Landmarks Preservation Commission
March 6, 2007, Designation List 387
LP- 2211

159 CHARLES STREET HOUSE, 159 Charles Street, Manhattan.
Built c. 1838; Henry J. Wyckoff, owner.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 637, Lot 40 in part comprising the land on which the described building and rear yard are situated and excluding the former carriage house facing on to Charles Lane (see attached map).

On November 14, 2006, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 159 Charles Street House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 1). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Fourteen people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of State Senator Thomas K. Duane, State Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick, City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn, Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer, Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, Manhattan Community Board 2, Greenwich Village Community Task Force, Municipal Art Society of New York, Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America, Historic Districts Council, New York Landmarks Conservancy, and Morton Street Block Association. One of the owners spoke in favor designation but asked that the garage be excluded from the designation and expressed concerns about the need for down zoning in the area. In addition, the Commission received several letters in support of designation, including that of U.S. Congressman Jerrold Nadler.

Summary

Constructed around 1838 for merchant Henry J. Wyckoff, 159 Charles Street is significant as a relatively rare surviving residential building of the early period of development of the far western section of Greenwich Village and has associations through its occupants with some of the area's most significant businesses, the maritime trade and brewing industry. It is one of the few surviving Greek Revival style rowhouses in the Hudson River waterfront section of Manhattan, specifically the area west of the Greenwich Village Historic District between West 14th Street and Lower Manhattan. Wyckoff, a prominent tea and wine merchant, built nine buildings on the former grounds of Newgate prison of which this is the only survivor. No. 159 Charles Street was initially leased to merchant James Hammond who operated a lumber business at Leroy and West Streets. Later tenants included local business owners and maritime workers including dock master Archer Martine and schooner captain Alexander Cunningham. In the 1880s the building was acquired by the neighboring Beadleston & Woerz brewery and was used to house brewery workers and in 1930s and 1940s served as the corporation's offices. A three-story-plus-basement three-bay-wide brick house with brownstone detailing, 159 Charles Street exhibits the simple forms and planar surfaces characteristic of the Greek Revival style. Its most notable feature is the handsome entry incorporating a stone surround with pilasters and a heavy entablature, tall wood pilasters framing a paneled doorway, sidelights, transom bar, and toplights. The house retains its brownstone base and original decorative wrought iron areaway fence ornamented with anthemia. The house's historic bracketed metal cornice probably dates from the 1870s or 1880s.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Early Development of the Far West Village[1]

In the early seventeenth century, the area now known as the Far West Village was a Lenape encampment for fishing and planting known as Sapokanican.[2] During Dutch rule the second director general (1633-37) of New Amsterdam, Wouter Van Twiller, "claimed" a huge area of land in and around Greenwich Village for his personal plantation, Bossen Bouwerie, where he cultivated tobacco. Starting in the 1640s freed African slaves, such as Anthony Portugies, Paulo d'Angola, Simon Congo, Groot Manuel and Manuel Trumpeter, were granted and farmed parcels of land near current-day Washington Square, Minetta Lane, and Thompson Street establishing the nucleus of a community of African-Americans that remained in this location until the Civil War.

Under British rule during the eighteenth century, the area of Greenwich Village was the location of the small rural hamlet of Greenwich. This building is located to the west of that development in an area that was part of a vast tract of land along the North (Hudson) River amassed during the 1740s by Sir Peter Warren. An admiral in the British Navy, Warren earned a fortune in prize money and had extensive land holdings throughout the New York region. As historian Jill Lepore suggests based on a review of documents at The New-York Historical Society, "Warren appears to have owned a sizable number of slaves."[3] Warren's three daughters, who resided in England, inherited the property after his death in 1752 and slowly sold off portions of the land. In 1788, Richard Amos, one of Warren's trustees, acquired the portion of the estate north of today's Christopher Street, between Hudson and Washington Streets. The land west of this tract was purchased by 1794 by Abijah Hammond, another of Warren's trustees and also owner of holdings to the southeast. Amos began having streets laid out in his parcel in 1796 and had subdivided the land into lots by 1817. Charles Street, said to be named for his relative, Charles Christopher Amos, was laid out by 1799. According to the Federal censuses for New York (1790-1800), Hammond owned several slaves, while Amos had none.

Between 1796 and 1797 the first penitentiary in New York State, known as the "State Prison at Greenwich" or Newgate State Prison was constructed on a four-acre site extending between today's Christopher and Perry Streets and Washington Street and the North (Hudson) River shoreline on land acquired from Abijah Hammond. Newgate's massive buildings, surrounded by high stone walls, were designed by Joseph-Francois Mangin, later the architect of City Hall (1802-11, with John Mc Comb, Jr.) and (old) St. Patrick's Cathedral (1809-15) on Mott Street.[4] Prisoners were transferred there from the old Bridewell Prison in City Hall Park. "A more pleasant, airy, and salubrious spot could not have been selected in the vicinity of New York,"[5] stated an observer in 1801, and the prison, one of the area's most imposing structures, became a tourist attraction. Ferry service was established from the prison's dock to Hoboken in 1799. The Greenwich Hotel, opened in 1809, near the prison; it became a popular summer resort and daily stage service was begun from the hotel to lower Manhattan in 1811. Amos (later West 10th), Perry, and Charles Streets were surveyed in 1796 and, extending westerly only to the prison grounds, deeded to the City by Richard Amos in 1809. North of the prison, Hammond (later West 11th) Street was laid out by 1799 and had a wharf leading to the river. South of the prison, landfill extended the shoreline westward, and West Street was laid out by 1824. Christopher Street, the northern boundary to the Trinity Church Farm, was laid out by 1799 and opened as a street in 1817.

