early date of the original one-room portion of the house. As was typical of colonial farmhouses, the house was originally oriented facing southward for maximum light and did not have a door facing Amboy Road until the 20th century.

The house occupies a portion of an 80-acre patent granted to Daniel Stillwell in the late 17th century. This land eventually passed to members of the Poillon family and sometime in the mid-18th century a portion of lot fronting on to Amboy Road was sold to Dr. Oliver Taylor, a physician, who lived nearby in Westfield, just north of Amboy Road. This house, likely built as a rental property, was probably begun under the Poillons and expanded under the Taylors. It remained in the ownership of the Taylor family until the mid-1840s. Around 1855 James Foster, an English immigrant gardener, moved to this house with his wife and two step-children and established a plant nursery. In 1887 following the death of his wife, Foster's step-daughter Annie Brougham, her husband Stephen and their children moved into the house with Foster. The Broughams resided here until 1910. In the 1920s the real estate developer and historian Cornelius J. Kolff leased the farmhouse as an office to sell building lots for the Woods of Arden development. At that time the old porch additions were removed. Later in the 1920s an entrance was created on Amboy Road and the house was clad with shingles. Although the house has undergone some alterations, it retains its historic form and many of its characteristic Dutch-American features. Today Brougham Cottage survives as a rare example of the small vernacular farm houses that were once common in the 18th and early 19th century rural landscape and have all but disappeared. It is significant example of Dutch-American design and a rare reminder of Staten Island's rural history. Its site is now part of Blue Heron Park.

DESCRIPTION

The free-standing Brougham Cottage is set back from the south side of Amboy Road on a generously-sized wooded lot. It is slightly skewed relative to the road alignment. (The house is in its original location, although its entry was originally on the south side of the house; Amboy Road has been widened.) The one-and-one-half-story Dutch-American H-bent frame house with a narrow rectangular east-west footprint, faces north and is comprised of a slightly taller separate roof at the east end. The house exhibits low proportions with small window openings and the gabled roof is pierced by two gable-end chimneys, one located at each (east-west) end. The foundation is fieldstone with about six to twelve inches visible above grade (varies). The horizontal weatherboard, seen in early 20th-century photographs, is either removed or covered with coursed-wood painted shingles at all facades. As is common for 17th and 18th century Dutch houses, the fieldstone fireplace back wall is exposed at the first story on the west gable wall. The roof is clad with replacement wood shingles. There are two one-story porch extensions at the rear (south) that were added during the 20th century.

Amboy Road (North) façade:

Historic: Location of gable-end chimneys; linear east-west arrangement of single rooms; eccentric window locations, location and approximate size of two single window openings at the west and two stacked window openings at the east; side-facing medium-steep gable roof with no eave overhang.

Alterations: Window opening at first floor in stair hall section enlarged and lowered to create entry; four-panel wood entry door with glazing at upper two panels; two stone steps to door; replacement flat-wood window and door trim; metal sconce light fixture, house number plaque, metal mailbox, and an “award” plaque at door; a decorative metal eagle above door; replacement red-brick cladding on chimneys above roofline with a base of metal flashing; metal gutter along eaves and leaders. *Window alterations:* installation of multi-light double-hung wood window sash.

West facade

Historic: Cladding includes exposed fieldstone of firebox at first floor; one-room-deep plan evident on the exterior; location and approximate size of two short window openings at the half-story; medium-steep gable end with no eave overhang.

Alterations: Wood louver vent at peak of gable; replacement flat-wood window trim. *Window alterations:* installation of two first-floor window openings with multi-light double-hung wood windows at each side of the fieldstone wall section; installation of four-light wood window sash at half-story openings; a single double-hung wood window and a four-panel wood door at west wall of porch addition.

East facade

Historic: One-room-deep plan evident on the exterior; location and approximate size of one window opening at the first floor toward the north and one opening at the upper half-story toward the south; medium-steep gable end with no eave overhang.

Alterations: Replacement flat-wood window trim; electrical meter and utility boxes; surface-mounted conduit from foundation to roof; small rectangular wood louver vent in gable-end. *Window alterations:* Installation of multi-light double-hung wood window sash at first floor and one-over-one double-hung wood window sash at half-story; two-light wood windows at the east wall of porch addition.

South facade

Historic: Location and approximate size of two single-door openings, one from the kitchen, and one from the living room (today lead to the porches); location and approximate size of a window opening at the first floor at the west end; location and approximate size of a window at the first floor and another immediately above at the half-story toward the east; location and approximate size of two short knee-wall window openings at the half-story, one at the central section and the other toward the west end; medium-steep side-facing gable roof with no eave overhang except at the central section; replacement flat-wood window trim.

Alterations: Removal and infill of one single-door opening from the stair hall to the exterior; extension of roof overhang of the central section over the two half-story knee-wall windows; metal gutters along eaves and leaders; security lights at the east section; metal light fixtures; the addition of two rear porch extensions, one to the west that incorporates in part an extension of the main building roof and multi-light wood windows, and another extension to the east that has its own shed roof and two-light wood windows and a wood door with glazed panel. *Window alterations:* The installation of a small window opening with a frosted-glass awning sash added in the location of former door opening from stair hall; installation of a one-over-one double-hung wood window sash at both the first floor opening and at the half-story opening at the east end; installation of a multi-light wood sash within the knee-wall opening at the central section; installation of metal air conditioning unit within knee wall opening toward the west end.

