

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

THEME **Architecture**

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Brooklyn Heights

AND/OR COMMON

Brooklyn Heights

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Brooklyn Heights

CITY, TOWN

Brooklyn

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

14th

STATE

New York

CODE

36

COUNTY

Brooklyn

CODE

047

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Multiple private and public contact Brooklyn Heights Association

STREET & NUMBER

76 Montague Street

CITY, TOWN

Brooklyn

VICINITY OF

STATE

New York

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Kings County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Brooklyn

STATE

New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> XALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

From the harbor, East River, or Brooklyn Bridge, Brooklyn Heights appears composed of the thin horizontal planes of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway and the Esplanade, and the bulky upright masses of hotels, apartment houses, office buildings, and a few industrial plants stationed around its perimeter. These impressions belie the charm of the real Brooklyn Heights, with its tree-shaded streets and bluestone-paved walks lined by rows of fine old brick and brownstone houses behind decorative iron fences, and distinguished churches in the romantic styles, dating back to an era when this was the most easily accessible, desirable, and aristocratic suburb of New York. One gets an entirely different concept of the community from within than from any of various vantage points outside its boundaries.

Brooklyn Heights is an irregularly shaped area located on a high bluff of Long Island directly across from the lower tip of Manhattan. In the nineteenth century three ferrys connected the Heights with Manhattan. Today, traffic between Long Island and New York comes through Battery Tunnel at the foot of Atlantic Avenue and over Brooklyn Bridge above Fulton Street, the two extremities of Brooklyn Heights. This leaves its predominantly residential streets to the relative quiet of local traffic.

Except for the variable outline in the northern part, and the peculiar angles of Joralemon Street, connecting the dock section with Borough Hall, and Love Lane, Brooklyn Heights is laid out on a rectangular grid scheme. Blocks were planned 250 feet to a side although less than a dozen turned out square. Omission of originally planned streets resulted in very long blocks. Along most of the west side extends the Esplanade, cantilevered out over two levels of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. This promenade gives a magnificent view of South Ferry and Manhattan's financial district across the river, a vista up the East River to the north and across the New York harbor to Governor's Liberty and Ellis Islands, New Jersey and Staten Island on the south.

The first scene of active building was along the northern end of Hicks Street and on the cross streets adjacent to it around 1820. A large percentage of these early houses were frame construction such as Numbers 38, 40, 68, 70, and 72 Hicks Street and Numbers 27, 29, 55, 57, and 59 Middagh Street. Numerous contemporary brick examples are found along Hicks and Willow Street.

Although the row house predominated, some earlier houses were constructed to be free standing. Number 13 Pineapple Street is one of the oldest, and later examples include Numbers 70 Willow Street and 36 Pierrepont Street.

(Continued)

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1816

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Brooklyn Heights, the leading residential district of New York City before the rise of the large homes along Fifth Avenue, contains many private and public buildings that display the various popular architectural styles of the nineteenth-century. Although the area has been intruded upon by modern buildings to some degree, it retains enough of its earlier structures to remain almost a textbook for architectural development between the 1820's and the early 1900's.

The residences in this area display, in the period after 1814, one architectural style after another. Three styles, the Federal, Greek Revival, and Renaissance Revival are represented by outstanding houses. Particularly striking are the fine front doorways flanked with rich ornamental ironwork. Interior ornamentation is equally elaborate, with marble fireplaces, heavy plaster cornices, and carved woodwork. In short, Brooklyn Heights reflects the comfortable, opulent culture of the Victorian era.

HISTORY

Brooklyn Heights was the leading residential area of New York City before the rise of Fifth Avenue. Three ferries connected Manhattan with the promontory of Long Island directly across from the lower tip. The Fulton Street Ferry docked at the northern end of the Heights where the Brooklyn Bridge crosses today. The second and third ferries carried passengers from the base of Montague Street to Wall Street and from Atlantic Avenue to South Ferry. The Atlantic Avenue ferry was the terminal of the Brooklyn-Jamaica Railroad. From 1842 to 1859 the last mile of this line ran through an underground tunnel, thus, becoming the world's first passenger subway. The railway was placed below ground to preserve the character of Atlantic Avenue, which in those days was a fashionable shopping street. The tunnel ended at a two-storied frame depot built in 1836 and demolished in 1914. Although unused for a century, all but the eastern extremity of the subterranean vault over the two-way tracks is said to remain intact.

