

**131 MACDOUGAL STREET HOUSE**, Manhattan. Built c. 1828-29.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 543, Lot 57.

On April 20, 2004, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 131 MacDougal Street House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 4). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Nine people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of State Senator Thomas K. Duane, State Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick, Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, Historic Districts Council, Municipal Art Society, and New York Landmarks Conservancy. In addition, the Commission received several letters in support of designation, including those from Manhattan Community Board 2, the Northeast Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Preservation League of New York State. The Commission previously held a public hearing on the 131 MacDougal Street House (LP-0200) in 1966.

**Summary**

The rowhouse at 131 MacDougal Street in Greenwich Village was constructed c. 1828-29 in the Federal style, characterized by its 2-1/2-story height, Flemish bond brickwork, low stoop with wrought-ironwork, entrance with Ionic columns, entablature and transom, molded lintels with end blocks, peaked roof, molded cornice, and pedimented double dormers. This was one of four houses (Nos. 125-131) speculatively built on lots owned by Alonzo Alwyn Alvord, a downtown hat merchant, as the area around Washington Square (converted from a potter's field in 1826-28) was being developed as an elite residential enclave. Until 1908, No. 131 was continually owned by families of the merchant and professional class. Around the time of the Civil War, as the neighborhood's fashionable heyday waned, this house was no longer a single-family dwelling and became a lodging house. In the 1910s, this block of MacDougal Street became a cultural and social center of bohemian Greenwich Village, which experienced a real estate boom in the 1920s. No. 131 was owned from 1919 to 1932 by the family of theatrical agent-playwright Will A. Page, and was partly in commercial use by 1924 for a number of tearooms and speakeasies. From 1940 to 1961, it was owned by Harold G. and Dorothy Donnell Calhoun, the former an assistant to the U.S. Attorney General; the Calhouns had purchased Nos. 127 and 129 in 1920. Alterations to the house included the creation of a roof "studio dormer" by linking its two dormers (c. 1950s) and the lowering and joining of the first-story windows as a commercial storefront (c. 1950s and post-1979).

The *Times* in 1951 reported on the planned modernization of the houses, noting that their "old architectural charm" was to be preserved. Despite the loss of some architectural details, this house, notable singularly and as a group with its neighbors, is among the relatively rare surviving and significantly intact Manhattan buildings of the Federal style, period, and 2-1/2-story, dormered peaked-roof type.



## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### The Development of the Washington Square Neighborhood<sup>1</sup>

The area of today's Greenwich Village was, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the location of the small rural hamlet of Greenwich, as well as the country seats and summer homes of wealthy downtown aristocrats, merchants, and capitalists. A number of cholera and yellow fever epidemics in lower Manhattan between 1799 and 1822 led to an influx of settlers in the Greenwich area, with the population quadrupling between 1825 and 1840.<sup>2</sup> Previously undeveloped tracts of land were speculatively subdivided for the construction of town houses and rowhouses. Whereas in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century many of the wealthiest New Yorkers lived in the vicinity of Broadway and the side streets adjacent to City Hall Park between Barclay and Chambers Streets, by the 1820s and 30s, as commercial development and congestion increasingly disrupted and displaced them, the elite moved northward into Greenwich Village east of Sixth Avenue. For a brief period beginning in the 1820s, Lafayette Place and Bond, Great Jones and Bleecker Streets were among the most fashionable addresses, the latter developed with three block-long rows of houses in 1827-31.

A potter's field, located north of 4<sup>th</sup> Street below Fifth Avenue since 1797, was converted into Washington Military Parade Ground and expanded (to nearly nine acres) in 1826 and landscaped as Washington Square in 1828. This public square spurred the construction of fine houses surrounding it, beginning with a uniform row of twelve 3-1/2-story Federal style houses (1826-27) on Washington Square South (4<sup>th</sup> Street), between Thompson and MacDougal Streets, by Col. James B. Murray and others. On Washington Square North, west of Fifth Avenue, Federal and Greek Revival style town houses were built between 1828 and 1839, while east of Fifth Avenue, "The Row" of thirteen large Greek Revival style town houses was developed in 1832-33 by downtown merchants and bankers who leased the properties from the Trustees of Sailors Snug Harbor. The University of the City of New York (later New York University) constructed its first structure, the Gothic Revival style University Building (1833-36, Town, Davis & Dakin), on the east side of the Square. While many of the better houses were built on east-west streets south of the Square, more modest dwellings for the working class were constructed on many of the north-south streets. The block of MacDougal Street (named after patriot Alexander

McDougal)<sup>3</sup> just southwest of the Square was developed with houses more modest than those on the Square, but still attracting the merchant and professional class.