Outbuilding

A one-story frame shed, probably dating from the 1920s, is located at the southwest section of the lot. The walls are clad with painted wood shingles and the shallow gable roof, also clad with wood shingles, sits atop exposed rafter tails. There is a five-panel wood door and a small multi-light wood window at the north side and a similar wood window at the east side. There appears to be a pair of recently-installed or repaired wood-panel carriage doors at the west side.

SITE HISTORY

Early Development of the Area

Brougham Cottage is located on the south side of Amboy Road on the high grounds overlooking Raritan Bay. At the time of Giovanni da Verrazzano's arrival in New York Harbor in 1524, Staten Island was occupied by the Lenape people. Its northern portion was the domain of the Hackensack and Canarsie tribes, while its southern portion, including this site, was occupied by the Raritans, whose territory extended northward from Trenton, New Jersey, to the southern end of Staten Island. "Signs of native occupancy" have been noted in the Woods of Arden within a few blocks of this site.² Amboy Road, together with Richmond Road, follows an ancient Native American trade route that connected the Grymes Hill area with Tottenville.

The English Governor Francis Lovelace made the final purchase of Staten Island from the Native Americans in 1670. Governor Lovelace began conducting land surveys in 1675. In the 1680s and 1690s the English governors of New York began granting land patents in the area of present-day Annadale and Eltingville south of Amboy Road. Typically these were tracts of 80 or more acres extending from the waterside to the Native American path that became Amboy Road. This house occupies a portion of a patent granted to Daniel Stillwell (1653-1720), which was in his possession prior to 1685 since his property was mentioned in a boundary description of a patent granted by Governor Thomas Dongan to Domine Petrus Tesschenmaker in November 1685.³ Stillwell conveyed this property to Obadiah Holmes in 1695.⁴

Amboy Road was laid out around 1695 as part of the King's Highway. In 1709 Christopher Billopp, who owned the 1,600 acre Manor of Bentley at the southern tip of the island, built a dock at the foot of King's Highway and established a rowboat ferry to Perth Amboy, across the Arthur Kill. With improved transportation, houses began to be built along the Amboy Road. Others were built along the waterside where a number of fishermen settled. Some early settlers like the Poillon family, who had acquired the Tesschenmaker patent, built houses midway on the slope down to the beach cultivating the farmland in front of their houses and leaving the rear portions of their property densely wooded (the Poillon House aka the Frederick Law Olmsted House, 4515 Hylan Boulevard, 1690s to early 1700s with later additions, is a designated New York City Landmark).

By the Revolutionary War the Poillon family had taken over several neighboring waterfront farms including the former Daniel Stillwell patent. A sense of the rural character of the neighborhood during the 18th century is provided by an advertisement Richard Seaman published in 1781 offering for sale a portion of the former James Poillon farm that Seaman was then occupying:

Very pleasantly situated on the south side of Staten-Island ... containing 190 acres, exclusive of the beach and flats in front of said farm, which will be included in the purchase on which comes great quantities of sea weed (a very valuable manure). On said farm is a good house, barn, and all necessary out-houses, a very good apple orchard of above 200 ingrafted trees of the best fruit, now in its prime with most sorts of other fruit trees, common to this country.⁵

The Taylor Family⁶

Sometime before 1770 James Poillon sold a portion of his farm on the south side of Amboy Road that appears to be the site of this cottage to Dr. Oliver Taylor (1687-1771). One of the first physicians practicing on Staten Island, Dr. Taylor was also a farmer and slave owner who owned considerable land in New Jersey and on Staten Island including a parcel just north of Amboy Road a short distance from this house. Dr. Taylor left all of his property in Richmond County to his son Thomas (1724-96). Based on the 1790 census it appears that Thomas resided on his father's farm just north of the Amboy Road. He added to the real estate he had inherited, purchasing a woodland for firewood and fencing, a salt meadow for fodder for his cattle, and additional farmland all of which passed to his wife Elizabeth (1728-96) and then to their son Abner (1764-1844).

The earliest specific reference to Taylor ownership of this house site appears to be an 1803 deed from John and Jane Poillon conveying his share of his father's estate, which was partially bounded on the west by the "Land of Thomas Taylor Deceased," to Daniel Farnsworth.⁷ In 1808 Farnsworth made a quit claim agreement with Abner Taylor releasing a disputed 1/10 acre parcel on the boundary between this lot and Farnsworth's land to Taylor.⁸ The 4½ acre lot on which this house was built lay partially in the town of Westfield and partially in Southfield, with the house on Southfield side of the boundary line and the occupants enumerated in the Southfield census. Since both Abner Taylor and his son Richard consistently listed their residence as Westfield in censuses, tax records, and legal documents from the 1790s through the 1840s, it appears that this house was leased to tenants. By 1841 Abner Taylor conveyed this house and property to his son Richard (1784-1842).⁹ At his death Richard Taylor instructed that his real estate "be sold as soon as my executors can get a sufficient price for the same."¹⁰ His executors conveyed this house to two Staten Island neighbors, Abraham Auten and Israel O.