The history of Brooklyn Heights as a residential suburb began soon after the establishment of a steam ferry plying between New York and Brooklyn in 1814. At that time a number of landowners, whose memories are perpetuated through such street names as Middagh, Pierrepont, Hicks, Remsen, and

(Continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Lancaster, Clay, Old Brooklyn Heights, Rutland, Vermont, 1961.
 Reed, Henry Hope, "Brooklyn Heights, A Walking Tour" (mimeographed guide)
 New York, 1957.
 _____ and Bayley, John Barrington, Classical Brooklyn: Its Architecture
 and Sculpture, Long Island Historical Society, Brooklyn, 1956.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY C. 140

UTM REFERENCES

A	18	585220	4505890	B	18	585160	4504570
C	18	584500	4504820	D	18	584150	4505940
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See Continuation Sheet)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Patricia Heintzelman, Architectural Historian, Landmark Review Project

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

May 1975

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington,

STATE

D.C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

George F. Emery
 1/12/65

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

George F. Emery
 Chief, Int. & Arch. Surveys

DATE 11/19/76

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE 11/19/76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

George F. Emery
 Director, OAH

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The Federal Period provided the standard plan of the row house used in Brooklyn Heights until well into the twentieth century. The normal twenty-five foot breadth of lots accommodated one room and a hall wide enough for a staircase to one side. This resulted in the three bayed house, usually two rooms deep, with the off center front door. The kitchen was generally in the basement.

In the Heights, classic elements were played down although columns or small slender colonnettes are seen flanking front doors or on mantelpieces in the interior. Other traditional elements such as rustication, paneling, carved sunburst, floral motifs, dentils and various moldings of cornices and entablatures are found on interior woodwork and exterior details.

Arched windows and fan doorways with leaded semicircular or semi-elliptical transoms in delicate patterns still can be found in many houses. Entrance stairs were either of wood or stone and railings were of wrought iron, decorated with small cast-iron fittings such as rosettes and pine cone finials.

The Greek Revival brought generally higher basements, usually with a family dining room on this level with the kitchen. Ceilings became higher and a screen of columns or pilasters flanking sliding doors between parlors added a new decorative element to the interior. Houses became a full three stories above the basement and roofs were lower pitched. Row houses often had superimposed open galleries along the back separated by brick partition walls as in Numbers 20-26 Willow Street. Greek Revival is the predominant style of Heights buildings. The style led to many of the attractive iron fences along the streets; thin square bars fashioned into frameworks filled with frets, meanders, guilloches and floral forms in double relief.

The name of Minard Lafever is closely associated with the Heights. His pattern books provide designs for much of the interior detailing. His acknowledge works in the neighborhood include Packer Collegiate Institute (1854), Church of the Holy Trinity (1844-47) and two churches on Monroe Place. These public buildings of his design, unlike the private residences either by his hand or influenced by his designs, are in the Gothic Revival. These churches gave the Gothic Revival its start in the Heights. Within six years the style was adopted for townhouses. Tudor arches with carved spandrels replaced pilastered doorways, slender clustered colonnettes flanked sliding parlor doors and medieval window tracery offered models for plaster ceilings and iron railings.

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Externally the least modified Gothic Revival house is a three story brown-stone at Number 131 Hicks Street, with its adjoining twin at Number 135. The doorways are recessed under low pointed arches with horizontal hood molds and the windows retain their center mullions. Three brick houses on State Street are also well preserved although stripped of their hood moldings. Only Number 107 retains its first floor balcony railing but all three display iron tracery stair rails and fences. Four houses on Willow Place also display a delightful blend of clustered colonnetts, Tudor arches and trefoiled spandrels.

Brooklyn Heights also contains a few examples of the more ponderous Romanesque Revival, most notably in Herman Behr's house (now the Hotel Palm) and the Church of the Pilgrims (now Our Lady of Lebanon) by Richard Upjohn.

The Renaissance Revival began to appear on the Heights soon after the Gothic Revival was adopted to residential buildings. This style is distinguished by a certain opulence, manifesting itself in an increased scale and greater ornamentation, especially around the openings. Balustrades replaced other types of railings and a half round arch was reintroduced at entrances, although spanning recessed vestibules instead of flush doors as in the Federal Period. Brownstone was the favored material with cast-iron painted to look like stone used for architectural detail (123 Remsen Street and 220 Columbia Heights).

Among later nineteenth-century styles, perhaps the most important and enduring was Ruskinian or Venetian-Gothic, distinguished by the multi-colored use of stone. The principal example in the Heights is Saint Anne's Protestant Episcopal Church by Renwick and Sands. The Ruskinian style had little effect upon domestic architecture.