In 1832, the Common Council created the 15<sup>th</sup> Ward out of the eastern section of the large 9<sup>th</sup> Ward, its boundaries being Sixth Avenue, Houston and 14<sup>th</sup> Streets, and the East River. According to Luther Harris' recent history *Around Washington Square*, during the 1830s-40s "this ward drew the wealthiest, most influential, and most talented people from New York City and elsewhere. By 1845, 85 percent of the richest citizens living in the city's northern wards resided in the Fifteenth."<sup>4</sup> Fifth Avenue, extended north of Washington Square to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in 1829, emerged as the city's most prestigious address.

### Construction and 19<sup>th</sup> Century History of No. 131 MacDougal Street<sup>5</sup>

No. 131 MacDougal Street was one of four adjacent rowhouses (Nos. 125-131) that were speculatively built on lots located between Amity (later West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street) and West 4<sup>th</sup> Street just southwest of Washington Square that were owned by Alonzo Alwyn Alvord. A downtown hat merchant in the firm of Alonzo A. Alvord & Co. at 14 Bowery, Alvord (1802-1862) was born in Connecticut, married Elizabeth Bulkley in 1834, and served on the Board of Assistant Aldermen in 1851. Alvord had acquired this property in 1827 from Thomas R. and Mary Mercein; according to tax assessment records, he had been paying taxes on the property at least a year earlier. Construction on the four houses began in 1828 and was completed prior to March 1829, when Nos. 129 and 131 were sold for \$8000 to downtown merchants John W. Harris and William Chauncey. The earliest known tenant of No. 131, in 1835-38, was Thomas J. Field, a downtown china merchant in the firm of Field & Co. In 1836, Nos. 129 and 131 were sold by John W. and Frasier Harris and William and Julia Ann Chauncey to Elias Hicks Herrick (1798-1857), a wealthy downtown flour commission merchant in the firm of E. & J. Herrick, and his wife, Jane Maria Taylor Herrick (died 1886). Elias Herrick transferred No. 129 in 1846 to Jacob B. Herrick, apparently his brother and a partner in his firm, but retained No. 131 until 1853. Resident tenants of No. 131 were downtown merchant Starkes W. Lewis and his wife, nee Matilda Campbell Varian, in 1838-42; and the newly wed John Abeel Weeks (1820-1901), a downtown lawyer, and his wife, nee Alice Hathaway

Delano (1827-1917), in 1849-54. In 1853, physician Cyrus Knapp purchased this house, and he and his wife, Harriett P. Knapp, lived here in 1854-55. From 1855 until 1880, No. 131 was owned by downtown silversmith Henry Hebbard (1819- ) and his wife, nee Julia A. Douglas; the Hebbards lived here in 1855-60. The firm of Henry Hebbard & Co. was dissolved in 1859; successor silver firms were Hebbard & Moore and Hebbard, Strong & Co.

Commercial intrusions and the arrival of workingclass immigrants in parts of the neighborhood south of Washington Square had ended its fashionable heyday by the Civil War. Many older residences were converted into multiple dwellings or boardinghouses, as the former residents moved northward. Bleecker Street as early as the 1850s was known for its boardinghouses and artists' community.<sup>6</sup> The 1870 census listed African-American laborer John Jackson as a tenant of No. 131 MacDougal Street. In 1880, this property was acquired through foreclosure by Joseph Hall, a real estate operator. At some point thereafter, it was conveyed to Elizabeth A. Louderback Quackenbush (c. 1838-1908), the wealthy wife of hardware merchant Abraham A. Quackenbush.

#### Federal Style Rowhouses in Manhattan <sup>7</sup>

As the city of New York grew in the period after the Revolution, large plots of land in lower Manhattan were sold and subdivided for the construction of groups of brick-clad houses. Their architectural style has been called "Federal" after the new republic, but in form and detail they continued the Georgian style of Great Britain. Federal style houses were constructed from the Battery as far north as 23<sup>rd</sup> Street between the 1790s and 1830s. The size of the lot dictated the size of the house: typically each house lot was 20 or 25 feet wide by 90 to 100 feet deep, which accorded with the rectilinear plan of New York City, laid out in 1807 and adopted as the Commissioners' Plan in 1811. The rowhouse itself would be as wide as the lot, and 35 to 40 feet deep. This allowed for a stoop and small front yard or areaway, and a fairly spacious rear yard, which usually contained a buried cistern to collect fresh water and the privy. During the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, several houses were often constructed together, sharing common party walls, chimneys, and roof timbering to form a continuous group. The houses were of load-bearing masonry construction or modified timber-frame construction with brick-clad front facades. With shared structural framing and party walls, each house in a row was dependent on its neighbor for structural stability. With the increasing availability of pattern books, such as Asher Benjamin's *American Builders Companion* (published

in six editions between 1806 and 1827), local builders had access to drawings and instructions for exterior and interior plans and details.

