Landmarks Preservation Commission
March 27, 2012, Designation List 453
LP-2481

34 DOMINICK STREET HOUSE, 34 Dominick Street, Manhattan
Built c. 1826; builder, Smith Bloomfield; altered c. 1866

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 578, Lot 63

On June 28, 2011, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 34 Dominick Street House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 7). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There were four speakers in favor of designation, including representatives of New York Landmarks Conservancy, Society of the Architecture of New York City, Historic Districts Council and Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. Robert Neborak, co-owner of the building, spoke in opposition to designation on behalf of the owners of the building.

Summary

The 34 Dominick Street House was one of twelve Federal style brick row houses (Nos. 28 to 50) built c. 1826 on the south side of Dominick Street between Hudson and Varick Streets; and was one of five houses (Nos. 28 to 36) constructed by builder Smith Bloomfield. A secession of tenants lived in the house while owned by Bloomfield and it was sold by the executors of his estate to James M. Horton in 1866. The house retains its Federal style Flemish bond brickwork and stone lintels and sills. It was raised to a full third story with Flemish bond brickwork at the third story and an Italianate style cornice c. 1866. The addition of a full story is a typical alteration that many owners of Federal-era houses made at that time. The construction of the Holland Tunnel (1919-27) necessitated the condemnation of several lots at the center of the block and the raising of Dominick Street. As a result of its construction, trucking traffic increased and large loft buildings were constructed in the neighborhood. Peter J. Hamill, a Tammany leader and member of Assembly, lived here from 1923 until his death in 1930. The 34 Dominick Street House is a relatively rare surviving Manhattan town houses of the Federal style and period with Italianate style alterations. It is also notable as being one of only four remaining (Nos. 32 to 38 Dominick Street) Federal-era row houses on a block that once was lined with brick row houses, and one of the three (Nos. 32 to 36 Dominick Street) relatively intact remaining houses in the row.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Development of the Neighborhood[1]

The vicinity of Hudson and Canal Streets, including Dominick Street between Hudson and Varick Streets, was for much of the 18th century commonly known as Lispenard's Meadows. This marshy land, connected by streams to the Collect Pond (approximately at today's Lafayette and Centre Streets) and to the North (Hudson) River, was a major impediment on the western side of Manhattan to northward travel and development. Previously, in the 17th century, the Dutch had set aside land for partially freed slaves just north of this uninhabited region, to act as a buffer zone between their settlement to the south and Native Americans to the north. African Symon Congo was granted in 1644 an eight-acre farm to the northeast of this intersection, bounded approximately by present-day Hudson, Charlton, Downing, and MacDougal Streets. After the British took control of New York in 1664, Africans were legally barred from owning property. During the British rule, this area was located within portions of the Trinity Church and Anthony Rutgers Farms, granted in 1805 and 1733 respectively (Congo's property became part of the church farm). Rutgers' property was transferred after his death in 1746, by inheritance and sale, to Leonard Lispenard (1715-1790), who married Rutgers' daughter Alice. Lispenard's mansion was built c. 1740 at the intersection of today's Hudson and Desbrosses Streets. The Lispenard property was inherited in 1790 by Leonard's son, Anthony Lispenard, who began to plot the land in 1795. According to the 1800 U. S. Census, Anthony Lispenard owned five slaves. He devised the land to his sons, Leonard, Anthony and Thomas, his daughter Sarah, wife of Anthony L. Stewart, and his granddaughter Sarah Bache.[2] After his death in 1805, the Lispenard heirs in 1807 petitioned the Common Council of New York for, and were granted, the water lots opposite their holdings at Canal Street. In 1811, they also petitioned the Council for, and were granted, the right to dig a channel to drain their land between Canal and Spring Streets. In that same year, a partition suit was commenced in the Mayor's Court and most of the property was included in the partition in lots.[3] The Lispenard mansion was demolished around 1813.

Trinity Church, which had earlier leased lots on its Church Farm property, also began preparing for development, and ceded to the City those portions necessary for the layout of streets, beginning with Hudson Street in 1797. St. John's Chapel (1803-07, John McComb, Jr.) was constructed next to Hudson Square (also known as St. John's Park), laid out between Varick, Beach, Hudson and Laight Streets. Though the vicinity of the park remained relatively isolated until the 1820s, Trinity further encouraged residential growth by selling, rather than leasing, lots, and this became one of New York's most fashionable residential districts into the 1830s. Trinity's land farther north was not as conducive to development until after the draining of Lispenard's Meadows.