Dissoway in 1845 and they sold it in 1846 to John Harrison, who had a restaurant on Fulton Street and resided on Washington Street in Manhattan.¹¹ Harrison died soon after acquiring the house. His widow Agnes remarried and moved west to Nebraska to farm with her new husband Lawson Cook and her three children from her previous marriage.¹² This house was leased to tenants; by 1854/55 James Foster was residing here with his family.¹³

South Side in the Mid-19th Century¹⁴

When James Foster moved to this house in the 1850s the surrounding area remained largely rural and peopled by the descendants of the original Dutch and Huguenot settlers but it was becoming a favored retreat for well-to-do professionals. To the east of Brougham Cottage, the former Jacques Poillion homestead was acquired in 1830 by Judge John Garretson, former Surrogate for Richmond County, and after his death in 1837 passed to Dr. Samuel Akerly, a retired physician and founder of the New York Institute for the Blind, who greatly enlarged the ancient farmhouse on the property. To the west, the Farnsworth property was acquired by Dr. Cyrus Perkins, a wealthy retired surgeon from New York City. Other neighbors included the Rev. Dr. David Moore, who had retired after 50 years as pastor of St. Andrew's Church, and Dr. Thomas H. Taylor, the pastor of Grace Church in Manhattan.

In 1848 Frederick Law Olmsted, his brother John, Aunt Maria, and two servants moved to the former Akerly farm, which Frederick had purchased from Akerly's estate. Frederick began a series of the improvements to the property, moving barns, re-routing roads, and introducing a variety of ornamental and forest trees and plants. Within a few years he had replaced Akerly's grain fields with apple trees and imported pear trees. By 1855 Frederick Law Olmsted had moved on to other projects, leaving his brother John to run the farm.

During this period there were a number of improvements to transportation in the area. In the early 1850s two wood plank roads were created - one running between Port Richmond and the shore on what is now Richmond Avenue, the other extending along a portion of Richmond Road. The Staten Island Railway began operations in 1860 running between Vanderbilt's Landing in Clifton and Tottenville, with major stations in Eltingville and Annadale, named for local landowners, who had invested in the railway. The transportation improvements helped attract additional visitors to the area, which was then popularly known as South Side or Seaside but later took the names of the railroad stops. Small village enclaves developed in both Eltingville and Annadale near the railroad stations.

The Fosters and Broughams

James A. Foster was born in England in 1821. He trained as a gardener, came to the United States in January 1849, and settled on Staten Island.¹⁵ Not long after (c. 1850), he married Anna Maria (Rhymes) Gilby, a widow with five children; the youngest two, Ann Elizabeth and Nelson, lived with the Fosters.¹⁶ By 1855, when the New York State census was taken, Foster was working as a gardener and residing near the John Olmsted farm in Southfield, presumably at Brougham Cottage, with his family and an Irish servant, Bridget Galigan.¹⁷ Around 1860, perhaps inspired by the Olmsted's precedent, he established a plant nursery, where his stepson,¹⁸ Nelson Gilbey, also was employed.¹⁹ His property extended from Arden Avenue to just past 4778 Amboy Road and extended back a couple of hundred feet. There he raised fruit, shade, and ornamental trees, shrubs, and flowers, and offered his services in ornamenting and laying out gardens. Since Foster reputedly understood the climate and soil conditions of Staten Island, his plantings did particularly well, better than his competitors. Among the Staten Island

locations that showcased his plants were the Vanderbilt homestead, the Moravian Cemetery, and the Vanderbilt Mausoleum (a designated NYC Landmark).²⁰

In 1867 the Brougham Cottage property was formally conveyed to James Foster.²¹ By 1870 his household grew to include not only his wife, daughter Ann Elizabeth, and son Nelson, but also his daughter-in-law Mary, and their two small children, Foster's 13-year-old nephew John, and two boarders.²² Ann Gilby married Stephen Brougham in 1872 and moved to Brooklyn. Sometime before 1874, Nelson Gilby had a house moved from a site near the railroad tracks to the western end of James Foster's lot (4778 Amboy Road), which he then occupied with his family. By 1875 the household at Brougham Cottage consisted of James and Anna Maria Foster, James's nephew John, who was employed as a waterman (probably an oyster fisherman), and one servant. In 1878 Foster conveyed the property to his daughter Ann and her husband Stephen M. Brougham but the Broughams conveyed it back the next year to Foster's wife.²³ The Broughams were living in Brooklyn at that time with their three young children. It appears that they did not move to Staten Island until some years after the death of Foster's wife Anna Maria in 1884. During those ensuing years Foster remained at the property and continued to be listed as a gardener as late as 1893-94. He died a few years later, on February 16, 1897, and was interred at the Moravian Cemetery.²⁴