Federal style rowhouses usually had a three-bay facade with two full stories over a high basement and an additional half story under a peaked roof with the ridge line running parallel to the front facade. (Very modest houses could be two bays wide, while grander houses had three full stories, and could be up to five bays wide). The front (and sometimes rear) facade was usually clad in red brick laid in the Flemish bond pattern, which alternated a stretcher and a header in every row. This system allowed the linking of the more expensive face brick with the cheaper, rougher brick behind. Walls were usually two "wythes," or eight inches, thick. Because brick was fabricated by hand in molds (rather than by machine), it was relatively porous. To protect the brick surface and slow water penetration, facades were often painted.

The planar quality of Federal style facades was relieved by ornament in the form of lintels, entrances, stoops with iron railings, cornices, and dormers. Doorway and window lintels, seen in a variety of types (flat, incised or molded), were commonly brownstone. The most ornamental feature was the doorway, often framed with columns and sidelights and topped with a rectangular transom or fanlight, and having a single wooden paneled door. Some grander houses had large round-arched entrances with Gibbs surrounds. The entrance was approached by a stoop – a flight of brownstone steps placed to one side of the facade – on the parlor floor above a basement level. Wrought-iron railings with finials lined the stoop and enclosed areaways. Window openings at the parlor and second stories were usually the same height (the size sometimes diminished on the third story) and were aligned and the same width from story to story. The wood-framed sash were double hung and multi-light (typically six-over-six). Shutters were common on the exterior. A wooden cornice with a molded fascia extended across the front along the eave, which carried a built-in gutter. A leader head and downspout that drained onto the sidewalk extended down the facade on the opposite side from the doorway. Pedimented or segmental dormers on the front roof slope usually had decorative wood trim, and the top sash were often arched with decorative muntins. The roof was covered with continuous wood sheathing over the rafters and clad in slate.

The original design of the three 19-1/2-foot-wide and 2-1/2-story rowhouses at 127, 129 and 131 MacDougal Street were characteristic of the Federal style in their Flemish bond brickwork, low stoops with wrought-ironwork, entrances with Ionic columns,

entablatures and transoms, molded lintels with end blocks, peaked roofs, molded cornices, and pedimented double dormers. Remaining historic features on No. 131 are its 2-1/2-story configuration and basic fenestration pattern, Flemish bond brickwork (painted), stoop, entrance with Ionic columns (slightly altered), entablature and transom, molded lintels, peaked roof, and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century (reconfigured) dormer. The specific Federal style lintel type (molded with end blocks) seen on this building is rare today.<sup>8</sup> The lintels on Nos. 127, 129 and 131 are cast iron; they are probably replacements for the original brownstone ones, and possibly date from c. 1867, when No. 125 MacDougal Street received a one-story (plus mansard roof) addition with this type of cast-iron lintel. Despite some alterations, including that of the first-story windows as a storefront, No. 131 MacDougal Street, notable singularly and as part of a group, is among the relatively rare surviving and significantly intact Manhattan buildings of the Federal style, period, and 2-1/2-story, dormered peaked-roof type (dating from 1796 to 1834).<sup>9</sup>

#### 20<sup>th</sup> Century History of MacDougal Street<sup>10</sup>

After a period of decline, Greenwich Village was becoming known, prior to World War I, for its historic and picturesque qualities, its affordable housing, and the diversity of its population and social and political ideas. Many artists and writers, as well as tourists, were attracted to the Village. In 1914, the block of MacDougal Street just south of Washington Square emerged as a cultural and social center of the bohemian set. After the Liberal Club, headquarters also of the feminist Heterodoxy Club, moved into No. 137 in 1913, it was joined the following year by Polly Holladay's popular basement restaurant, also in No. 137, and Albert and Charles Boni's Washington Square Bookshop, specializing in modern literature, next door in No. 135. The Provincetown Playhouse, opened in 1916 in No. 139, relocated in No. 133 in 1918. (These buildings were combined in 1941-42 and given a new facade for the Provincetown Playhouse, apartments, and offices for New York University Law School). Other buildings on MacDougal Street, including No. 131, also attracted businesses that catered to both neighborhood residents and tourists to the Village. Historian George Chauncey has identified the importance of this block in the 1920s to New York's burgeoning lesbian and gay community:

*By the mid-twenties the MacDougal Street block south of Washington Square – the site of the Provincetown Playhouse and numerous bohemian tearooms, gift shops, and speakeasies – had become the most*

*important, and certainly the best-known locus of gay and lesbian commercial institutions. ... Although... gay-run clubs... on MacDougal Street encountered opposition in the Village, this should not obscure the fact that the very existence of such clubs in a middle-class cultural milieu was unprecedented.*<sup>11</sup>