Unlike other revivals, the Queen Anne was not concerned with a specific style for its own sake but rather with unusual harmonies of forms, colors, and textures. The best example of Queen Anne is a group of three houses inclusive on Numbers 108-112 William Street, dated 1883. Treated as a single irregular mass of brick, stone, terracotta and shingles, great interest is achieved through the use of bay windows, towers, gables, chimneys, and a variety of different shaped openings. (For a detailed analysis of each street the reader is referred to Clay Lancaster's book on Brooklyn Heights cited in the bibliography.)

The interesting variety of nineteenth-century architecture at times beautiful in its refinement, delightful in its fancy or ponderous in its

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massiveness still remains well represented in Brooklyn Heights. The area has been revived as a residential area over the last two decades and most of the private residences are well maintained. The hotels and apartment houses erected in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century have not destroyed either the architectural interest or residential nature of Brooklyn Heights. Montague Street is the principal commercial strip, but most of the shops and businesses are located within old buildings so the scale is not disrupted. In fact, great potential remains for a complete rehabilitation of the area. The Brooklyn Heights Association, chartered by the city, is an active organization which has had remarkable success in safe-guarding the area. There greatest triumph occurred in 1950 with the construction of the Esplanade, forcing the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway below the Heights, thus keeping heavy traffic and noise from the residential area. Following the construction, modern low-level dock facilities below the Esplanade were procured, opening up the harbor and skyline view. This innovative solution to the problem of modern highway construction saved the integrity of Brooklyn Heights which would most certainly have been destroyed. In 1971 another battle saved the South Heights from a multi-lane expressway. As long as people are willing to search for alterative answers to the questions of urban development, the continued existence of Brooklyn Heights seems hopeful and should serve as an example for other communities.

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Joralemon, began dividing their respective holdings into 25 X 100-foot building lots. The first village map, recorded by Jeremiah Lott in 1816, the year Brooklyn was incorporated as a village, shows virtually the same street arrangement that exists today north of Clark Street, except for the crook to Orange Street at the Fulton Street end; and the Poppleton and Lott map of the Pierrepoint estate, made three years later, indicates in a general way the present layout of the southern section of the Heights. This area, however, was still not much developed when a new map of the Pierrepoint estate was made in 1831 by Isaac T. Ludlam, the village surveyor. All streets on the Heights were given their definitive form by about mid century, and they have remained unaltered down to the time of the construction of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway during the early 1950's, which took off the northwest and southwest corners of the Heights.

Not a single building existing on Brooklyn Heights today figured on the Lott map of 1816 or the Lott and Poppleton map of 1819, barring perhaps part of No. 39 Henry Street not visible from outside. A good many structures stood on Fulton Street in those days, and several farm houses and villas were inside the range of the Heights proper, but all have since disappeared. However, a number of buildings put up soon after the Lott surveys were made are still to be found. The first scene of consecutive building operations was along the northern end of Hicks Street and on the cross streets adjacent to it.

Today the area is entirely built-up, forming an integral part of Brooklyn by its active commercial boundary street. Only when one gets beyond Atlantic Avenue and Fulton and Court Streets does the special character of the area become apparent. Brooklyn Heights remains a community, sustaining the quality of neighborhood in the vast spread of New York City.

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The boundary of Brooklyn Heights Historic District follows those of the historic zoning, and is drawn to eliminate the heavy commercialization along the eastern edge. Beginning at the southeast corner, the boundary runs west along the north curb of Atlantic Avenue to the beginning of the Esplanade which runs above the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, then north along the outer edge of the Esplanade which curves at its beginning to the northwest, then straightens to continue due north then curves to the northeast where the Esplanade stops and the boundary becomes the south edge of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway until it crosses Fulton Street, then southeast along the south curb of Fulton Street to Henry Street, then south along the west curb of Henry Street to Clark Street, then east along the south curb of Clark Street to the rear property lines of buildings on the east side of Monroe Place, then south along this line to the rear property lines of buildings on the north of Pierrepont Street, then east along this line to Clinton Street, then south along the west curb of Clinton Street to the south curb of Remsen Street, then east to the rear property line of the building on the southeast corner of the intersection of Remsen and Clinton Streets, then south along this line, then west back to Clinton Street along the south property line of this building, then south along the west curb of Clinton Street to Joralemon Street, then east along the south curb of Joralemon Street to the east property line of Packer Institute, then south along this line to Livingston Street, then east along the south curb of Livingston Street to the rear property lines of buildings on the west side of Court Street, then south along these rear property lines to the point of beginning as shown in sketch maps A and B.