An 1820 survey conducted by John Randel, Jr., of the area west of Greenwich Street, between Desbrosses and Houston Streets, indicated that the shoreline was then quite irregular, West Street did exist for the most part, and that there was a rectangular boat basin at Washington and Canal Streets. Washington and West Streets along the North River were created through landfill, and completed by around 1824 as far north as the state prison (1796-97), located just north of Christopher Street. The area of today's Greenwich Village was, during the 18th 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. Previously undeveloped tracts of land there were speculatively subdivided for construction of town houses and row houses.

Though Anthony Rutgers had been granted his petition in 1733 to lay a ditch to assist in draining the area of Lispenard's Meadows, and several attempts at drainage were made over the years, no decisive action was taken until the early 19th century. A survey was finally made in 1805 for a 100-foot-wide Canal Street, but not until 1817 was an ordinance passed to "fill in" Lispenard's Meadows, and in 1819 a sewer was finally completed along the street's length. By the 1820s, Canal Street had become a thriving retail district. A steamboat ferry to Hoboken was established at its west end in 1823. A public market, named the Clinton Market after former governor DeWitt Clinton, was opened in 1829 on the triangle of land bounded by West, Washington, Spring and Canal Streets, and a "country market" was established in 1833 on the triangular site just south of there, on the south side of Canal Street.

The appeal of the fashionable residential neighborhood surrounding St. John's Park was short-lived as the entire area became increasingly commercial. As James Fenimore Cooper had observed as early as 1828 of the vicinity of lower Manhattan, "commerce is gradually taking possession of the whole of the lower extremity of the island, though the Bay, the battery, and the charming Broadway, still cause many of the affluent to depart with reluctance."[4] By 1840, with the straightening of the Hudson River shoreline and the construction of piers and wharves at every cross street between Vesey and King Streets, the waterfront became quite active, particularly for produce associated with the Washington Market to the south.

The Construction and Early History of the Building

No. 34 Dominick Street is one of twelve Federal style row houses built on the south side of Dominick Street between Hudson and Varick Streets c. 1826. Nos. 28 to 36 were built by Smith Bloomfield, Nos. 38 to 46 by Azariah Ross and Nos. 48 and 50 by Joshua Brush.[5] All three builders purchased the lots by separate deeds dated March 10, 1826 from Robert M. and Sarah B. Livingston.[6] Sarah B(ache) Livingston, the granddaughter of Anthony Lispenard, inherited the land from him.[7]

Smith Bloomfield (1780-1865) was a mason and builder.[8] He lived in New York City and built many residences on Dominick and North Moore Streets and elsewhere in the city. In the late 1820s he lived at 28 Dominick Street, and from the 1840s until his death in 1879, his son William Bloomfield, a lawyer, lived at that same address. In 1839, after accumulating much wealth, Smith Bloomfield moved to a farm in Metuchen, New Jersey that had been in the Bloomfield family for approximately 175 years, and in the 1860 U.S. Census his occupation is listed as farmer. A secession of tenants lived at 34 Dominick Street while he owned the house, including William Williams, grocer, in 1834; Edward G. Billington, broker, in 1842; Robert Benner, lawyer, in 1848; P. Stryker, pastor of the Broome Street Dutch Reformed Church, in 1857; and Henry A. Morgan, a trustee of the Board of Education in the Eight Ward, in 1858.[9] The executors of Bloomfield's estate sold the house to James H. Horton the year after his death.[10]

Federal Style Houses in Manhattan[11]