At the same time, as observed by museum curator Jan S. Ramirez,

*As early as 1914 a committee of Village property owners, merchants, social workers, and realtors had embarked on a campaign to combat the scruffy image the local bohemian populace had created for the community. ... Under the banner of the Greenwich Village Improvement Society and the Greenwich Village Rebuilding Corporation, this alliance of residents and businesses also rallied to arrest the district's physical deterioration... their ultimate purpose was to reinstate higher-income-level families and young professionals in the Village to stimulate its economy. Shrewd realtors began to amass their holdings of dilapidated housing.*<sup>12</sup>

These various factors and the increased desirability of the Village lead to a real estate boom – “rents increased during the 1920s by 140 percent and in some cases by as much as 300 percent.”<sup>13</sup> According to Luther Harris

*From the 1920s through the 1940s, the population of the Washington Square district changed dramatically. Although a group of New York's elite remained until the 1930s, and some even later, most of their single-family homes were subdivided into flats, and most of the new apartment houses were designed with much smaller one- and two-bedroom units. New residents were mainly upper-middle-class, professional people, including many young married couples. They enjoyed the convenient location and Village atmosphere with its informality, its cultural heritage, and, for some, its bohemian associations.*<sup>14</sup>

Older rowhouses, such as those on MacDougal Street, were remodeled to attract a more affluent clientele or as artists studios. Nearby, on most of the lots of the two blocks of MacDougal Street to the north (Washington Square West), new apartment buildings were constructed in 1925-29.

New York University, particularly after World War II, became a major institutional presence around Washington Square.<sup>15</sup> Vanderbilt Hall (1950), the

main building of the Law School, at the southwest corner of the Square at MacDougal Street, was the vanguard of the university's expansion and new construction to the south. During the 1950s, the area south of Washington Square, to Houston Street, was also targeted for urban renewal. The surviving historic streets to the west, including MacDougal Street, became particularly popular for coffee houses, restaurants, and clubs.

#### No. 131 MacDougal Street in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>16</sup>

After the death of Elizabeth A. Louderback Quackenbush in 1908, No. 131 MacDougal Street was briefly owned in 1909-11 by John Franklin. From 1911 to 1919, the house was owned by Katie Hicks and her heirs. The Irish-born Ms. Hicks was convicted in 1912 along with the French-born Mary Chapelle, the owner of Nos. 127 and 129, as "two notorious keepers of disorderly houses;" they were pardoned by the governor in 1913.<sup>17</sup> Katie Hicks died around 1916, and the property was inherited by her children, Robert Hicks and Gertrude Watkins. No. 131 was acquired in 1919 by Adelaide Helen Page and Sarah Crocker Page. Adelaide was the wife of Will A. Page (c. 1879-1928), called by the *New York Times* a "well-known theatrical agent and playwright."<sup>18</sup> The house was transferred in 1922 to Georgia W. Page. The Milgor Realty Corp. was the owner from 1932 to 1940. Reflecting changes in Greenwich Village, No. 131 MacDougal Street was partly used for commercial purposes by 1924. Commercial tenants in the 1920s-30s included the Kopper Kettle tearoom (Arch E. Horns, proprietor), Teddy Morone's speakeasy, [Arthur] Murray's Tearoom, and Henry's Laundry.

From 1940 to 1961, No. 131 was owned by Harold Gilmore and Dorothy Donnell Calhoun (they had previously purchased Nos. 127 and 129 in 1920). Harold G. Calhoun (died 1953) was a professor of political science at the University of California in Los Angeles and served as assistant to the U.S. Attorney General (1936-45). His wife (c. 1889-1963) was a motion picture magazine editor (1927-35) and an assistant to Labor Secretary Frances Perkins (1935-40), and wrote short stories, children's books, and plays. In 1946, the house was internally altered from a three-family to a two-family dwelling.<sup>19</sup> The *Times* in 1951 reported on the Calhouns' 63-year lease of Nos. 127 to 131 MacDougal Street to operator Thomas M. Graham, who planned to modernize the houses by architects Knubel & Persich, but noted that Graham planned "to preserve the old architectural charm" (mistakenly reputed the construction of the buildings to Aaron Burr).<sup>20</sup> Commercial tenants of the 1940s-60s included Frank C. Pascale, plumbing and heating contractor, Playhouse Café Espresso, Africa

Curios, and Leather Land Gifts. Alterations to the house c. 1950s were the creation of a roof "studio dormer" by linking its two dormers, and lowering the first-story windows as storefront windows. In 1961, Dorothy Donnell Calhoun transferred Nos. 127 to 131 MacDougal Street to Mormac Equities, Inc. No. 131 has been owned since 1974 by Juanita and Rodrigo R. Fernandez. The lowered first-story windows were joined as a multi-pane commercial storefront window (post-1979). Later first-story commercial tenants have included Gemini Boutique, jewelry and dresses; Another Village Restaurant, Chinese country cooking; The Eleventh Hour, "truth emporium;" and a dentist's office.