By the early 1820s it was obvious that Newgate prison was a failure, subject to frequent riots and attempts to burn the buildings. Many of the Newgate prisoners were West Indian blacks who had a history of opposition to white authority. In 1824 a commission appointed to look into the problem recommended closing Newgate and erecting a new prison farther north along the Hudson River at Sing Sing (later Ossining), New York. The City of New York acquired the Newgate State Prison from the state in 1826, and the prisoners were moved to Sing Sing in 1828-29. In March 1829 Common Council adopted a resolution to extend Charles Street and Amos (West 10th) Street westward to West Street and to have the former prison grounds laid out into 100 lots to be sold at public auction, reserving the blockfront along West Street between Christopher and Amos Streets for a public

market.[6] In April 1829, Henry I. Wyckoff, a prominent merchant and former government official, purchased nine lots at the auction including this property at 159 Charles Street.[7]

Henry J. Wyckoff

Henry J. Wyckoff was born in Flatbush in October 1768.[8] He was the son of Mary Nostrandt Wyckoff and John Wyckoff, a descendant of Pieter Claesen Wyckoff. Mary and John Wyckoff resided in Manhattan, where John was a partner in an export-import firm engaged in an extensive trade with European ports. Henry Wyckoff also became a merchant, establishing a partnership, Suydam & Wyckoff, with John Suydam in 1794. Located on the East River waterfront, first at Coenties Slip and later on South Street, Suydam & Wyckoff dealt in teas, wines, and groceries, and according to *Old Merchants of New York* City "did a very heavy business for thirty years."[9] Considered one of the leading businessmen of his day, Wyckoff was one of the directors of the Merchants' Bank when it incorporated in 1805. He was also one of the organizers of the Eagle Fire Insurance Company and became its president in 1809, a position he held until 1815. Wyckoff was also active in New York City government, serving as a fire warden, election inspector, street assessor, and tax assessor during the early 1800s. From 1821 to 1825 he represented the First Ward as an Alderman in the Common Council, the precursor to today's City Council, and was described in *Old Merchants of New York* as "one of those good old-fashioned Aldermen, such as New York used to have in the olden time."[10] As an Alderman Wyckoff served on committees that determined policy on civic improvements, tax assessments, licenses, and land-use.[11]

In 1795 Henry Wyckoff married Phebe Suydam, a cousin of his business partner. The Wyckoffs lived in Lower Manhattan, initially on Stone Street and later on Pearl Street. In 1802 they moved to a house at 6 Broadway. Henry Wyckoff was residing there when he died in 1839. His wife continued to occupy that house until it burned in a major fire in 1845 and afterwards moved to Brooklyn. The Wyckoffs had three children: Maria Ann (1796-1836) who married dry goods merchant Francis Olmstead, Ferdinand Suydam (1798-1827), and Henry Suydam (1804-52) who became a merchant and married Elizabeth Brinckerhoff Suydam. According to the federal census of 1800 Henry J. Wyckoff's household also included two slaves and one free black person in 1800.[12] In the 1810 census he no longer had slaves residing in his home but his household included two live-in free black servants.[13]

Like many wealthy businessmen of the period, Henry J. Wyckoff invested his surplus capital in real estate. His holdings included commercial properties at 70 and 72 Broad Street in the heart of the financial district and a factory building at Washington and Laight Streets.[14] Wyckoff also built a number of row houses in Greenwich Village including a pair of houses at 108 and 110 Bank Street (no longer extant) and the three story Greek Revival residences at 75 and 77 Horatio Street (built c. 1835) which are within the Greenwich Village Historic District. His largest investment was the nine lots he purchased at the auction of the former prison grounds.[15] Six of these lots were on the south side of Perry Street (Nos. 158 and 166-172) where Wyckoff built houses during the 1830s that were leased to tenants.[16] He also erected an industrial building which was used as a steel factory (foundry) on the north side of Charles Lane behind 172 Perry Street (c. 1829). Two of his buildings at 656 and 658 Washington Street, erected in the late 1830s, had ground floor commercial space and apartments in the upper floors. This building, No. 159 Charles, was constructed c. 1838 and like the other houses Wyckoff built in the neighborhood was an investment property. Although Henry Wyckoff died soon after the house was completed it remained a part of his estate until 1889 providing income for his widow and later for his grandchildren.

