

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAY 20 1976

DATE ENTERED JUN 11 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
\* \*

Cobble Hill Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

*roughly bounded by*  
Area between Atlantic Avenue, Court,  
Degraw, and Hicks Streets

CITY, TOWN

Brooklyn

VICINITY OF

14th - Rep. John J. Rooney

STATE

New York

CODE  
036COUNTY  
KingsCODE  
047**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Various owners

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

City Register's Office, King County

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Municipal Building, Borough of Brooklyn

CITY, TOWN

Brooklyn,

STATE

New York

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

DATE

December 30, 1969

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

CITY, TOWN

New York

STATE

New York

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Cobble Hill Historic District includes over twenty-two city blocks, which are located generally between Atlantic Avenue, Court Street, Degraw Street and Hicks Street. It is approximately two blocks east of the Brooklyn waterfront of the Upper Bay, and forms a southerly extension of the Brooklyn Heights Historic District. Separated from the heights only by Atlantic Avenue, it is nonetheless quite different in character.

The development of Cobble Hill as a residential district began in the mid-1830's when an attractive row of Greek Revival town houses was built, and was soon followed by others. It retains its residential character today, since commercial activity is largely limited to Atlantic Avenue and Court Street. There are a number of fine churches, one of which was designed by Richard Upjohn and another by Minard Lafever.

Among the architectural styles represented are the Greek Revival of the 1830's and 1840's, followed by the Gothic Revival, Italianate and early Romanesque Revival styles of the 1850's and 1860's. The French Neo-Grec style which appeared in the 1870's, often in combination with retardataire examples of Italianate or French Second Empire designs, continued into the early 1880's. Lastly came the more sophisticated styles of the latter part of the 19th century: the Romanesque Revival, the Queen Anne style, and the new classicism, which was influenced by the Chicago Fair of 1893. Of course this area also had its fair share of houses built in the local vernacular style--houses so simple that they are not readily identifiable with any particular style. The district also has many "transitional" houses which display the characteristics of one or more styles during a period when one style was giving way to another.

Houses were built individually or in rows of as few as three houses or groups which occupied half a city block. In some of these rows we find examples which are virtually unique in the City and which give Cobble Hill its special distinction.

Materials adhere closely to the masonry tradition, with brick and brownstone predominating. Ironwork includes both the standard designs and castings to be found in other parts of the City, as well as several most unusual designs. In its quantity, quality and variety it is the equal of some of the best areas in the City. Cobble Hill is notable as the site of one of the earliest housing projects in the country.

A brief description of some of the streets in the district is given here with particular reference to buildings and rows of outstanding architectural interest.

# SIGNIFICANCE

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

1899	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1899	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1899	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1899	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		Urban Planning

IC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of Cobble Hill lies in its historical associations during the Revolution and its history as a desirable residential area during the nineteenth century. The high quality of the architecture of its many row houses, as well as churches designed by Minard Lefever and Richard Upjohn give a pleasing aura to this neighborhood which has survived as a district.

The history of Cobble Hill goes back to the 1640's when the Dutch governor, Willen Kieft, granted patents for farms north of Red Hook. "Cobleshill", on Ratzer's survey of Brooklyn in 1766-67, referred to a very steep conical hill shown on the west side of Red Hook Lane, near the present intersections of Atlantic Avenue and Pacific Street with Court Street. Another old name for the region was "Ponkiesbergh."

Cobble Hill was the scene of some military activity during the Revolution. General George Washington issued an order on July 18, 1776 that two guns fired from Cobble Hill were to be the signal that the enemy had landed on Long Island. Washington, General Putnam and other officers witnessed the disastrous battle of August 27, 1776 from the ramparts of Cobble Hill Fort.

Many changes came to Cobble Hill in the Federal period. The Dutch farms, extending from the East River to Court Street, were bought by relative newcomers. The old Red Hook Lane later became Court Street. Henry Street was opened by 1828 to connect directly with the Heights. With ready access to the South Ferry which was established in 1836 after years of opposition from Manhattan real estate owners--Cobble Hill began to change from an area of farms into a residential suburb of row houses. People could now commute readily to Manhattan by ferry.