#### Description

No. 131 MacDougal Street is a 19-1/2-foot-wide and 2-1/2-story Federal style rowhouse clad on the front facade in Flemish bond brickwork (now painted). The basement level has two windows (with non-historic single panes and wrought-iron grilles); a sign has been placed between the windows. The concrete-paved areaway has steps, a non-historic wrought-iron gate beneath the stoop, and a non-historic basement entrance door, and is bordered by a 20<sup>th</sup>-century wrought-iron fence and gate. A low brownstone stoop with 20<sup>th</sup>-century wrought-iron railings and gates leads to the entrance (having two of the four original Ionic columns (turned sideways c. 1951-66), that originally framed sidelights, which were replaced by solid panels) with an entablature, rectangular transom, and a non-historic paneled wood door. A lantern has been placed over the doorway. The first-story windows were lowered as storefront windows (c. 1950s) and then joined as a multi-pane commercial storefront window with anodized aluminum framing (post-1979). The entrance and first- and second-story windows have molded cast-iron lintels with end blocks. Four star-shaped iron tie-rod plates are located above the first-story window lintels (post-1978). Sash was originally six-over-six double-hung wood; second-story windows currently have one-over-one double-hung wood sash. A downspout is placed at the southern edge of the building. The original molded wooden cornice was removed (c. 1939). The peaked roof originally had pedimented double dormers; a roof "studio dormer" was created by linking the dormers (c. 1951-63); the dormer is sided with wood shingles (the windows have one-over-one double-hung wood sash). A chimney rises above the party wall with No. 129.

Report prepared by  
**JAY SHOCKLEY**  
Research Department

## NOTES

1. Luther Harris, *Around Washington Square: An Illustrated History of Greenwich Village* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Pr., 2003); LPC, *Greenwich Village Historic District Designation Report* (LP-0489)(N.Y.: City of New York, 1969); Rick Beard and Leslie C. Berlowitz, edit., *Greenwich Village: Culture and Counterculture* (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Pr., 1993).
2. Jan S. Ramirez, "Greenwich Village," in Kenneth T. Jackson, edit., *The Encyclopedia of New York City* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Pr., 1995), 506.
3. McDougall (whose family had spelled the name "MacDougal") (c. 1733-1786) served in the First New York City Guard Regiment during the Revolutionary War, rising to major general, represented New York in the Continental Congress, was first president of the Bank of New York, and became a state senator. Henry Moscow, *The Street Book: An Encyclopedia of Manhattan's Street Names and Their Origins* (N.Y.: Fordham Univ. Pr., 1978), 71.
4. Harris, 35.
5. *Note*: The address of this property was 147 MacDougal Street until 1854. Susan De Vries conducted preliminary conveyance and tax assessment research on this property for the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, including Liber 215, p. 33 (Jan. 20, 1827), and Liber 247, p. 537 (Mar. 29, 1829); New York Tax Assessments (1825-1890); *New York City Directories* (1829-1899); "Alonzo Alwyn Alvord," [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) website, and Jackson, 268; "Elias H. Herrick," [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) website; [Jacob B. Herrick], *NYT*, Dec. 2, 1872, 8; [Jane Maria Herrick] "Contesting a Millionaire's Will," *NYT*, Jan. 16, 1887, 3; "Starkes W. Lewis," [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) website; "John A. Weeks," [www.wykes.org](http://www.wykes.org) website, and obit., *NYT*, May 24, 1901, 9; "Henry Hebbard," *NYT*, Jan. 12, 1859, 7, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) website, and *Boyd's Business Directory of New York State* (1870), 728; "The Real Estate Market," *NYT*, Jan. 9, 1880, 6; [Elizabeth A. Quackenbush] "Bequests to Charity," *NYT*, Sept. 12, 1908, 6, and [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) website.
6. Harris, 86.
7. Adapted from LPC, *281 East Broadway House (Isaac T. Ludlam House) Designation Report* (LP-1993)(N.Y.: City of New York, 1998), prepared by Marjorie Pearson. For the history of Federal style rowhouses, see: Elizabeth Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent, 1785-1850* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Pr., 1989); Ada Louis Huxtable, *The Architecture of New York: Classic New York Georgian Gentility to Greek Elegance* (Garden City, N.J.: Anchor Bks., 1964); Charles Lockwood, *Bricks and Brownstone: The New York Rowhouse, 1783-1929, an Architectural and Social History* (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1972); Montgomery Schuyler, "The Small City House in New York," *Architectural Record* (April-June, 1899), 357-388.
8. This lintel type was also employed on No. 36 Beach Street (c. 1820; demolished); the Dry Dock Savings Bank (c. 1826), 143-145 Avenue D; 281 East Broadway (c. 1829; lintels shaved); Carroll Place (1831, developed by Thomas E. Davis), both sides of Bleecker Street between Thompson Street and LaGuardia Place (demolished except for Nos. 144-146 (remodeled in 1919 by Raymond Hood), and 145 and 149 (lintels replaced)); and No. 97 East Broadway.
9. The following Federal style houses are designated New York City Landmarks: Edward Mooney House (1785-89), 18 Bowery; James Watson House (1793, attrib. to John McComb, Jr.; 1806), 7 State Street; nine houses at 25-41 Harrison Street (1796-1828; two designed by John McComb, Jr.); Nicholas and Elizabeth Stuyvesant Fish House (1803-04), 21 Stuyvesant Street; Gideon Tucker House (1808-09), 2 White Street; Stephen van Rensselaer House (c. 1816), 149 Mulberry Street; James Brown House (c. 1817), 326 Spring Street; 480 Greenwich Street and 502-508 Canal Street (1818-41); 83 and 85 Sullivan Street (1819; third stories added 1880 and 1874); William and Rosamond Clark House (1824-25; two stories added in the 19<sup>th</sup> century), 51 Market Street; 265 Henry Street (1827; third story added 1895); Isaac Ludlam House (c. 1829), 281 East Broadway; Daniel Leroy House (1831), 20 St. Mark's Place; Seabury Treadwell House (1831-32), 29 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street; 116 Sullivan Street (1832; third story added 1872); 131 Charles Street (1834); and 203 Prince Street (1834; third story added 1888).
10. Harris; Beard and Berlowitz; Ramirez, in Jackson.

