



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau • Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

518-237-8643

www.nysparks.com

October 1, 2010

David A. Paterson
Governor

Carol Ash
Commissioner

Andrew Berman
Executive Director
Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation
232 East 11th Street
New York, NY 10003

RE: State and National Registers eligibility evaluation request
326 and 328 East 4th Street (Uranian Phalanstery)
New York County, NY

Dear Mr. Berman:

Thank you for your interest in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. After reviewing your eligibility evaluation request for the brick row houses at 326 and 328 East 4th Street in the East Village, it is the opinion of the State Historic Preservation Office that the buildings appear to meet the criteria for listing to the Registers. Attached to this letter is a copy of our Resource Evaluation.

A copy of this letter of eligibility is being forwarded via email to Mehdi Matin of the Uranian Phalanstery. In order for a building to be listed in the National Register, the property owner must not oppose the proposed listing. It is the policy of the State Historic Preservation Office to work closely with owners to inform them of the potential benefits of listing. Not only is listing to the Registers a prestigious honor, it brings with it economic benefits. Not-for-profit organizations that own registered properties may apply for historic preservation grants from various sources. Owners of historic commercial properties listed in the National Register may qualify for historic preservation tax credits. The Tax Reform Act of 1986 allows a 20 percent tax credit for the substantial rehabilitation of income-producing historic properties.

If the owner of the property expresses interest in proceeding with listing the property, we will provide detailed information on the next steps at that time. If you have any questions about this determination of eligibility please feel free to call me at (518) 237-8643 ext. 3266.

Sincerely,

Kathleen A. Howe
Historic Preservation Program Analyst

cc: Mr. Mehdi Matin

enc.



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RESOURCE EVALUATION

DATE: October 1, 2010

PROPERTY: Row houses at 326 & 328 East 4th Street

STAFF: Kathy Howe

MCD: Manhattan

COUNTY: New York Co.

USN: 06101.018018

- I. Property is individually listed on SR/NR:
name of listing:
- Property is a contributing component of a SR/NR district:
name of district:
- II. Property meets eligibility criteria.
- Property contributes to a district which appears to meet eligibility criteria.
- Pre SRB: Post SRB: SRB date

Criteria for Inclusion in the National Register:

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or represents the work of a master; or possess high artistic values; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;
- D. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE¹:

Based on the information provided², the two adjacent three-story, brick houses at 326 and 328 East 4th Street appear to meet Criterion C as excellent examples of Greek Revival row houses of the late-1830s and early 1840s. They are also significant under Criterion A as a microcosm of the evolution of nearly two centuries of history of this part of the Lower East Side, better known today as the East Village. They represent the history of the East Village – from its years as a working port, to its shift to a point of entry

¹ Much of the information for the "Statement of Significance" is excerpted from Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, "Historic Resource Inventory Form on 326 & 328 East 4th Street," September 14, 2010, on file at SHPO.

² The interiors of the houses have not been evaluated for their historic integrity. When information and photographs on the interiors become available the SHPO will reevaluate the status of the buildings at that time.

for waves of immigrants, to its role as the heart of the largest Jewish community in the world, to finally its transformation to an epicenter for the artistic community.

Many of the early owners of houses located in the far East Village worked in the waterfront industries on the nearby East River. Tax records indicate that the original owner of 326 East 4th Street was Fickett & Thomas, a large shipbuilding company. Records also indicate that Francis Fickett was the original developer of several homes along the block.

With the massive influx of immigrants to the East Village in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many single-family houses became multiple-family dwellings as was the case with both 326 and 328. Around that time, the Lower East Side/East Village became the largest Jewish community in the world. Reflecting this shift, 1927 building permits indicate that No. 328 housed a synagogue that is believed to have served a Hungarian congregation. The shul remained until 1974, when both buildings came to house the Uranian Phalanstery, which calls itself "an anarchist utopian commune for practitioners of art and cosmology" and still exists today.³

This history of changing populations combined with the buildings' architectural distinction, make 326 and 328 East 4th Street among the most remarkable survivors in this part of the East Village. The three-story row houses were built in 1837 and 1841 in the newly fashionable Greek Revival style. The houses have brick facades, high basements, and stoops with wrought iron railings. The façade of no. 328 retains a higher degree of historic integrity than no. 326. The entrance at No. 328 retains its rectangular sidelights, transom, Doric pilasters, denticulated entablature, and brownstone enframement. The classical enframement at no. 326 is intact while the original door was replaced, but with one evocative of the neighborhood's transformation to an artistic enclave in the 1970s. Many of the original multi-light wood windows are intact at no. 328. Windows have simple sills, and lintels of simple moldings. Many of the original lintels have been removed at no. 326. The roofline of both is marked by a wood cornice, with a row of dentils above a wood fascia board.

Their undoubted architectural distinction and their unusual history -- both residential and institutional -- mirroring the history of its neighborhood, combine to make this Greek Revival pair unusual East Village survivors.

³ Rhonda Lieberman, "Stuff of Dreams," ARTFORUM, August 6, 2010, accessed online at <http://artforum.com/diary/id=26095>.