The first stage in this development of Cobble Hill occurred in the blocks along the west side of Henry Street where the dramatic view of the harbor tempted owners to establish their rural homesteads or seats. None of these residences survive. The Greek Revival house which serves as a sole reminder of this period still stands at 149 Baltic Street.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 60 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	5,8,4	4,3,0	4,5	0,4	0,8,0	B	1,8	5,8,4	7,0,0	4,5	0,4	7,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,8	5,8,5	1,1,0	4,5	0,4	5,4,0	D	1,8	5,8,4	8,9,0	4,5	0,3	9,1,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Betty J. Ezequelle/

Revised by Elizabeth K. Ralph  
NYS Office of Parks & Recreation  
Division for Historic Preservation

ORGANIZATION

NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

305 Broadway/Empire State Plaza

TELEPHONE

518-474-0479

CITY OR TOWN

New York, NY/Albany, NY

STATE

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL XX

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*[Signature]*

TITLE Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation

DATE

4/27/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

6/11/76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

6/11/76

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

RECEIVED MAY 10 1976  
DATE ENTERED JUN 11 1976

Cobble Hill Historic District, Brooklyn, Kings County

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER #7 PAGE 2

## ATLANTIC AVENUE

On the southeast corner of the intersection of Clinton Street and Atlantic Avenue, stands the original home of the South Brooklyn Savings Bank, now housed in the fine Italian Renaissance style building at the other end of the block. Although stripped of its once handsome roof balustrade, and remodeled beyond recognition at ground floor level, the original neo-Grec bank building of 1871 still retains much of its noble vigor. It was designed by E.L. Roberts and was built of Tuckahoe marble.

Five buildings, Nos. 170-178, are all that remain of a fine residential row of eight Gothic Revival houses erected in 1846 for Elizabeth Rapelyea. By 1860, three of the houses were already semi-commercial properties reflecting the changing character of the street. Nos. 170-174 still retain traces of their Gothic Revival label moldings above the window lintels, now shaved until they are flush with the wall. The original three-story height is still retained at the two end houses of the row. Two houses still have their original stoops.

## BALTIC STREET

Baltic Street is a pleasant residential street which displays surprisingly uniform appearance in spite of the variations from one to five stories in height at both ends of the street. The facades emphasize the almost continuous cornice-line and high stoops of the three-story brick dwellings of the mid-19th century. It is thus interesting as an example of conformity, or planned unit development by individual owners and builders. Of special interest, on the south side near Clinton Street, is a complex of three dwellings designed to form a single architectural unit. The steep pediment at the center of the unit adds piquancy to the skyline of the block. Designed originally as one-family residences, most houses on this street have been altered to accommodate one apartment unit per story.

Of special architectural significance on the south side of Baltic Street is the fine complex of three dwellings, Nos. 224-228, which were designed as a single architectural unit in the Anglo-Italianate style. Above a first story of rusticated brownstone rise two stories of brick with brownstone trim. The brownstone facades of these structures are surmounted by a multi-bracketed cornice with an intricate jigsaw motif decorating the fascia. The central dwelling is emphasized by a slight forward projection and a pediment.

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

RECEIVED MAY 10 1976

DATE ENTERED JUN 11 1976

Cobble Hill Historic District

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER #7 PAGE 3

This central unit still retains within each window opening the original central mullion that separates two long Italianate windows. The windows are arched except on the first floor. Also extant are the ultra-long parlor floor windows which rise directly from the rusticated brownstone base. All three doorways are squareheaded and surrounded by rope moldings. The inner doorway at No. 226 is set back in a vestibule, and is enframed by a spiral foliate molding. This complex was apparently built for Anson Blake, the developer who had bought the lots, and it can be dated about 1854-1856.

