

WOODROW METHODIST CHURCH, 1109 Woodrow Road, Staten Island. Built 1842.

Landmark Site: Borough of Richmond Tax Map Block 6110, Lot 1.

On September 13, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Woodrow Methodist Church and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 74). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. The Reverend Walter H. Everett, Pastor of the Church, spoke in favor of the proposed designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Set on sloping ground in a churchyard that is dotted with gravestones, this interesting Greek Revival Church has stood proudly erect since 1842. One is impressed with the stark simplicity of this little Greek temple, with its four handsomely proportioned Doric columns, supporting an unadorned pediment. Constructed completely of wood, the walls of the edifice are sheathed in clapboarding. The horizontal lines of the evenly spaced boards in combination with the vertical fluting of the four columns creates a pattern of contrasts that relieves the otherwise plain exterior. The tranquility of the graveyard surrounding it adds an element of somberness to the architectural design.

Simplicity is the key theme of the facades. The two doorways, symmetrically placed beneath the portico, are the only features of the front wall. These extremely well proportioned double doors with recessed panelling are handsomely enframed with eared moldings and pedimented lintel. A flight of steps, the full width of the Church, leads up to the portico. Four tall rectangular windows are evenly spaced at the sidewalls. The open, rather unusual bell tower, although added at a later date, is impressive with its arched design. On each of the four sides the columned arcade is crowned with a dentiled pediment. Surmounting the belfry is a low square base which repeats, on a smaller scale, the pediments of the arcade below. A small octagonal spire, capped with a cross, crowns the structure.

Historical Significance

The first Methodist church on Staten Island, dating back to 1787, was located on the site of the present Church. The history of the Woodrow Methodist Church is vividly associated with two outstanding pioneer preachers of Methodism in America. Bishop Francis Asbury has come to be known as one of the most important Methodist missionary men in America. In 1771, Bishop Asbury's first assignment in America was the Staten Island circuit, which included the Woodrow, Bethel, and Asbury Churches. In 1835, the Reverend Henry Boehm, was assigned to the Staten Island area and dedicated seventy-six years of his life to the Methodist ministry. His remains lie in the Methodist graveyard.

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 Woodrow Methodist Church 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 Woodrow Methodist Church is an interesting example of severely plain Greek Revival architecture, that it is situated in a tranquil setting, that it is the first Methodist Church on Staten Island, and that the history of the Church is closely associated with the lives of two noted missionary preachers of Methodism in America.

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 Woodrow Methodist Church, 1109 Woodrow Road, Staten Island and designates Tax Map Block 6110, Lot 1, Borough of Richmond, as its Landmark Site.