As the city of New York grew in the period after the Revolution, large plots of land in Manhattan were sold and subdivided for the construction of rows 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 23rd Street between the 1780s and 1830s. The size of the lot dictated the size of the house: typically each house lot was between 20 and 25 feet wide (though some were smaller) and 90 to 100 feet deep. These lots accorded with the rectilinear plan of New York City, laid out in 1807 and adopted as the Commissioners' Plan in 1811. The house itself would be as wide as the lot, and commonly 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 19th century, 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. The design of some houses has been identified with certain architects or builders, such as John McComb, Jr., though such documentation is rare. 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 row houses 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, while very modest houses could be two bays wide. Grander town 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, splayed, incised, or molded), were commonly stone. 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. The entrance was usually approached by a stoop – a flight of stone steps usually placed to one side of the facade – on the parlor floor above a basement level, though some houses had ground-story entrances and commercial shopfronts. 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), aligned and were the same width from story to story. The wood-framed sashes 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 sashes were often arched with decorative muntins. The roof was covered with continuous wood sheathing over the rafters and clad in wood shingles or slate.

The original design of the 34 Dominick Street House was characteristic of the Federal style in its two-and-a-half story height and 20-foot width, Flemish bond brickwork and high peaked roof with dormers. The house was raised to a full third story c. 1866 with Flemish bond brickwork at the third story and an Italianate style cornice.[12] Replacing the pitched roof attic and dormers with a full story is a typical alteration that many owners of Federal-era houses made at this time as land values in Manhattan rose.[13] Despite the loss or alteration of some architectural details and the raising of the third story, the 34 Dominick Street House is among the relatively rare surviving and relatively intact Manhattan town houses of the Federal style and period (dating from 1789 to 1834) retaining its Flemish bond brickwork and stone lintels and sills.[14] It is also notable as being one of only four remaining (Nos. 32 to 38 Dominick Street) Federal-era row houses on a block that once was lined with brick row houses, and one of the three (Nos. 32 to 36 Dominick Street) relatively intact remaining houses in the row.

Later History[15]

While New York City had developed as the largest port in the United States by the early 19th century, in the early 20th century it emerged as one of the busiest ports in the world. In Manhattan, South Street along the East River had been the primary artery for maritime commerce, but West Street became a competitor in the 1870s and supplanted the former by about 1890. After the Civil War, New York also flourished as the commercial and financial center of the country. The corridor of blocks closest to the Hudson River was, throughout the 19th century, a mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial uses, typical of a waterfront neighborhood. The diversity of businesses in the vicinity of Greenwich and Canal Streets included lumber, stone and coal yards; iron and copper works; sugar refineries; soap, lantern, glass, pipe, wire, and steel wool manufacturing; elevator works; food processing; and bonded warehouses along West and Washington Streets. While the neighborhood was undergoing redevelopment in the early 20th century, with its red brick houses being replaced by tenements, factories and commercial buildings, it was noted in 1910 that on Dominick Street "the owners have refused to be driven out and still live there in trim houses, with neat yards and gardens."[16] This was to change with the construction of the Holland Tunnel (1922-27), a double-tubed vehicular tunnel spanning the Hudson River. It was the longest underwater tunnel in the world at the time it opened, measuring 8557 feet. Its innovated ventilation system that utilizes four ventilating buildings became the model for other underwater tunnels in New York City and around the world.[17]

Transportation improvements connected with the construction of the Holland Tunnel and completion of the elevated Miller Highway (1929-31) above West Street, provided easier access between the metropolitan region and the Hudson River waterfront. The construction of the Holland Tunnel necessitated the condemnation of many parcels of land, including six lots at the center of the block in 1922 and 1923 for the entrance to

the tunnel,[18] and the raising of Dominick Street, which caused the stoops of the remaining houses on the south side of the block to be buried. Trucking traffic greatly increased in the neighborhood, and there were a number of effects on the area's real estate, such as the spurring of construction of even larger loft buildings. Most of the many early Federal style houses that survived into the 1920s in the vicinity of the western blocks of Canal Street were demolished. Of the twelve row houses built c. 1826 on the south side of Dominick Street between Hudson and Varick Streets, only four remain today. St. John's Chapel was torn down in 1919 for the widening of Varick Street, and the Holland Tunnel exited onto the former site of St. John's Freight Terminal.