159 Charles Street and the Growth of Greenwich Village's Far West Side

Now one of the few surviving buildings dating from the initial urban development of the Greenwich Village Hudson River waterfront, 159 Charles Street is a significant reminder of the history of this waterfront community.[17] The population of Greenwich Village quadrupled between 1825 and 1840 as a number of cholera and yellow fever epidemics in Lower Manhattan led merchants to relocate to Greenwich. Commercial development and congestion in the area near City Hall Park, also encouraged many wealthy New Yorkers to move northward, particularly to the area east of Sixth Avenue. Throughout the nineteenth century, Greenwich Village developed as a primarily residential precinct with accompanying institutions and commercial activities. However, the western section of Greenwich Village developed as a mixed-use area intermingling middle-class and professional-class housing with industrial and commercial buildings, often serving maritime-related businesses.

Several factors helped to spur commercial activity in the area. New piers were constructed at the foot of Christopher Street and Charles Street in 1828 and the pier at Hammond (West 11th) Street was rebuilt c. 1829-30.[18] By 1842 there were also piers at Amos (West 10th) Street, Jane Street, and Gansevoort Street. The Christopher Street pier, used initially as a transfer depot for lumber and building materials, became the Manhattan terminus for the Hoboken ferry in 1841. By 1842, the Amos (West 10th) Street pier was a passenger stop for the North River (Hudson River) steamboats.[19] In 1846, the Hudson River Railroad was incorporated and began constructing its line along West Street, terminating in a station at Chambers Street in 1851 (the station was replaced by the St. John's Park Terminal in 1868). In addition, sections of the old Newgate prison building survived on the block between Amos and Charles Streets near Washington Street and were adapted for reuse, initially by Jacob Lorillard, who converted the buildings into a sanatorium spa in 1831, and then by Nash, Beadleston & Co. (later Beadleston & Woerz), who established the Empire Brewery there in 1845. The brewery became a major commercial presence in the neighborhood, employing many workers and attracting related businesses. Other businesses located in the blocks between Christopher Street and Bank Streets, West and Washington Streets included the Greenwich Market (known as the Weehawken Market, operated 1834-44), a soap factory, lumber mill, lime shed, foundries and iron works.[20] On Charles Street a coal yard was located on the south side of the street nearly opposite this house and the property to the east of this house at 155-157 Charles Street was developed as an ice depot.

Nevertheless a thriving middle-class residential neighborhood developed amidst these businesses. By 1835 there were twelve houses on the north side of Charles Street between West and Washington Streets, most of which were owner-occupied.[21] The residents were primarily local businessmen, artisans, and carters who likely were involved in hauling goods docked at the neighborhood wharves.[22] When 159 Charles Street was constructed in 1838, Henry Wyckoff leased the house to James Hammond, the proprietor of a lumber business at the corner of West and Leroy Streets, who had previously lived on Morton Street. Hammond lived in this house with his wife and three children until 1844. By 1849 the house was being leased to two families. The primary tenant was probably businessman Archibald Martine who had a feed store on West Street, near Charles Street. Martine and his wife and son occupied a portion of this house until at least 1860. During the late 1840s and early 1850s the family of druggist John H. Douglass also resided at 159 Charles Street. By 1860, when the federal census was taken, Archer Martine had become a dock master and he and his family shared this house with the family of sea captain Alexander Cunningham.[23] A Scottish immigrant, Capt. Cunningham commanded and owned several ships that sailed between New York City and Eastern and Southern ports.[24]

In the period following the Civil War this section of Greenwich Village was no longer a desirable location for single-family residences. In 1870 this building was occupied by the families of boatman Abraham Tompkins, hatter David Roberts, and tinsmith Alfred Bailey, a total of fourteen people.[25] By the 1880s there were five families (twenty people) residing here. They ranged in income from the relatively affluent steamboat captain James Lounsbery who occupied a portion of the house with his wife, three children and a live-in-servant, to truckman Gilbert G. Tucker and his wife Eliza who supplemented their income by renting a portion of their flat to two boarders. The number of occupants of this house in the third quarter of the nineteenth century who earned their living through maritime pursuits is a reflection of the growing importance of the Hudson River piers which could accommodate larger deeper-draw vessels than the East River piers and therefore were used for coastal and transatlantic steamships. By 1870 New York had become the busiest port in the United States and West Street had become one of the city's primary commercial arteries. Growth in the neighborhood was also spurred by the opening of an elevated railroad line (the el) along Greenwich Street in 1869 and by the city's creation of the Gansevoort Market for regional produce in 1879 (north of Horatio Street) and West Washington Market for meat, poultry, and dairy in 1889.