CLINTON STREET, between Pacific Street and Atlantic Avenue:

The increased size and height of so many of the buildings on Clinton Street mark the transition from a residential area to a commercial district on Atlantic Avenue. The east side retains the familiar appearance of the Cobble Hill residential district, while the west side is occupied by large apartment houses and a commercial building.

No. 219 Clinton Street, on the corner of Amity Street, is the most imposing property in the Cobble Hill Historic District. In a century and a quarter of existence, this large house, set in ample grounds planted with trees and shrubs, has been the residence of only three families. The original and much smaller house was built in 1845 as the suburban home of Abraham J. S. Degraw, a wealthy New York merchant. The original brick dwelling was average in dimension and massive. The structure was Greek Revival in style, as is still evident from the proportions and spacing of the windows, as well as from the very handsome wrought iron railing enclosing the house on both the Clinton and Amity Street sides. The rectilinear design of the wrought iron castings is typical of the Greek Revival style of the late 1840's. The house was enlarged and completely redesigned in 1890-91 by the architectural firm of D'Oench & Simon for the second owners of the house, the Cutters. It was this alteration of the 1890's which gave the house its rugged Romanesque flavor at street level, and the Flemish stepped gables rising picturesquely above the former roofline. At the same time, the building was extended toward the rear of the lot; a tower, containing the first electric passenger elevator in a private dwelling in Brooklyn, was built and the bold-faced brownstone stoop and facing of the basement were added. This stoop, leading to an enclosed entrance doorway, was placed sideways across the front of the house, giving it greater importance and adding dignity to the house.

RECEIVED MAY 10 1976

DATE ENTERED JUN 11 1976

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Cobble Hill Historic District, Brooklyn, Kings County

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER #7 PAGE 4

CLINTON STREET, between Degraw and Kane Streets:

Christ (P.E) Church, facing Clinton Street at the corner of Kane Street, was built in 1841-42. Designed by Richard Upjohn who lived in Brooklyn and worshipped for years at this church, it is in the Gothic Revival style, using a mixture of Early English and Perpendicular elements. Upjohn donated his architectural services to the church and was presented by the vestry with a life deed to one of the pews. At the time it was built, Christ Church was generally considered the finest church in Manhattan or Brooklyn, since Trinity Church was not completed until 1846.

DEGRAW STREET, Between Henry Street and Strong Place:

On the north side of the street at the corner of Strong Place is a fine Gothic Revival church designed by Minard Lafever. Erected in 1851-52 as the Strong Place Baptist Church, it was known as the Spanish Baptist Church in the mid-20th century, and was rededicated in May 1969 as St. Francis Cabrini (R.C.) Chapel. It serves primarily the Italian community. This stone church is dominated by a massive square tower which rises at the junction of the streets. The tower is strengthened by large stepped buttresses which rise to its full height, and which flank the arched windows of the belfry. Surrounding the church is a strong but simple iron railing with very tall gate posts of unusual design. The Strong Place Baptist Church was the South Brooklyn offshoot of the Pierrepont Street Baptist Church. Both were organized by the Rev. Elisha L. Taylor, and both had as their architect Minard Lafever, who moved from New York to Brooklyn in 1847. Among the original trustees of the Strong Place Church was E. Darwin Litchfield.

Adjoining the church on Strong Place is a gabled Gothic chapel. Also designed by Lafever, this structure was first used for religious services in 1849. It was originally the Sunday School of the church, and was one of the most popular in Brooklyn.

The completely Gothic Revival character of the house at No. 271 Degraw Street is unique in this historic district. The pointed arches of the iron-work along the areaway and on the stoop, as well as the drip moldings of the windows are typical Gothic elements. However the miniature pointed arches supporting the roof cornice are unusual. The structure was designed to fit its narrow twenty-one and a half foot lot. There is no window at the center of the angular bay. The molding which crowns the doorway terminates in decorative impost blocks.

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 10 1976
DATE ENTERED JUN 11 1976

Cobble Hill Historic District, Brooklyn, Kings County

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER #7 PAGE 5

The house was built and sold in 1850 by Anson Blake, Jr., who, with his father, was active in developing the southern tier of this historic district.

