

SEGUINE HOUSE, 440 Seguine Avenue, Staten Island. Built about 1840.

Landmark Site: Borough of Richmond Tax Map Block 6694, Lot 173 in part, consisting of the land on which the described building is situated.

On September 13, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Seguine House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 78). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There were no speakers at the public hearing. The owners have indicated to the Commission that they are in favor of designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Situated on rising ground with a commanding view of New York's lower bay, the Seguine Mansion is a monument to the Greek Revival period of architecture and to a grand way of life now a part of Staten Island's past history. Despite certain minor alterations, this two and one-half story structure has retained its original grandeur and, in its character and setting, is reminiscent of an ante-bellum mansion of the deep South. The white clapboards conceal the original stone walls, yet the alteration enhances the impressive quality of the structure.

The low pitched, pedimented gable of the attic story is supported by six two-story paneled columns. Centered in the pediment, beneath the peak of the roof, a handsome fan-light opens into the attic area. The main entrance is framed by an unpretentious arrangement of pilasters, and here the Greek Revival vocabulary of design has been utilized in its purest form as plain moldings and blocks serve as cornices, capitals and bases. The eighteen-room mansion has survived fire, time and encroaching urbanization.

Built about 1840 by Joseph H. Seguine, the house was on an estate whose original boundaries extended from Princess Bay to the Staten Island Rapid Transit Line. The residence was designed as a water front mansion and was the home of the large, busy Seguine family, once affluent and prominent on Staten Island. Seguine Avenue and Seguine Point in Princess Bay were named after this family, whose ancestors first settled in Staten Island about 1706.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Seguine House has a special character, 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, among its important qualities, the Seguine House, by its monumentality, mirrors an image of the grandeur of Staten Island's past way of life, amidst beauty, grace and charm, and that this mansion is not merely a vivid reminder of the past as it adapts itself even to our pattern of life today.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 8-A of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Seguine House, 440 Seguine Avenue, Staten Island and designates as its related Landmark Site that part of Borough of Richmond Tax Map Block 6694, Lot 173 which contains the land on which the described building is situated.