The house had several owners after James M. Horton. Mary A. Horton sold it in 1867 to John Taylor before it became the home of Peter J. Hamill and his family in 1923.[19] Hamill, a Tammany leader of the First Assembly District, had been selected to be minority leader of the Assembly on December 30, 1929. He suffered a severe attack of appendicitis at his home and died a week later on January 14, 1930, following an operation. His funeral was attended by over 2,000 people including Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt.[20] His widow Matilda J. Hamill retained ownership of the house until 1963.[21]

Description

Three-story red-brick front facade with Flemish bond brickwork and brownstone lintels and sills; bluestone areaway paving; Italianate style cornice; Colonial Revival style paneled wood reveal and door lintel; door opening enlarged and entrance doors replaced possibly prior to 1939

Alterations: basement windows and stoop below grade c. 1919-27 when street raised; stone base painted; brickwork altered below first story windows and at sides of outer second-story and eastern third-story windows; window sash and second floor western window lintel replaced; basement window grilles, metal gate under stoop, areaway fence and gate replaced and metal stairs installed in areaway possibly in the 1920s

Brick east facade and chimney partially visible above neighboring building

Report prepared by
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NOTES

[1] This section is based on New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *486 Greenwich Street House Designation Report* (LP-2225) (New York: City of New York, 2007) prepared by Jay Shockley, 2-3.

[2] Deeds and Conveyances, General Statement of Early Title for Block 578.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Cited in Charles Lockwood, *Bricks and Brownstone: The New York Rowhouse, 1783-1929, An Architectural and Social History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), 35.

[5] These twelve houses first appear in the Tax Assessment of 1826.

[6] Deeds and Conveyances, deed from Robert M. and Sarah B. Livingston to Smith Bloomfield recorded March 16, 1826, Liber 200, page 476; deed from Robert M. and Sarah B. Livingston to Joshua Brush recorded March 16, 1826, Liber 200, page 475; and deed from Robert M. and Sarah B. Livingston to Azariah Ross recorded April 8, 1826, Liber 201, page 227.

[7] Cuyler Reynolds, *Genealogical and Family History of Southern New York and the Hudson River Va*lley (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1914), III, 1339.

[8] Information about Smith Bloomfield is from Eleanor M. Bloomfield, *The Bloomfield Family* (n.p.: 1951), 3-6; *Longworth Directories* 1822-1843; 1860 U. S. Census; *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Rutgers College* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Terhune & Van Anglen's Press, 1879). According the 1810 U.S. Census, Smith Bloomfield did not have any enslaved persons in his household.

[9] *Longsworth Directory* 1834; *Doggett Directories* 1842, 1848; *Acts and Proceedings of the General Synod of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church in North America* v. 9 (N.Y.: Board of Publication of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, 1806), 157; *Manual of the Board of Education of the City and County of New-York* (N.Y.: Rudney & Russell, 1858), 158.

[10] Deed recorded March 10, 1866, Liber 975, page 99.

[11] This section is taken almost is its entirety from LPC, *Hardenbrook-Somarindyck House Designation Report* (LP-2439) prepared by Jay Shockley and Cynthia Danza (N.Y.: City of New York, 2011), which was adapted from LPC, *94 Greenwich Street House Designation Report* (LP-2218) prepared by Jay Shockley (N.Y.: City of New York, 2009). The designation of the Hardenbrook-Somarindyck House was overturned by the City Council.

[12] The 1866 tax assessment indicates that 28 to 36 Dominick Street were two stories high and each had an assessed value of $4000. The 1867 tax assessments indicates that 28, 30 and 32 Dominick Street were two stories high and each had an assessed value of $4,000, and 34 and 36 Dominick Street were three stories high and each had an assessed value of $6,500.

[13] Charles Lockwood, *Bricks and Brownstones: The New York Row House 1783-1929* (N.Y.: Rizzoli), 14.

[14] 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.); 94 Greenwich Street House (c. 1799-1800); Nicholas and Elizabeth Stuyvesant Fish House (1803-04), 21 Stuyvesant Street; Gideon Tucker House (1808-09), 2 White Street; Robert and Anne Dickey House (1809-10), 67 Greenwich 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 Houses (1818-41); 83 and 85 Sullivan Street Houses (1819; third stories added 1880 and 1874); 486 and 488 Greenwich Street Houses (c. 1823); William and Rosamond Clark House (1824-25; two stories added in the 19th century), 51 Market Street; 265 Henry Street House (1827; third story added 1895); 145 and 147 Eighth Avenue Houses (c. 1827 and c. 1828); 511 and 513 Grand Street Houses (c. 1827-28); 127, 129, and 131 MacDougal Street Houses (c. 1828-29); Isaac Ludlam House (c. 1829), 281 East Broadway; 143 Allen Street House (c. 1830-31);

Hamilton-Holly and Daniel Leroy Houses (1831), 4 and 20 St. Mark's Place; Seabury Treadwell House (1831-32), 29 East 4th Street; 116 Sullivan Street House (1832; third story added 1872); 190 and 192 Grand Street Houses (c. 1833); 131 Charles Street House (1834); 203 Prince Street House (1834; third story added 1888).