HICKS STREET, between Kane and Baltic Streets:

Occupying the northern half of this block are four apartment houses, Nos. 439-445, which are united behind an architecturally uniform facade. These six-story buildings built in 1876-77, together with the adjacent structures at Nos. 134-140 Baltic Street, are the famous Home Buildings--model tenements of fireproof construction. They were financed by Alfred Tredway White (1846-1921), the noted Brooklyn businessman and philanthropist, who introduced them here after studying prototype housing of a similar nature in England.

HICKS STREET, between Baltic and Warren Streets:

Following immediately upon the success of the Home Buildings (Nos. 439-445 Hicks Street), Alfred T. White and the architects William Field & Son commenced work on the equally famous Tower Buildings, Nos. 417-435. Although these structures are reminiscent of the early phase of the Romanesque Revival, the creative use of brick and iron makes the Tower Buildings a bold expression of the 1870's. These twelve six-story buildings, built in 1878-79, are part of a large complex which was grouped around a central courtyard to form a pleasant quadrangle designed for the recreation of the tenants.

These model tenements were described by White as "Improved Dwellings for the Laboring Classes". One of the most interesting features of these buildings was the outside staircase which obviated the use of an enclosed shaft and hallway running up through the center of the house--a potential chimney for smoke and flames. The passages which lead to the apartments open directly off balconies located at each floor, which link them to isolated open-air staircases.

PACIFIC STREET, between Court and Clinton Streets:

This street is interesting because of its multiple uses and its fine examples of Romanesque Revival and Italianate architecture. The north side is primarily devoted to manufacturing or storage, and contains street level garages in converted stables. Building heights vary from one to six stories. The studio of the sculptor Henry Kirke Brown was located on this street in the 1850's.



RECEIVED MAY 10 1976

DATE ENTERED JUN 11 1976

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Cobble Hill Historic District, Brooklyn, Kings County

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER #7 PAGE 6

No. 162 Pacific Street is an outstanding building designed in the early Romanesque Revival style, with handsome round-arched doors and windows at both floors. The main floor is emphasized by piers and corbeled arches, while brick dentils mark the central floor. A blind brick oculus provides a variation in the wall plans and the stepped gable. A striking feature of this building is the divided stoop with stairs ascending to a central landing.

STRONG PLACE, between Degraw and Kane Streets:

This long residential street is unusually uniform in height, consisting primarily of three-story houses with high basements. However, the roofline and the facade line are often enlivened by bay windows, bow fronts, parapets, gables and a mansard roof. This diversity is the happy result of the varying styles during the last third of the century. Surviving in their midst are a few houses of the 1830's. This was the earliest street developed at the south end of this historic district.

WARREN STREET, between Court and Clinton Streets:

This exceptionally pleasant, tree-lined street is almost entirely residential. The dignified rows of handsome houses, built between the 1830's and the 1870's, display an interesting variety of styles ranging from Greek Revival to neo-Grec.

On this street is a complete row of six fine Greek Revival houses (Nos. 228-238) built in 1833-35. These structures are among the earliest and best preserved examples of this style in the historic district. Constructed of brick with brownstone trim, they were all built on land purchased from John Gregeon by D.H. Arnold, a Brooklyn merchant. In keeping with their early date, these three-story houses are lower than the mid-century row near Court Street. The doors are flanked by heavy, fluted, Doric columns of wood, semi-engaged to the wall and surmounted by a classical entablature. The most distinguished example of Greek Revival ironwork on the entire street is located at No. 236 Warren Street.

RECEIVED MAY 10 1976

DATE ENTERED JUN 11 1976

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Cobble Hill Historic District, Brooklyn, Kings County

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER #7 PAGE 7

WARREN PLACE, between Warren and Baltic Streets:

Warren Place was planned in 1878 as a secluded, private courtyard closed at both ends by graceful iron gates which completely exclude vehicular traffic. The two-story brick houses, which face each other across an attractive center island of greenery, were built in 1878-79 at the eastern end of the quadrangle formed by A.T. White's Tower Buildings. The twenty-six narrow little houses on Warren Place, plus the eight larger houses at both ends of the court, provided the answer to White's endeavor to provide not only flats for the laboring classes, but also small, comfortable, one-family houses for low and middle income groups.