Beadleston & Woerz's Ownership of 159 Charles Street (1889-1947)

The large number of people residing at 159 Charles Street in 1880s was probably both a reflection of the scarcity and high cost of housing in Manhattan and the increasing demand for worker

housing in this neighborhood with its rapidly growing industries. Among the fastest growing businesses in the area during this period was Beadleston & Woerz's Empire Brewery. This firm had been established by Ebenezer Beadleston (1803-89), who settled in New York City in 1837 where he began selling the ales of A [braham] Nash & Co. of Troy, N.Y. Around 1845 Nash, Beadleston & Co. established a brewery on West Tenth Street near Washington Street on a lot extending through the block to Charles Street opposite this house. The business continued under the Beadleston's sons, William Henry Beadleston (1840-95) and Alfred Nash Beadleston (?- 1917) who formed a partnership with Ernest G. W. Woerz (?- 1916) in 1877. In 1889 Beadleston & Woerz was incorporated with a capitalization of just under a million dollars.[26] The firm replaced its original brewery building at 291 West 10th Street in 1879. Over the years the brewery expanded its works onto several other former industrial sites in the neighborhood so that it occupied portions of the four blocks from Christopher to Charles Street between West and Greenwich Streets. William Henry and Alfred Nash Beadleston built or acquired a number of buildings in the neighborhood to house their workers.[27] No. 159 Charles Street was purchased by William Henry Beadleston in 1889 and was later transferred to the ownership of the firm. It became one of several houses on the north side of Charles Street between West and Washington Streets that were owned by Beadleston & Woerz and were for the most part leased to brewery workers. Census records indicate that three families including that of brewery worker Ernest Reinhardt occupied this house in 1890. In 1900 all three families were headed by German immigrants who worked at the brewery. One family, that of Franz and Maria Baldes, resided in the house from at least 1900 to 1910 with Baldes rising from a laborer to foreman at the brewery.[28]

After the enactment of prohibition Beadleston & Woerz continued to operate as a producer of beverages. In 1929 the firm sold a portion of its bottling plant at Washington and West 10th Street to the New York Central Railroad which constructed a warehouse building on the site.[29] Between 1937 and 1939 Beadleston & Woerz replaced the remainder of its main brewery building at West 10th and Washington Streets with a modern three-story factory building which was leased to commercial tenants.[30] The firm's other real estate holdings were either sold or leased and the company was primarily a real estate firm headed by Ebenezer Beadleston's grandson Alfred Beadleston and Ernest Woerz's son Frederick Woerz with its offices at 159 Charles Street.[31] Frederick Woerz died in 1947, Alfred Beadleston began liquidating the corporation's real estate.[32] This building and the neighboring buildings at 151-157 Charles Street were purchased by the Davidson Transfer & Storage Company, a moving company which had offices at 149 Charles Street., and was subsequently transferred to the ownership of a related firm, the Terminal Leasing Corporation.[33]

Greek Revival Style Rowhouses in Manhattan and the Far Western Village [34]

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 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 23rd 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, 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. During the early 19th century, several houses were often constructed together, sharing common party walls, chimneys, and roof timbering to form a continuous group. The houses, of load-bearing masonry or modified timber-frame construction, had brick-clad front facades. 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. The front facade was usually clad in red brick laid in the Flemish bond pattern, with stone trim, commonly brownstone. The planar quality of the facades was relieved by ornament in the form of lintels, entrances, stoops and areaways with iron railings, cornices, and dormers. The most

ornamental feature was the doorway, often framed with columns and sidelights and topped with a rectangular transom or fanlight, and having a wooden paneled door. The wood-framed sashes were double hung and multi-light (typically six-over-six). A wooden cornice with a molded fascia extended across the front along the eave. Pedimented or segmental dormers on the front roof slope usually had decorative wood trim.

Around 1830, builders in New York City began to incorporate some Greek Revival style features on grander Federal style houses, such as the Seabury Tredwell ("Old Merchant's") House (1831-32), 29 East 4th Street. During the early 1830s, fashionable rowhouses were constructed in a Greek Revival style that was distinct from the earlier Federal style houses. Local builders were influenced by the designs and builder's guides of architects such as Asher Benjamin, Minard Lafever, and Alexander Jackson Davis. Some examples were "high style," such as the nine marble-fronted houses with a continuous Corinthian colonnade known as LaGrange Terrace or Colonnade Row (1832-33, attributed to Seth Greer), of which Nos. 428-434 Lafayette Street survive. Many rows of speculatively-built Greek Revival style houses were constructed, particularly in the Greenwich Village and Chelsea neighborhoods, during the period of enormous growth and development in New York City during the 1830s-40s.

Greek Revival style rowhouses, which became widely popular, basically continued many of the traditions of Federal style houses, including three-bay front facades, brick cladding with brownstone trim, and raised stoops and areaways with iron railings. They differed, however, in stylistic details, in their emphasis on flat planar surfaces and simple forms, and in scale, being taller and somewhat grander at a full three stories above a basement (with higher ceilings per story). By this period, technological advances in brickmaking allowed for higher quality, machine-pressed brick. The brick was laid in a bond other than Flemish, such as stretcher bond. Ornamentation was spare, including simple, molded rectangular lintels and a flat roofline capped by a denticulated and molded wooden cornice (sometimes with attic windows). Like on Federal style houses, the most ornamental feature was the doorway. The Greek Revival style doorway was recessed, with a rectangular transom, sidelights, and paneled (often a single vertical panel) door. On grander houses, the entrance featured a portico with Doric or Ionic columns flanking the doorway and supporting a prominent entablature. Examples of this type include "The Row" (1832-33), 1-13 Washington Square North, and the Samuel Tredwell Skidmore House (1845), 37 East 4th Street. More commonly, the entrance featured a brownstone surround with wide pilasters supporting an entablature. No. 159 Charles Street is of this latter type. The wood-framed sashes were double-hung and typically six-over-six (often nine-over-nine or six-over-nine on the parlor level).