[15] The later history of the neighborhood is based on the *486 Greenwich Street Designation Report*.

[16] "Old-Time New York Leaves Some Traces" *New York Times*, February 13, 1910, 8.

[17] Rebecca Read Shanor, "Holland Tunnel" in Kenneth T. Jackson, ed., *The Encyclopedia of New York City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 604-05.

[18] Block 578, lots 58-60 and 80-81, see Deeds and Conveyances, Block and Lot Index; "For Vehicular Tunnel" *New York Times*, April 16, 1922, 108.

[19] Deed recorded September 13, 1867 from James M. and Mary A. Horton to John Taylor, Liber 1009, page 675; deed recorded March 10, 1879 from John and Jane Taylor to John Dreyer, Liber 1478, page 329; deed recorded May 21, 1909 from Catharine Houghtlin and Josephine, John, Louise and Bertha Dreyer, Liber 192, page 33; deed recorded October 16, 1923 from Katarina Wingenfeld to Mary Hamill, Liber 3350, page 449; deed recorded May 17, 1924 from Mary Hamill to Peter J. Hamill, Liber 3418, 320.

[20] "Hamill Operated on for Appendicitis" *New York Times*, January 7, 1930, 14; "Associates Laud Hamill's Career" *New York Times*, January 14, 1930, 3; "Governor in Throng at Hamill Funeral" *New York Times*, January 17, 1930, 23.

[21] Deed dated October 7, 1963 and recorded October 23, 1963 from Matilda J. Hamill to Alexander J. Santulli, Albert DeVincenzo and Elizabeth G. DeVincenzo. The latter became the sole owner in fee by deed dated September 8, 1983 and recorded May 25, 1984, Liber 797, page 259. She sold the property to the current owners, Robert G. Neborak and Therese M. Esperdy, by deed dated December 16, 1991 and recorded December 31, 1991, Liber 1836, page 1045.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and the other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the 34 Dominick Street House has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and culture characteristics of New York City.