11. George Chauncey, "Long-Haired Men and Short-Haired Women: Building a Gay World in the Heart of Bohemia," in Beard and Berlowitz, 162-163.
12. Jan S. Ramirez, "The Tourist Trade Takes Hold," in Beard and Berlowitz, 388.
13. Ramirez, in Jackson, 508.
14. Harris, 210.
15. After the 1894 decision by the university's trustees to remain at the Square, a new Main Building (1894-95, Alfred Zucker) was constructed on the site of its original structure. Over the next four decades, the campus expanded mainly into converted loft buildings to the east and southeast, though the School of Education (1929) was built on East 4<sup>th</sup> Street east of the Square.
16. *Manhattan Address Directories* (1929-93); Terry Miller, *Greenwich Village and How It Got That Way* (N.Y.: Crown Publr., 1990); "Real Estate Transfers," *NYT*, Jan. 16, 1909, 16; "Real Estate Field," *NYT*, Dec. 10, 1919, 131; [Teddy Morone] "36 Padlock Suits....," *NYT*, Dec. 2, 1928, 20; Will A. Page obit., *NYT*, July 21, 1928, 7; H.G. Calhoun obit., *NYT*, May 14, 1953, 29; D.D. Calhoun obit., *NYT*, Dec. 3, 1963, 43.

Historic photographs and renderings of the building are found in: Harris, 172 (c. 1920, Jessie Tarbox Beals); *Valentine's Manual of Old New York* (1925), edit. Henry C. Brown (N.Y.: Museum of the City of N.Y.), 190-191; New York Public Library (Paul Sperr, 1933); Office for Metropolitan History (1938); NYC, Dept. of Taxes (c. 1939); LPC (c. 1940s, c. 1951, c. 1963, c. 1965, 1978); and Edmund T. Delaney and Charles Lockwood, *Greenwich Village: A Photographic Guide* (N.Y.: Dover Publics., Inc., 1976).

17. "Dix Freed Women, Despite Objection," *NYT*, Jan. 3, 1913, 5.
18. Page obit.
19. NYC, Dept. of Buildings (Alt. 57-1946).
20. "Lessee to Modernize Five 'Village' Houses," *NYT*, Aug. 10, 1951, 29.

## 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 the 131 MacDougal Street House 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.