Stephen M. Brougham was born 1835 in New York, possibly Brooklyn. In 1862 he was residing in Brooklyn, working for a pencil case manufacturer and married to his first wife who died in 1867.²⁵ On February 14, 1872, Stephen married James and Anna Maria Foster's daughter Ann Elizabeth (1845-1933). Throughout most of his working life, Stephen worked in the pencil and fountain pen business and lived in Brooklyn until the family moved to Staten Island around 1887.²⁶ In 1900, the Broughams were living in this cottage with the three youngest of their five children (they had six children, but one died in childhood). By 1910 they were sharing their home with their son George, daughter May, and son-in-law Arthur Romer. After Stephen died December 19, 1910, Ann Elizabeth Brougham moved to Pleasant Plains, to be with her son and daughter-in-law. She lived at the homes of various family members until her death in 1933. Nelson Gilbey, who had become a teamster, continued to reside at 4778 Amboy Road. Sometime between 1907 and 1912 Nelson Gilby erected a second house at 4758 Amboy Road, which was initially occupied by his daughter Minetta (Minnie) and her husband Henry Chevanney, and later by his son Harry and his family. While 4778 and 4758 Amboy Road remained in the ownership of the Gilby family until at least the 1930s, Ann Elizabeth Brougham sold Brougham Cottage to realtor-attorney Alrick H. Man in 1919.²⁷

Brougham Cottage and Dutch-American Vernacular Architecture²⁸

This house, likely built as a tenant property, was probably begun under the Poillons and expanded under the Taylors. Historic photographs and a close study of the building including interior details (only the exterior is included in this designation) show that it was built in three stages. The earliest section, at the western end of the house, was likely a one-room, one-and-one-half-story, H-framed, clapboard-sided, gable-roofed building. As Gabrielle Lanier and Bernard Herman observe in their book on vernacular architecture in the Mid-Atlantic States, hall or one-room houses were the most common house type in the Middle Colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries. The H-framed structural system is a defining feature of Dutch-American architecture. In it, upper story floor joists are tenoned into principal posts to create a series of H-shaped structural members with plates placed on top of the posts to secure the frame. This results in the creation of attics with "knee walls," half-height exterior walls that support the roof rafters. These features are found in all three sections of the Brougham house, with the higher attic in the eastern

wing indicative of its later date. Another characteristic feature of Dutch-American architecture is the exposed first story fieldstone chimney wall. A safety feature to prevent the hearth wall from overheating and igniting the wood cladding, exposed hearth walls were common in frame Dutch-American houses from the 17th century (Voorlezer's House, c. 1695, on Arthur Kill Road in Richmond Town (a designated New York City Landmark) through the early 19th century (Crocheron House, c. 1819, moved from Greenridge to Richmond Road in Richmond Town). The presence of these features coupled with the low proportions and modest size of the house are indicative of the early date, perhaps around 1720 to 1730. Also supporting this dating are certain interior features, notably the exposed axe-hewn beams and large hearth in the east room. In the course of repairing this fireplace an early-20th-century owner, William Billard, reported discovering a Dutch oven and a clay ball hardened by fire containing a penny dated 1732 buried in the fireplace. Billard likened the clay ball to a corner stone, imagining that the builder of the house had placed a coin from the year it was built in clay and buried it in the hearth. While this story may well be apocryphal, it does seem consistent with the architectural evidence and would support a c. 1720-1730 construction date.²⁹

As was typical of colonial farmhouses, this house was originally oriented facing southward for maximum light and did not have a door opening on to Amboy Road until the 20th century. In addition to the door there was a window at the first story on the south façade and two windows at the first story on the north façade of the original section of the house. The west gable wall had low square windows only at the attic level. The attic, used for storage and perhaps sleeping, would have been an open unfinished room accessed by a ladder and trapdoor or a simple staircase, likely a winder stair to save room. Probably at the end of the 18th century an additional bay was added to the house for an entrance stair hall. This bay also had an entry at the first story and an attic window on the south side of the house. The hall would have served both a social function by providing a social distance between the outside and the interior living spaces and a practical function by providing an air lock between the outside and the heated rooms.³⁰ In addition it permitted the attic space to be finished and made into a formal albeit small bedroom with a doorway opening on to the stair hall.

Although the presence of a Dutch oven in the original wing suggests that this room was initially used for cooking, it would have been a typical development for there to have been a small one-story kitchen wing, perhaps with a lean-to roof like the kitchen wing of the original section of the Hendrick I. Lott House (1940 East 36th Street, Brooklyn, east wing 1720, main section and west wing, 1800, a designated New York City Landmark.) By the first half of the 19th century the owners of this house decided to replace that wing or finally build a one-and-one-half-story kitchen wing that would provide the house with a separate kitchen and second bedroom. This is the only portion of the house to have a full basement and the presence of sawn rather than hewn timbers in the basement is suggestive of a 19th-century date although the mortised joinery and wide floorboards point to a date early in the century. The irregular placement of the windows and doors is indicative of the vernacular nature of the design as is the continued use of H-framing. Another traditional feature of Dutch-American houses that was incorporated into this design is the no-longer-extant wood bulkhead for cellar entry seen in 1920s photos of the Amboy Road façade. Like the earlier sections of the house this wing rests on a fieldstone foundation and was clad with weatherboards. The large window openings may be original but it is likely that they have been enlarged. There were no windows on the east wall prior to the 20th century.