In designing these houses for A.T. White, architects William Field and Son turned for inspiration to the early Romanesque Revival style of the mid-nineteenth century. The houses are built of brick and are sturdy and fireproof. In order to achieve a satisfactory design these houses, only eleven and a half feet wide and thirty-two feet deep, are grouped in pairs under a continuous cornice. Arched doorways are paired under a common segmental arch which is crowned by a steep gothic gable. The segmental-arched, first-story windows are decorated with brick dentils, a motif which is repeated under the roof cornice. This decorative treatment of the brickwork, carried out by mason James H. Stevenson, gives these little houses their charmingly distinctive character.

This small and delightful landscaped court is unique in the city. The scale is small and human. The green lawns and gardens enhance the reddish-brown brick of the houses. The small complex contrasts sharply with the dehumanized environment commonly encountered by slum dwellers in the tenements of the nineteenth century. Here was a noble experiment in low cost urban housing.

FOR INFO USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 10 1976
DATE ENTERED JUN 11 1976

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Cobble Hill Historic District

CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER #8 PAGE 2

The next stage in the development of Cobble Hill was the breaking up of large land holdings. The oldest house now standing in the Cobble Hill Historic District is 122 Pacific Street, built during or shortly before 1833 in the Greek Revival style on the former Patchen farm. Construction of row houses soon began to transform Cobble Hill into an urban community. Here, in contradistinction to Manhattan, the rows built during this period are seldom longer than five or six houses. Architectural compositions of two or three units were popular. A handsome row of six Greek Revival houses was built on Warren Street, between Court and Clinton Streets, as early as 1835.

In the 1850's, Leonard Jerome lived in two rented houses on Cobble Hill between his removal from Rochester and the construction of his great mansion on Madison Square. The one on Amity Street was the birthplace of his daughter Jennie, the mother of Sir Winston Churchill.

By 1860 Cobble Hill had been largely developed into a suburban community, complete with bank, stores and other services, as well as a number of churches whose towers or steeples rose against the skyline. The chief innovations after that date were Alfred T. White's well-known model tenements for the laboring classes.

The famous 19th century architects, Minard Lafever and Richard Upjohn, each designed a church in Cobble Hill. Upjohn, and later his son Richard M. Upjohn, lived at 296 Clinton Street.

Among the builders was Asa Stebbins who began his career in the 1830's as a local carpenter of Cobble Hill. By 1847 he had become a member of the Common Council for the district, and advertised as an architect specializing in Gothic cottages and villas. William Johnson and Horatio White, Brooklyn architects, designed a fine row of residences at the south end of the district. Thomas Sullivan, first a mason and later identified as a builder, lived for a time within the district as well as nearby, and did a considerable amount of work in the area. Michael Markey, a neighborhood carpenter, erected the district's chief Gothic Revival row. Jeremiah O'Donnell was a local contractor who lived just outside the district, and may have participated in the development of the area.

RECEIVED MAY 10 1976

DATE ENTERED JUN 11 1976

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Cobble Hill Historic District

CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER #8 PAGE 3

---

Cobble Hill retains an aura of the past with its many tree-lined streets and its rows of architecturally notable houses. It is a residential neighborhood which has the pleasing quality of a relatively low, uniform building height. The houses display much architectural detail of note, some of which is unique in character. Through most of its urban life, Cobble Hill was variously known as part of Red Hook, South Brooklyn or the Sixth Ward. Known as Cobble Hill since 1959, the area today has its own identity. The district has experienced a marked renaissance and rejuvenation.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