Examples of surviving Federal and Greek Revival style rowhouses in the far western section of Greenwich Village include: the rare, vernacular wood-framed No. 132 Charles Street (c. 1819), attributed to carpenter Matthew Armstrong, a co-owner/occupant who was active in neighborhood development, and extended one story c. 1853, attributed to carpenters/owner-occupants John and Levi Springsteen; Nos. 651, 653 and 655 Washington Street (1829), 3-1/2-story, brick-clad Federal style houses owned by merchant Samuel Norsworthy; No. 398 West Street (1830-31), a 3-1/2-story, brick-clad Federal style house built for flour merchant Isaac Amerman; No. 7 Weehawken Street (c. 1830-31), a 3-story, brick-clad rowhouse/stable owned by carpenter Jacob P. Roome; No. 131 Charles Street (1834), an intact, relatively rare and late example of a 2-1/2-story, brick-clad Federal style house, owned by stone cutter David Christie and a designated New York City Landmark since 1966; No. 269 West 10th Street (c. 1835), a Greek Revival style (now altered) house for widow Hannah Jenkins; No. 161 Charles Street (c. 1835), a 3-story Greek Revival style house built by Abraham Romaine (altered at the ground story and by a multi-story penthouse addition.); and No. 354 West 11th Street (c. 1841-42), a fine 3-story Greek Revival style constructed by carver and composition ornament manufacturer William Fash and today a designated New York City Landmark. [35]

Aspects of No. 159 Charles Street's design that reflect the Greek Revival style are its three-story-plus-basement height, the emphasis on planar wall surfaces achieved in part by the use of machine-pressed brick laid in stretcher bond (now painted), stoop and areaway with wrought-iron railings trimmed with Greek anthemia, entrance surround with wide pilasters carrying a full entablature, recessed doorway, with door articulated with shallow recessed panels typical of the Greek

Revival style, pilasters, sidelights, transom bars and transom. The original flat stone lintels and sills have been covered with non-historic metal lintels and sills. The Italianate style paneled frieze and decorative bracketed cornice probably dates from the 1870s or 1880s.

Subsequent History

This building remained in the ownership of the Terminal Leasing Company until 1964. In the mid-1950s it was occupied James Hargan. In 1964 the building was purchased by realtor Chester W. Krone, Jr. who converted it into two duplex apartments and who resided in the building.[36] In 1966 Krone sold the building to Charles D. Rogers and Frederick Lock.[37] Lock died around 1983 and Rogers purchased his interest in the house. In 1985 Miguel Chacour and stock analyst Barbara H. Chacour, who had been living at 159 Charles Street since 1980, purchased an interest in the building. In 1992, after Charles Rogers died, his interest passed to Robert C. La Mont. La Mont died in 1995 and John McClenahan and Deborah Robin True purchased his interest in the building. They sold their interest to Robert Cromwell Coulson, publisher of *Pink Pages*, in 2004.

Description

This 3-story-plus-basement Greek Revival style rowhouse is clad in machine-pressed red brick laid in stretcher bond (now painted) above a brownstone base (now parged). The areaway is bordered by stone curbs (now parged) which support original wrought-iron railings and a gate ornamented with anthemia. The brownstone stoop leading down to the areaway is historic. The areaway is paved with historic flagstone but the steps down to the entrance beneath the front stoop are non-historic. The iron-gate beneath the stoop is non-historic. The basement entry has a historic paneled wood door. The two basement windows have non-historic six-over-six wood sashes and non-historic iron grates. The high stone stoop has been parged with stucco; it has non-historic wrought-iron railings. The entrance has a brownstone surround with pilasters supporting a full entablature with a molded architrave and cornice and a frieze band above the cornice. The recessed entry has historic wood reveals and features tall pilasters that extend the entire height of the entry. They set off the historic (perhaps original) Greek Revival style paneled wood door (non-historic hardware and letter slot). Flanking the door are historic multi-pane sidelights supported by paneled wood dados. Transom bars articulated with a simple drip molding support the double-light center transom and two small side transom windows. All of the windows above basement level have non-historic metal lintels and sills. The upper-story windows contain non-historic replacement sash. Through-the-wall air conditioners are located below the western window of the first and second stories. The facade is terminated by a c. 1870s-1880s metal entablature with a paneled frieze, decorative scrolled brackets, and molded pressed metal cornice (the west portion of the cornice was replaced in 2006).