As one would expect with so small a house, there were a number of 19th-century porch additions to the south side of the house. These were removed in the early 1920s. Later the house was shingled and the entrance was created on Amboy Road. By 1927 a new screen porch (later enclosed) had been added on the south side of the kitchen wing. In the 1930s or 1940s a large shed-roofed porch was added to south façade of the west wing.

Houses such as the Brougham Cottage would have been common sight in the rural landscape of 18th and 19th century New York, when there were many tenant farmers, laborers, and artisans living along the main roads. Because they were small and had less sentimental value than the large farmhouses of the principal land-owning families they have not survived in great numbers. Thus, as with the Edgar Allan Poe Cottage in Fordham (c. 1812, 2640 Grand Concourse, Bronx, a designated New York City Landmark) and the Hubbard House in Gravesend (c. 1835, 2138 McDonald Avenue, Brooklyn, a designated New York City Landmark), the Brougham Cottage is one of the few surviving small vernacular Dutch-American houses to retain its form and architectural features and is especially significant because of its early date.

Later History

In the 1890s the farmland south of Brougham Cottage and east of Arden Avenue was mapped for a development called Southfield Park. By 1917 only a few lots had been sold.³¹ In the 1920s, the realtor and civic leader Cornelius J. Kolff gained control of this development, which he renamed the Woods of Arden after the popular Woods of Arden resort that operated in the 1880s and early 1890s on the former Akerly-Olmsted estate. Known as the dean of the Staten Island realtors, Kolff was active from 1893 to 1943 and is best known for his major Staten Island development projects, including the Woods of Arden, Elting Park, and Shore Acres. A native New Yorker, and the son of a Dutch father and American mother, Kolff was educated in England. Returning to Staten Island in 1893, he became a prominent realtor, community leader, and historian who wrote several books including his *Short History of Staten Island*.³²

Kolff leased Brougham Cottage from Alrick Man, a Queens-based lawyer and realtor, for use as a branch office to sell building lots for the Woods of Arden development.³³ Kolff made a number of alterations, principally removing the old porch additions. The beamed west room with its ancient fireplace became the selling office; the kitchen became a construction office. In June 1922, Kolff, who was then president of the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce, held a meeting and reception for Chamber members to show off the cottage.³⁴ On July 15, 1922, Mr. Kolff hosted a meeting of the Staten Island Historical Society in the cottage to vote on the merger of the Antiquarian Society and the Historical Society.³⁵

In November 1923, Alrick Man sold Brougham Cottage to Frances Way Billard, wife of William Billard. The Billards “reconstructed” the house and “covered it with shingles.”³⁶ They used it as a residence, antiques shop, and tea room, occupying the house with their four children.³⁷ Frances Billard lost the house to foreclosure in 1939. In 1946 the property became the residence of Walter Mallien and his wife, Ethel. The Malliens resided in the cottage for 54-years and amassed a collection of 17th- and 18th-century American and British art and artifacts which decorated the house.³⁸ A longtime Staten Island resident and retired shipping-lines supervisor, Walter Mallien ensured the cottage would be preserved by the city’s Parks Department.³⁹

Brougham Cottage and the adjacent land became part of the 226-acre Blue Heron Park through the advocacy of the Parklands Division of the City of New York/Parks & Recreation.

New York City Councilmember Stephen Fiala allocated funds from the city council's capital budget to purchase the house.⁴⁰

Although the house has undergone some alterations, it retains its historic form and many of its characteristic Dutch-American features and a rare reminder of Staten Island's rural history.

Associated Archaeological Resources

As noted above, the Brougham Cottage was constructed in multiple sections with the earliest part likely dating to the 18th century. The site includes a well that is 12 feet from the kitchen door which, at the time of designation, was covered by a fieldstone patio and was filled with water. In addition to this archaeological resource, there is a shed at the southern corner of the lot which appears to be in the same location as an outbuilding shown on the 1907 Robinson map.⁴¹ The site also has the potential to contain other archaeological resources including trash deposits associated with the early inhabitants of the house.

