

203 PRINCE STREET HOUSE, Borough of Manhattan. Completed 1834.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 518, Lot 49.

On September 25, 1973 the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 203 Prince Street House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 12). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Two witnesses, including the owner, spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The handsome townhouse at No. 203 Prince Street was built in 1833-34. Its style is transitional from Federal to Greek Revival. The original owner, John P. Haff, listed in the city directories as a leather inspector, acquired several lots on this block in 1811 and built houses on three of them in 1833-34.

Haff lived in the house at No. 183, now replaced by the building at 199-201 Prince. The land had formerly been a part of Aaron Burr's estate, "Richmond Hill." When built, No. 203 Prince Street was located in the Eighth Ward. Between 1815 and 1825 the population of the area doubled; it remained a favored residential area for well-to-do New Yorkers until mid-century. In 1834 the house at No. 203 was occupied by Eliza Scudder, a widow. This property remained in the Haff family until the 1860s.

The three-story house with front of red Flemish bond brickwork and brownstone basement has been sympathetically restored and is one of the few surviving examples of its type. The impressive entrance set above a high stoop is the most striking Federal-style element of the facade. The semi-elliptical arched doorway is outlined by a molded enframement of brownstone with incised impost blocks and a flat incised keystone. The door is flanked by Ionic columns and engaged columns which enframe the three-paned side-lights. An entablature with carved foliate moldings at the cornice and architrave is surmounted by a fanlight filling the arch and surrounded by an egg-and-dart molding.

The windows of the house, with six-over-six sash, are crowned by lintels with cap moldings--typical Greek Revival features. All windows have interior shutters and exterior blinds. The third floor, added in 1888, replaced the original attic story with peaked roof and dormer windows. The metal modillioned roof cornice of 1888 is carried on foliate brackets separated by molded panels in the fascia. Wrought-iron area railings and handrailings at the stoop, which have openwork cage newels with pineapple finials, are Federal-style decorative features, which add to the elegance of the house.

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 203 Prince Street 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 203 Prince Street House is one of the few surviving examples of a transitional architectural style which incorporates Federal and Greek Revival elements, that it has been sympathetically restored, that among its decorative features are a handsome Federal-style doorway and graceful iron railings, and that it is a characteristic example of an upper middle-class residence of the 1830s.

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 203 Prince Street House, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 518, Lot 49, Borough of Manhattan as its Landmark Site.