Visible above the second story, the brick eastern sidewall of the house is parged with stucco and is largely concealed by vines. There is a non-historic metal railing on the roof near the east wall. The rear façade is blocked from view by the extensively altered two-story former carriage house/back house facing onto Charles Lane. The former carriage house/back house is not included in this designation and the landmark site extends only to the south wall of that building.

Report prepared by
Gale Harris
Research Department

NOTES

[1]This section on the early history of the Far West Village is adapted from Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Greenwich Village Historic District Extension Report* researched and written by Jay Shockley (LP-2184) (New York: City of New York, 2006), prepared by Jay Shockley.
[2] Archaeological evidence and historical documents suggest that Sagapokanican was centered at the foot of Gansevoort Street.
[3] Jill Lepore, *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan* NY:Knopf. 2005), fn 4, p. 302.
[4] Both buildings are designated New York City Landmarks.
[5] Quoted in Edmund T. Delaney, *New York's Greenwich Village* (Barre, Mass.: Barre Publrs, 1968), 19.
[6] I.N. Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1909* (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1915), v. 5, p. 1682; *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784-1831* (New York: City of New York, 1917), v. 17, 689.
[7] New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 307, p. 117.
[8] This information on Henry Wyckoff is drawn from Joseph A. Scoville, *The Old Merchants of New York* (New York: Carleton, 1863-66), v. 2, 264-66; H.W. Lanier, *A Century of Banking in New York* (New York: The Gilliss Press, 1922), 141,154; William Forman Wyckoff, *The Wyckoff Family in America: a Genealogy* (Summit, N.J.: Wyckoff Asso. in America, 1960), 274-75; New York City Directories, 1791-1845; New York County, Office of the Surrogate, Last Will & Testament Henry J. Wyckoff, Wills Liber 77, p. 401, LW&T Phoebe Wyckoff, Wills Liber 131, p. 188.
[9] Scovill, v. 2, p. 266.
[10]Ibid, v. 2, p. 265.
[11] See the *Minutes of the Common Council*, index, p 1437-1440, for a sense of the scope of government issues Wyckoff was involved in. On the political importance of the Aldermen in the 1820s see Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 520.
[12] *Population Schedules of the Second Census of the Unites States, 1800*, New York, New York City, Ward 1, series M32, roll 23, p. 17.
[13]*Population Schedules of the Third Census of the Unites States, 1810*, New York, New York City, Ward 1, series M252, roll 32, p. 16. One of Wyckoff's former slaves, "Miss Dinah" had her deed of manumission recorded in the office of the Register in January 1810. She may have been the same Dinah who was recorded as living near Wyckoff in the census of 1800. See Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 90, p. 85; *Census of the Unites States, 1800*, series M32, roll 23, p. 17.
[14] The properties that remained part of Wyckoff's estate in 1889 were listed in a release in Conveyance Liber 2187, p. 107; for the factory building at Laight and Washington Streets see *Newport Mercury*, Jan. 26, 1828, p. 2; Conveyances, Grantor and Grantee Indexes, s.v. Wyckoff, Henry J.
[15] The conveyance for this property was recorded in Conveyances Liber 307, p. 117.
[16]For these properties see New York City, Tax Assesment Records, Ward 9, 1828-50.
[17] This section on the urban development of the Far West Village is based on LPC, *Greenwich Village Historic District Extension Report*, 10-11, Charles Lockwood, *Manhattan Moves Uptown: An Illustrated History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1976), 64-71.
[18] For the piers see *Minutes of the Common Council*, v. 14, 339, 367, v. 15, 231, 553, v. 16, 578, 698, v. 17, 653, v. 19, 172, 445, 517, 542, 617; James Hardie, *The Description of the City of New-York* (New York: Samuel Marks, 1827), 206-18.
[19] D.T. Valentine, *Manual of the Corporation of the City of New-York 1842 & 3* (New York, City of New York, 1842).
[20] Matthew Dripps, *City of New York Extending Northward to Fiftieth St.* (New York: M. Dripps, 1852); William Perris, *Maps of the City of New York* (New York: Perris & Browne, 1857-62).
[21] This information on the ownership and residents of the area is drawn from Tax Assessment Records, Ward 9, 1828-70; New York City Directories, 1834-65; *Population Schedules of the Sixth Census of the Unites States, 1840*, New York, New York City, Ward 9, series M704, roll 303, p. 26-27; *Population Schedules of the Seventh Census of the Unites States, 1850*, New York, New York City, Ward 9, series M432, roll 543 , p. 227;
[22] Charles Street residents included grocer Rufus S. King who lived at 163 Charles Street and had a business at the corner of Washington and Charles Streets, carpenter Abraham B. Romaine who had his

home and shop at 161 Charles Street, Benjamin A. Romaine, a carter, at 153 Charles Street, and William Ryer whose house at 151 Charles Street, later passed to Lewis Ryer, a portrait painter.