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NOTES

- ¹ This item had previously been heard on September 13, 1966, (LP-0381) (Item No. 15).
- ² Reginald P. Bolton, quoted in, Linda Stone, “Report on Phase 1A Archaeological Documentary Research in Advance of Sanitary and Storm Sewer Construction Wilson Avenue East, Eltingville Staten Island, New York,” prepared for Bedford Construction Corp., 1994, 10.
- ³ Quoted in Margaret Boyle-Cullen, “The Woods of Arden House,” *Staten Island Historian*, vol.14, n. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 1953), 25-26.
- ⁴ New York City, Dept. of Finance, Office of the Register, Richmond County, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber B, 330-331.
- ⁵ Quoted in Richard M. Bayles, ed., *History of Richmond County* (New York: L.E. Preston and Co., 1887), 213.
- ⁶ For the Taylor family see Will of Oliver Taylor, New York County, Office of the Surrogate, Wills Liber 28, p. 60-62; Will of Thomas Taylor, filed May 13, 1796, Richmond County, Office of the Surrogate, Wills Liber A, p.136; Will of Richard Taylor, filed July 16, 1842, Richmond Wills Liber F, p. 149-152; Will of Abner Taylor, filed Sept. 9, 1844, Richmond Wills Liber G, 1-5; Joseph F. Mullane, *The Swaim-Tysen Family of Staten Island, New York, New Jersey, and Southern States* (printed privately: 1987),151, 154, 201-203; United States Census, 1790, Richmond County, Westfield, 228; United States Census, 1800, Richmond County, Westfield, 955; United States Census, 1810, Richmond County, Westfield, 458; United States Census, 1820, Richmond County, Westfield, 5; United States Census, 1830, Richmond County, Westfield, 10; United States Census, 1840, Richmond County, Westfield,13; New York State, Tax Assessment Rolls, Westfield, 1801-1804.
- ⁷ Richmond County Deeds, Liber F, 337.
- ⁸ Richmond County Deeds, Liber G, 12.
- ⁹ In August 1841 Richard Taylor conveyed the 1/10 acre parcel that Abner Taylor had acquired from Daniel Farnsworth, to Cyrus Perkins, the new owner of the former Farnsworth property. See Deeds Liber 8, 698.
- ¹⁰ Will of Richard Taylor, Richmond County Wills, Liber G, p.149.
- ¹¹ Richmond County Deeds, Liber 12, 68-70; Liber 14, 164-166; New York City Directories, 1845-47.
- ¹² The house appears on the *Map of Staten Island, Richmond County, New York from Surveys under the Direction of H.F. Walling* (New York: DA Fox, 1859), labeled Mrs. Cook. For Agnes Harrison Cook see New York City Directories, 1846-48; United States Census, 1850, New York County, NY, Third Ward, 691; United States Census, 1860, Otoe County Nebraska, 329; “Agnes H. Harrison,” Ancestry @ <http://person.ancestrylibrary.com/tree/24129226/person/1488673817/facts>, accessed Dec. 12, 2016.
- ¹³ There is a listing for a house and 4^{1/2} acre lot on Amboy Road, occupied by “Isaac Foster,” just a few properties away from Frederick L. Olmsted in the Southfield Tax Assessments of 1854, p.4.
- ¹⁴ This section on the mid-19th century changes to the neighborhood is based on Margaret Boyle-Cullen, “Woods of Arden House,” part 2, *Historian*, vol. 15, n. 1 (Jan-Mar. 1954), 7-8; part 3, Vol. 15, n. 2 (Apr.-June, 1954), 13-15; Stone, 16-18; Laura W. Roper, *F.L.O., a Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1973), 56-66.
- ¹⁵ District of New York: Port of New York – Passenger Manifest, Ship Marmion, January 22, 1849.
- ¹⁶ Anna Maria Rhymes (c. 1814-84) was born in England and in the 1830s immigrated to Hicksville, Long Island, where she met and married English immigrant William George Gilby (originally O’Gilby). After her first husband died (c. 1848) she moved to Brooklyn and became a seamstress. This information on the Foster, Brougham, and Gilby families is based on letters, family trees, and recollections compiled by Dorothy and May Brougham in the Brougham Cottage files at the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation, Parklands Division (copies in the LPC, Research file for Brougham Cottage).
- ¹⁷ New York State Census, 1855, Richmond County, Southfield, 2nd ED, 14; This information on James Foster is based on “Mrs. Brougham Dead at 88, Drank No Water—Her Boast” Aug. 22, 1933, unidentified clipping; Richmond County, Southfield, 2nd ED, 1855, 14.