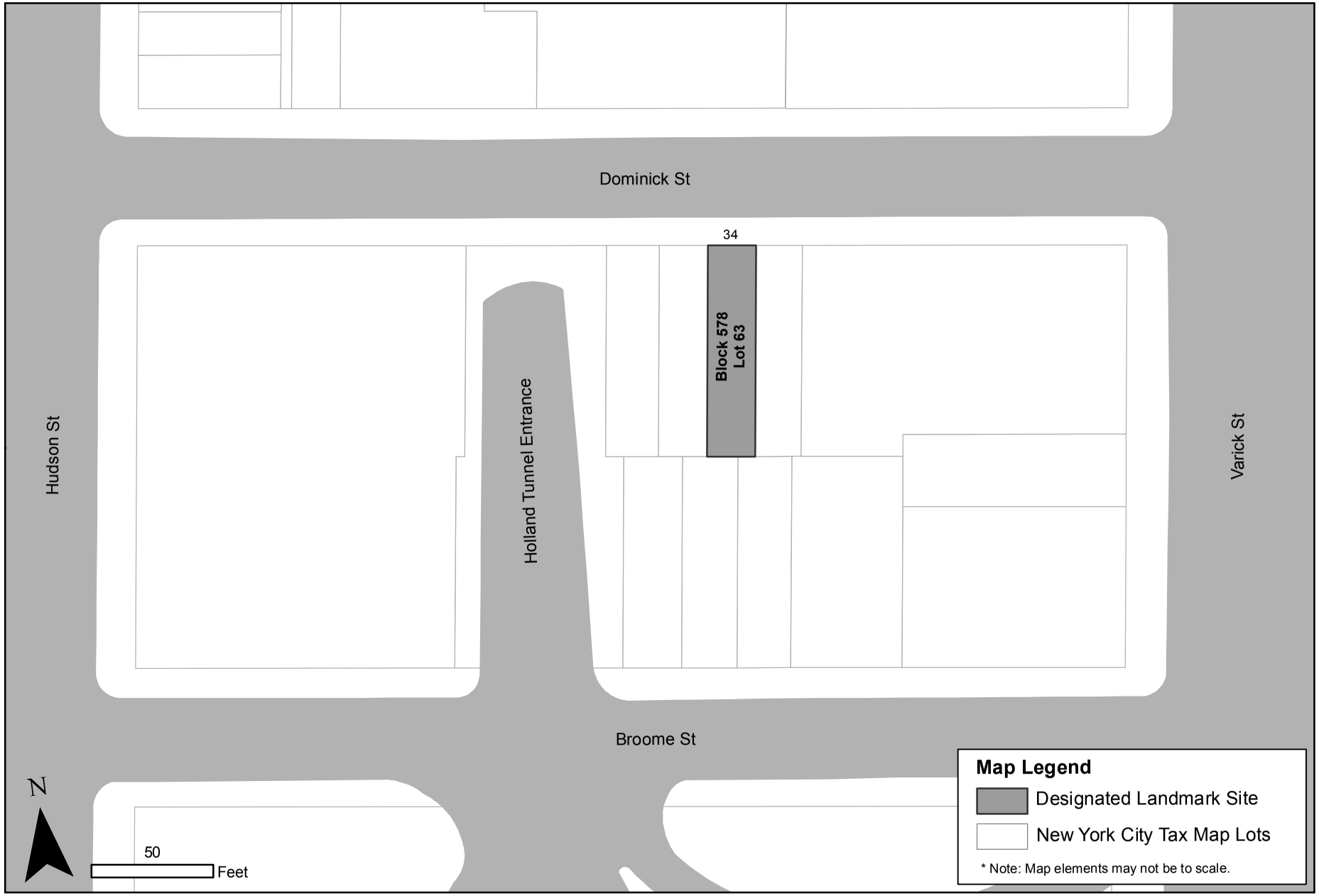
The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the 34 Dominick Street House was one of twelve Federal style brick row houses (Nos. 28 to 50) built c. 1826 on the south side of Dominick Street between Hudson and Varick Streets; that it was one of six houses (Nos. 28 to 36) constructed by builder Smith Bloomfield; that a secession of tenants lived in the house while owned by Bloomfield and it was sold by the executors of his estate to James M. Horton in 1866; that the house retains its Federal style Flemish bond brickwork and stone lintels and sills; that it was raised to a full third story with Flemish bond brickwork at the third story and an Italianate style cornice c. 1866; that the addition of a full story is a typical alteration that many owners of Federal-era houses made at that time; that the construction of the Holland Tunnel (1919-27) necessitated the condemnation of several lots at the center of the block and the raising of Dominick Street; that as a result of its construction, trucking traffic increased and large loft buildings were constructed in the neighborhood; that Peter J. Hamill, a Tammany leader and member of Assembly, lived here from 1923 until his death in 1930; that the 34 Dominick Street House is a relatively rare surviving Manhattan town houses of the Federal style and period with Italianate style alterations; and that it is also notable as being one of only four remaining (Nos. 32 to 38 Dominick Street) Federal-era row houses on a block that once was lined with brick row houses; and that it is one of the three (Nos. 32 to 36 Dominick Street) relatively intact remaining houses in the row.

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 34 Dominick Street House, 34 Dominick Street, Manhattan, and designated Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 578, Lot 63, as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin, Michael Devonshire, Joan Gerner,
Michael Goldblum, Christopher Moore, Margery Perlmutter,
Elizabeth Ryan, Commissioners

34 Dominick Street House
34 Dominick Street, Manhattan
Block: 578, Lot: 63
Photo: Olivia T. Klose, 2011

34 Dominick Street House
NYC Dept. of Taxes (c. 1939), Municipal Archives



34 DOMINICK STREET HOUSE (LP-2481), 34 Dominick Street
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Designated: March 27, 2012

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