[23] *Population Schedules of the Eighth Census of the Unites States, 1860*, New York, New York City, Ward 9, series M653, roll 796, p. 496. In 1860 a major fire in the stable of Van Tassell & McGinty iron railing factory on Charles Lane, then known as Charles Alley, spread to adjoining stables, ice-houses, factories and tenements on this block leaving only the buildings on West Street and the westernmost buildings on Charles and Perry Street standing. The original carriage house for this building facing on to Charles Lane was destroyed and the rear of this house was also probably damaged. A newspaper account of the fire indicates that there was a loss of $1,500 on the building and of $250 for furniture belonging to Mr. Martine[e]. See "Another Disastrous Conflagration," *NYT*, July, 17, 1860, p. 8

[24] "Obituary Notes," *NYT*, May 17, 1883.

[25]*Population Schedules of the Ninth Census of the Unites States, 1870*, New York, New York City, District 14, Ward 9, series M593 roll 983, p. 448. Boatman Abraham Tompkins may have been connected with oyster barges that tied up at Christopher Street from 1865-98 and were home to New York's thriving wholesale oyster trade Although the term boatman can refer to a man who works on, deals in or operates boats, during the nineteenth century it often connoted an association with the oyster trade. For an overview of oystering in New York and information on the Hudson River oyster barges see, Mark Kurlansky, *The Big Oyster: History on the Half Shell* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2006).

[26] "Close to a Million," *NYT*, Jan. 6, 1889, p. 6.

[27] Among these structures were two flat buildings with stores at 3-5 Weehawken Street (1876-77, Mortimer C. Merritt, architect, within the Weehawken Historic District) which seem to have been used for workers' housing.

[28]*Population Schedules of the Twelfth Census of the Unites States, 1900*, New York, New York City, Ward 9, series T623, roll 1087, p. 57; New York State Census, 1905, 7th AS, 2nd ED; sv 159 Charles Street; *Population Schedules of the Thirteenth Census of the Unites States, 1910*, New York, New York City, Enumeration District 1413, series T624, roll 1006, p. 127

[29] "New York Central Purchases Washington St. Brewery Plot, *NYT*, Aug. 14, 1929, p. 45; Review of the Day in Realty Mart," *NYT*, Feb., 1, 1930, p. 34.

[30] "Site is Financed for Metal Plant," *NYT*, Aug. 17, 1937, p. 34;"Food Firm Rents Big Unit," *NYT*, June 14, 1939, p. 47;" Properties Sold in Three Boroughs," *NYT*, Apr. 24, 1939, p.31.

[31] New York Telephone, Manhattan Address Directories, 1940-47, s.v. Charles Street.

[32] "Brewery Holding Sold in Village," *NYT*, June 11, 1947, p. 48; "Old Prison Site Sold in Village," *NYT* , Jul. 22, 1948, p. 40.

[33] Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 4531, 460; "Manhattan Transfers," *NYT* , Jul. 8, 1947, p.40

[34]Federal style houses portion adapted from LPC, *281 East Broadway House (Isaac T. Ludlam House) Designation Report* (LP-1993)(NY: City of New York, 1998), prepared by Marjorie Pearson. Also: Charles Lockwood, "Greek Revival Style" in *Bricks and Brownstone: The New York Rowhouse 1783-1929* (N.Y.: Rizzoli, 2003); Ada Louise Huxtable, "Houses with Grecian Graces," in *Classic New York: Georgian Gentility to Greek Elegance* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books., 1964), 89-107; LPC, *Rowhouse Manual* (n.d.).

[35]Aside from the two designated Landmarks, the other houses mentioned are located within the Weehawken Street Historic District and Greenwich Village Historic District Extension.

[36] New York City Department of Buildings, alteration permit 1517-1964

[37] New York County, Deeds, Reel 76, p. 304.

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 159 Charles 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 159 Charles Street, House is significant as a relatively rare surviving residential building of the early period of development of the far western section of Greenwich Village and as one of the best extant examples of the Greek Revival style rowhouses of the 1830s-40s located in the Hudson River waterfront section of Manhattan, specifically the area west of the Greenwich Village Historic District between West 14th Street and Lower Manhattan; that 159 Charles Street exhibits such characteristic features of the Greek Revival style as its the three-story height, flat roofline, machine-pressed red brickwork laid in stretcher bond, and wood and stone decorative detailing emphasizing simple forms and planar surfaces; that its most notable feature is the handsome entry incorporating a stone surround with pilasters and a heavy entablature, tall wood pilasters framing a paneled doorway, sidelights, transom bar, and toplights; that the house retains its brownstone base and original decorative wrought iron areaway fence ornamented with anthemia; that the house's Italianate bracketed metal cornice probably dates from the 1870s or 1880s and is historic; that that the building was constructed c 1838 for Henry Wyckoff, a prominent tea and wine merchant, and remained in the ownership of the Wyckoff family until the 1880s; that No. 159 Charles Street was initially leased to merchant James Hammond who operated a lumber business at Leroy and West Streets and was later occupied by local businessmen and maritime workers; that in the 1880s the building was acquired by the neighboring Beadleston & Woerz brewery and was used to house brewery workers and later served as the offices of the Beadleston & Woerz Corporation and a trucking firm; that it was returned to residential use as a multiple dwelling in 1964 and continues to house residents; and that through its history the 159 Charles Street House is a significant reminder of the West Village's development as a place of dwelling, industry, and commerce.