- ¹⁸ New York State Census, 1875, Richmond County, Southfield, ED 1, 1.
- ¹⁹ When he enlisted in the Union Army in August 1862 gave “nurseryman” as his occupation. He served as a private in Company I of the New York Infantry, Regiment 15 B, until the end of the war. See “Civil War Muster Roll Abstracts, 1861-1900,” p. 492 @<https://www.fold3.com/images/316194763>, accessed Dec. 15, 2016.
- ²⁰ “J. Foster & Co.” advertisement, *Staten Island Business Register; Prominent Men of Staten Island*, (New York: A.V. Hubbell, 1893), 210.
- ²¹ Richmond County Deeds, Liber 73, 125-129.
- ²² United States Census, 1870, Richmond County, Southfield, 290.
- ²³ Richmond County Deeds Liber 124, 372; Liber 133, 182.
- ²⁴ “Deaths,” *Richmond County Advance*, Feb 20, 1897, 8.
- ²⁵ This information on Stephen Brougham is based on Brooklyn City Directory, 1862; Brougham family reminiscences (see note 16 above); United States Census, 1880, Kings County, New York, Seventh Dist., 22nd Ward, ED 230, p. 51; *Webb’s Consolidated Directory of the North and South Shores, Staten Island* (New York: M.L Webb, 1888); United States Census, 1900, Richmond County, Ward 5, ED 618, sheet 2-3; United States Census, 1910, Richmond County, Ward 5, ED 1328, sheet 8 A.
- ²⁶ Brougham was listed for the last time in the Brooklyn directories in 1886; his name appears in *Webb’s Staten Island directory* in 1888.
- ²⁷ Richmond County Deeds Liber 496, 392-94.
- ²⁸ Sources for this discussion of the architecture of the Brougham Cottage include Elsa Gilbertson, “The Early Houses of Staten Island: Their Architectural Style and Structural Systems,” (M.S. Thesis, Historic Preservation, Columbia University, 1982); Clifford W. Zink, “Dutch Framed Houses in New York and New Jersey,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 22 (Winter 1987), 265-294; David Steven Cohen, *The Dutch-American Farm* (New York: New York University Press, 1992); Roderic H. Blackburn, *Dutch Colonial Homes in America* (New York: Rizzoli, 2002); John R. Stevens, *Dutch Vernacular Architecture in North America (1640-1830)* (West Hurley, New York: Society for the Preservation of Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture, 2005); Kevin L. Stayton, *Dutch by Design: Tradition and Change in Two Historic Brooklyn Houses* (New York: Brooklyn Museum, 1990); Rosalie F. Bailey, *Pre-Revolutionary Dutch Farmhouses and Families in Northern New Jersey and Southern New York* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1936).
- ²⁹ “200-Year-Old Farmhouse Rebuilt: Cornerstone Gives Clue to Age of Structure,” unidentified clipping “Old Relic of British Colonial Days,” unidentified clipping dated December 5, 1925, both from the Historic House Trust, Brougham Cottage file.
- ³⁰ In their book on vernacular architecture in the Mid-Atlantic States, Gabrielle Lanier and Bernard Herman note that side-passage single-room-deep houses were relatively rare. This house plan was first utilized in the post-Revolutionary period and remained in use throughout much of the nineteenth century, appearing most often in villages and towns. Lanier and Herman also note that in such houses “the principal first-floor room often served simultaneously as parlor, dining room, and chamber.” Lanier and Herman, 25-28, 32-38.
- ³¹ *Atlas of the Borough of Richmond, City of New York* (New York: E Robinson, 1907), pl. 20; *Atlas of the City of New York, Borough of Richmond, Staten Island* (New York: G.W. Bromley & Co, 1917). A number of the building lots in Southfield Park were sold at auction in 1898 following a foreclosure. See “Sheriff’s Sales,” *New York Times*, Apr. 30, 1898, 11.
- ³² Leng and Davis, vol.4, 389-90.
- ³³ “The Little Woods of Arden House,” *Preservation League News* (September 1997), 2.
- ³⁴ “They Met in Woods of Arden,” *Staten Island Leader*, June 21, 1922.
- ³⁵ “Saving a Staten Island Treasure,” *Historic House News*, (Summer 2000).
- ³⁶ “200-Year-Old Farmhouse Rebuilt.”

³⁷ United States Census, 1930, Richmond County, New York, AD 2, ED 43-71.

³⁸ “Saving a Staten Island Treasure.”

³⁹ “Obituaries: Walter Mallien, 92, shipping lines supervisor,” *Staten Island Sunday Advance*, (February 13, 2000).

⁴⁰ Kiawana Rich, “Home to become museum, part of Bluebelt,” *The Island* (January 29, 1999), A6.

⁴¹ E. Robinson, *Atlas of the Borough of Richmond, City of New York*, (New York: E. Robinson Company, 1907) plate, 20.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that Brougham Cottage has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that Brougham Cottage is a rare Dutch-American farmhouse significant as a reminder of Staten Island's rural heritage and its vernacular architectural traditions; that the historic house is composed of a one-room-deep, one-and-one-half-story H-framed western wing that appears to date from the first half of the 18th century, likely the 1720s or 1730s, a center one-and-one-half-story H-framed stair hall section that probably dates to the 1790s or early 1800s, and a taller one-and-one-half-story eastern wing that probably was erected prior to 1840; that the first-story fieldstone chimney wall, the Dutch H-framing with its attic "knee walls" and small windows are characteristic features of Dutch-American architecture; that the low ceiling height and modest size of the house are indicative of the early date of the original one-room portion of the house; that as was typical of colonial farmhouses, the house was originally oriented facing southward for maximum light and did not have a door facing Amboy Road until the 20th century; that the house occupies a portion of an 80-acre patent granted to Daniel Stillwell in the late 17th century; that this land eventually passed to members of the Poillon family and sometime in the mid-18th century a portion of lot fronting on to Amboy Road was sold to Dr. Oliver Taylor, a physician, who lived nearby in Westfield, just north of Amboy Road; that this house, likely built as a rental property, was probably begun under the Poillons and expanded under the Taylors; that it remained in the ownership of the Taylor family until the mid-1840s; that around 1855 James Foster, an English immigrant gardener, moved to this house with his wife and two step-children and established a plant nursery; that in 1887 following the death of his wife, Foster's step-daughter Annie Brougham, her husband Stephen and their children moved into the house with Foster; that the Broughams resided here until 1910; that in the 1920s the real estate developer and historian Cornelius J. Kolff leased the farmhouse as an office to sell building lots for the Woods of Arden development and at that time the old porch additions were removed; that later in the 1920s an entrance was created on Amboy Road and the house was clad with shingles; that although the house has undergone some alterations, it retains its historic form and many of its characteristic Dutch-American features; that today Brougham Cottage survives as a rare example of the small vernacular farm houses that were once common in the 18th and early 19th century rural landscape and have all but disappeared; that it is significant example of Dutch-American design and a rare reminder of Staten Island's rural history; that its site is now part of Blue Heron Park.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 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 a Landmark Brougham Cottage, 4746 Amboy Road, Staten Island, and designates as its Landmark Site Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 5391, Lot 2.

Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin,
Wellington Chen, Michael Devonshire,
Michael Goldblum, Jeanne Lutfy,
Adi Shamir-Baron, and Kim Vauss, Commissioners



Brougham Cottage
4746 Amboy Road
Staten Island Tax Map Block 5391, Lot 2
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2014



View from the northwest
Photo: Lisa Kersavage, 2015



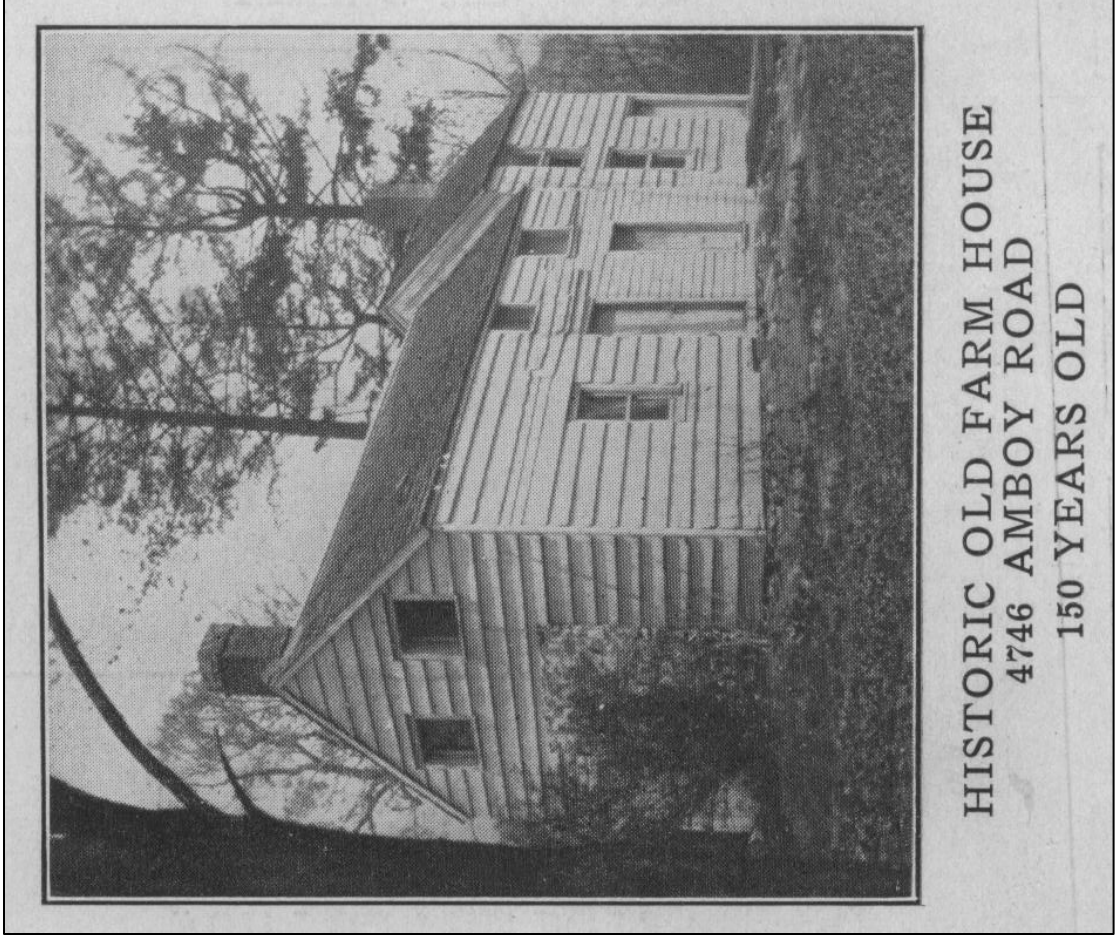
East Façade
Photo: Lisa Kersavage, 2015.



West Façade
Photo: Sarah Moses, 2016



South Façade
Photo: Sarah Moses, 2016



Circa 1922 photograph from advertising brochure for the Woods of Arden development
Source: Cornelius Kolff Collection, Staten Island Historical Society



Brougham Cottage c. 1890
Left to right: Willy Van Pelt (a worker), Stephen Moore Brougham, Jr., Ann E. Brougham, James A. Foster, George Brougham,
May Brougham, Winifred Brougham
Photo Source: Historic House Trust!



Arthur Russell, son of Winifred Brougham Russell, c.1910
Standing near Amboy Road in front of Brougham Cottage

Photo Source: Historic House Trust:



Staten Island Chamber of Commerce Meeting at the Woods of Arden branch real estate office, June 1922

Photo Source: Staten Island Museum



Walter and Frances Mallien at Brougham Cottage, c. 1950

Photo Source: Historic House Trust



Legend

- Landmark Site
- Building Footprints
- New York City Tax Map Lots

Address: 4746 Amboy Road
Landmark Site: Borough of Staten Island, Tax Map Block 5391, Lot 2
Public Hearing: May 16, 2000; October 22, 2015
Designated: December 13, 2016