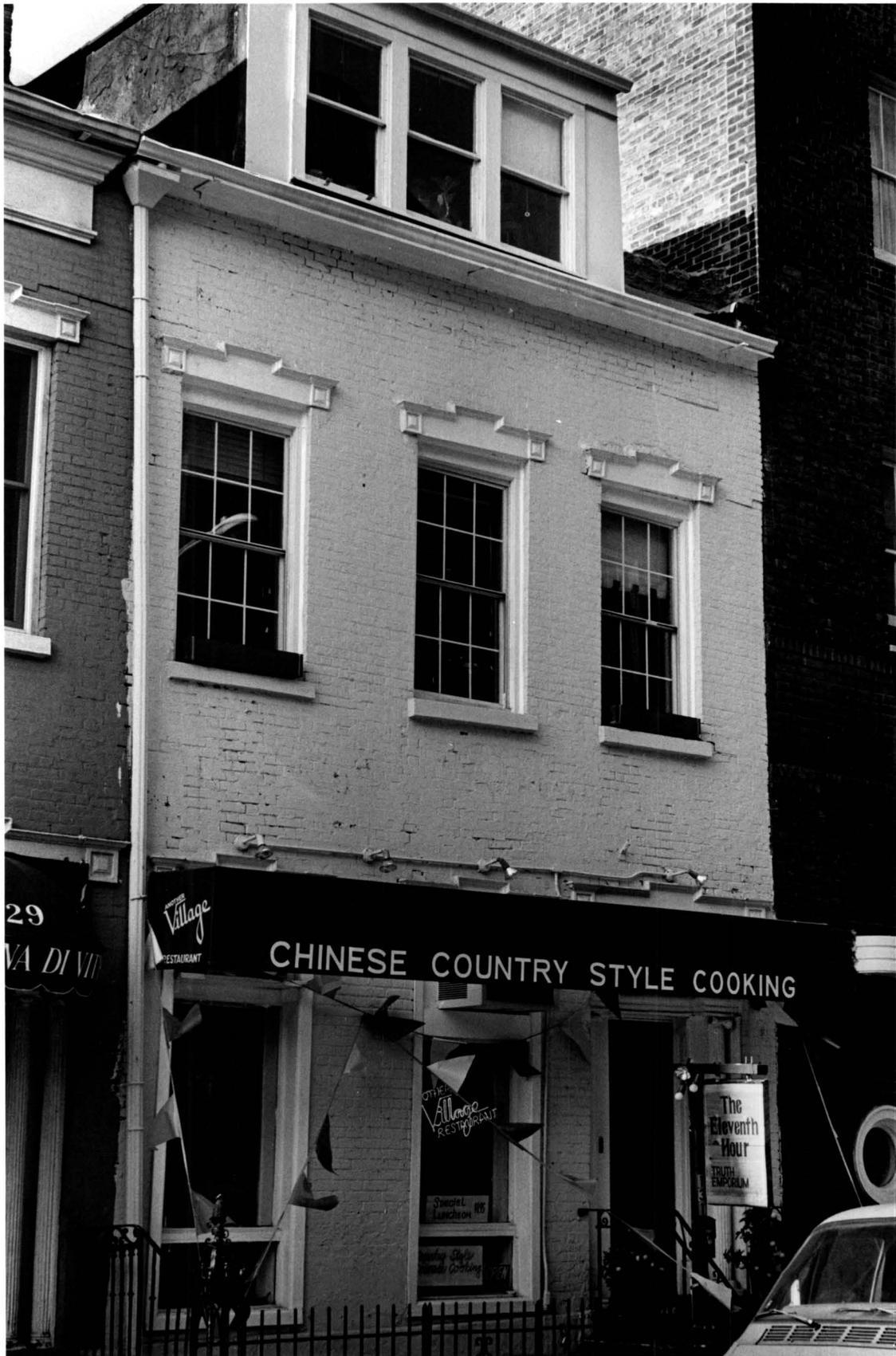
The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the 131 MacDougal Street House, a rowhouse in Greenwich Village, was constructed c. 1828-29 in the Federal style, characterized by its 2-1/2-story height, Flemish bond brickwork, low stoop with wrought-ironwork, entrance with Ionic columns, entablature and transom, molded lintels with end blocks, peaked roof, molded cornice, and pedimented double dormers; that this was one of four houses (Nos. 125-131) speculatively built on lots owned by Alonzo Alwyn Alvord, a downtown hat merchant, as the area around Washington Square (converted from a potter's field in 1826-28) was being developed as an elite residential enclave; that, until 1908, No. 131 was continually owned by families of the merchant and professional class; that around the time of the Civil War, as the neighborhood's fashionable heyday waned, this house was no longer a single-family dwelling and became a lodging house; that in the 1910s, this block of MacDougal Street became a cultural and social center of bohemian Greenwich Village, which experienced a real estate boom in the 1920s, and that No. 131 was owned from 1919 to 1932 by the family of theatrical agent-playwright Will A. Page, was partly in commercial use by 1924 for a number of tearooms and speakeasies, and from 1940 to 1961 was owned by Harold G. and Dorothy Donnell Calhoun, the former an assistant to the U.S. Attorney General, the Calhouns having purchased Nos. 127 and 129 in 1920; that alterations to the house included the creation of a roof "studio dormer" by linking its two dormers (c. 1950s) and the lowering and joining of the first-story windows as a commercial storefront (c. 1950s and post-1979), and that the *Times* in 1951 reported on the planned modernization of the houses, noting that their "old architectural charm" was to be preserved; and that despite the loss of some architectural details, this house, notable singularly and as a group with its neighbors, is among the relatively rare surviving and significantly intact Manhattan buildings of the Federal style, period, and 2-1/2-story, dormered peaked-roof type.

