

Landmarks Preservation Commission
November 19, 1969, Number 6
LP-0568

JAMES BROWN HOUSE, 326 Spring Street, Borough of Manhattan. Completed 1817; architect unknown.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 595, Lot 71.

On December 27, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the James Brown House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 58). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. The proposed designation of this building as a Landmark has been discussed with the owner of the house.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Talbot Hamlin, the great authority on American architecture, noted in connection with the Federal style: "New York developed a special type of dwelling...the type is a local one." The James Brown House is a modest survivor of one of these charming, comfortable, small early nineteenth century houses, once abundant in our City. Although occupied by a commercial establishment and altered to suit the tenant, the structure still retains its original gambrel roof, second story lintels and dormers.

This two and one-half story dwelling built in 1817 for James Brown was originally assessed for the then considerable sum of two thousand dollars. The brick front, laid up in Flemish bond, is three windows wide. These second floor windows have stone sills and the splayed lintels have double keystone blocks. There are two dormers set into the gambrel type roof.

Ada Louise Huxtable writing of such houses in her book, Classic New York, notes, "Their value is...a sudden sense of intimacy, scale,...evocative of the qualities of another century and way of life."

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 James Brown 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 James Brown House is a modest example of an early nineteenth century Federal house with some of its original architectural features, that after one hundred and fifty years, it is still serving a useful purpose and that it adds charm, intimate scale, a provocative change of pace to our city life and scene.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 63 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 James Brown House, 326 Spring Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 595, Lot 71, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.