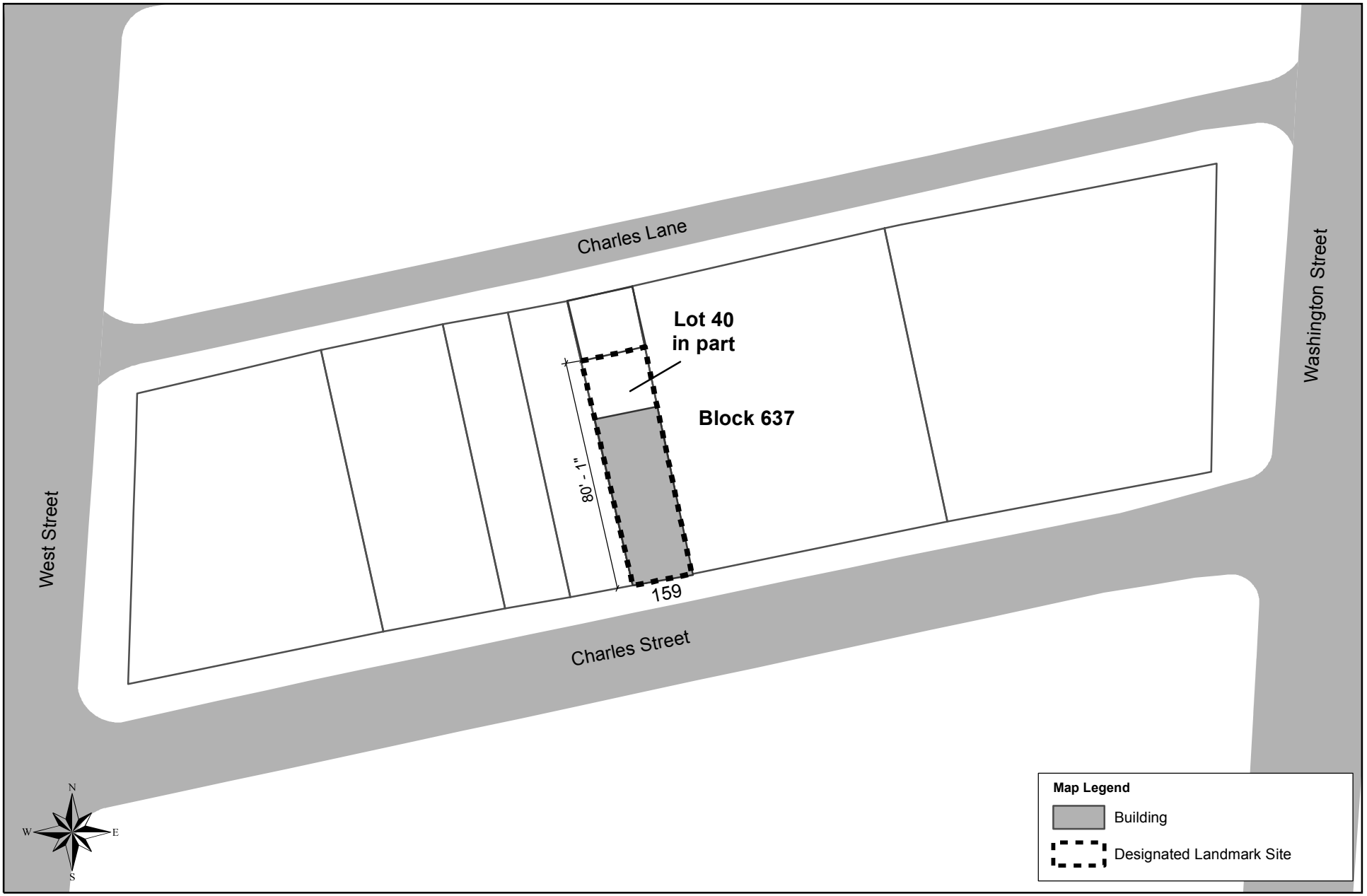
Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the 159 Charles Street House, 159 Charles Street, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Manhattan Tax Map Block 637, Lot Block 637, Lot 40 in part comprising the land on which the described building and rear yard are situate and excluding the former carriage house facing on to Charles Lane as its Landmark Site.

159 Charles Street House, 159 Charles Street, Manhattan
Photo: Carl Forster

159 Charles Street, c. 1939
Photo Source: NYC Dept. of Taxes, NYC DORIS

159 Charles Street House
Photo: Carl Forster

159 Charles Street House
Photos: Carl Forster



159 CHARLES STREET HOUSE (LP-2211), 159 Charles Street.
Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 637, Lot 40 in part.

Designated: March 6, 2007

Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 03C, December 2003.
Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, JM.