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 the 131 MacDougal Street House, 131 MacDougal Street, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Manhattan Tax Map Block 543, Lot 57, as its Landmark Site.



131 MacDougal Street House

Photo: NYC Dept. of Taxes (c. 1939)



131 MacDougal Street House

Photo: LPC, Michael Stein (1978)



131 MacDougal Street House  
Photo: Carl Forster



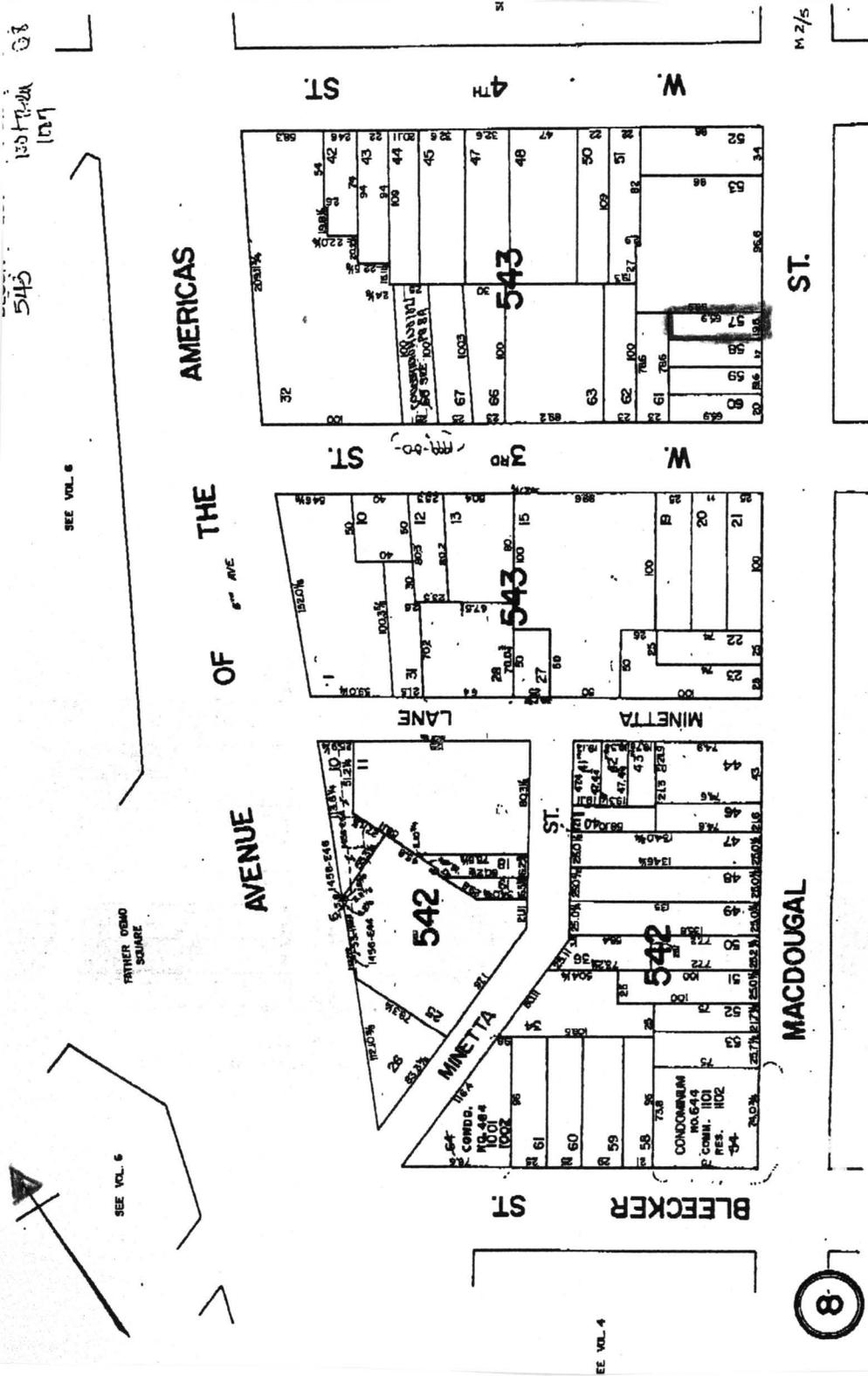
131 MacDougal Street House, first story  
Photo: Carl Forster



131 MacDougal Street House, entrance  
Photo: Carl Forster



131 MacDougal Street House, upper section  
Photo: Carl Forster



**131 MacDougal Street House**

Landmark Site: Manhattan Tax Map Block 543, Lot 57  
 Source: Dept. of Finance, City Surveyor, Tax Map