Cobble Hill Historic District

Continuation sheet Kings County New York

Item number 8

Page 4

The Cobble Hill Historic District was largely developed in the decades preceding the Civil War. The historic district is part of a neighborhood known until the post World War II era as South Brooklyn. This area encompassed the neighborhoods that are now known as Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens, Boerum Hill, and Red Hook. Much of South Brooklyn was built up with brick and stone single family row houses and the streets were punctuated by institutional buildings constructed to serve the needs of the primarily middle-class families who moved into the new homes. Development in South Brooklyn began at the northern edge of the area (Cobble Hill), near Brooklyn Heights and the ferry lines to Manhattan. By 1860, most of the land within the Cobble Hill Historic District had been built up and by the end of the 1860s the area to the south (now Carroll Gardens) had also been fully developed. Development, however, was not frozen at this time. Instead, South Brooklyn remained a dynamic neighborhood witnessing change and growth in both its architectural character and in the economic and ethnic composition of its residents. Between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the century, changes in the Cobble Hill Historic District included the construction of the famous Home and Tower model tenements and workers' houses on Hicks, Warren, and Baltic Streets and Warren Place (1876-79), the construction of P.S. 78 (1888) on Pacific Street, St. Paul's School (1886-87), a Catholic school on Warren Street, and the erection of several multiple dwellings and row houses. Similar changes occurred elsewhere in South Brooklyn as schools, hospitals, churches, and some housing were built.

Growth and change continued into the twentieth century. By the early twentieth century the economic and ethnic character of the South Brooklyn area had changed noticeably. As the housing stock aged, middle-class families moved to the newer neighborhoods in southern and eastern Brooklyn or left the borough altogether. These people were replaced by working-class families whose livelihood often depended on the nearby port facilities (this is the neighborhood that is the setting for such American classics as On the Water-Front and A View From the Bridge). A large percentage of the new population was Italian, with smaller numbers of Irish and Scandinavians. The new families tended to be larger than those of the early neighborhood residents. In addition, many of the one-family houses were converted into multiple dwellings at this time. Thus, the population density of South Brooklyn, including the area within the Cobble Hill Historic District, greatly increased. The new population put pressure on the old established institutions, particularly the schools. Consequently, in the first decades of the twentieth century many new institutional buildings were constructed. Throughout South Brooklyn new public schools were erected and Catholic schools were built or expanded.

Most of the residents moving to South Brooklyn in the early twentieth century were immigrants from primarily Catholic countries or were first generation Americans from the same background. By the early twentieth century there were at least seven major Roman Catholic churches in South Brooklyn. Some were older churches that served the community's early Catholic residents; others were large new complexes built specifically to serve the Catholic immigrants. All, however, were revitalized and expanded their services during this period.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Cobble Hill Historic District  
Continuation sheet Kings County New York Item number 8 Page 5

The new immigrant families frequently chose to send their children to religious schools, where traditional values would be respected. Parochial education became extremely important in South Brooklyn during this period. Several Catholic churches erected new schools in the area. The Church of the Sacred Heart, which was located on the west side of Hicks Street and was demolished during construction of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (the church merged with St. Stephen's Roman Catholic Church several blocks to the south on the corner of Hicks Streets and Carroll Street), commissioned a new school in 1922. Designed by local architect Nicholas Serracino, the school is a handsome white brick and stone structure with the Classical and Renaissance details popular during the early decades of the twentieth century. These forms complement the Classical and Renaissance details of the surrounding Greek Revival and Italianate style row houses. The Sacred Heart School building is representative of early twentieth century parochial school architecture and it played an important cultural role in the neighborhood for over fifty years, serving approximately 1100 elementary school students during its peak enrollment period. Most of these students came from the South Brooklyn area.

The churches were not the only institutions to expand in South Brooklyn during the early twentieth century. Because of the increased population density, demands for city services expanded. Several notable municipal buildings are contemporary with the new parochial schools. Within the Cobble Hill Historic District are P.S. 29, a Neo-Gothic style elementary school built in 1919, and an Art Deco style clinic built by the New York City Department of Health on Baltic Street. The larger South Brooklyn area contains a Neo-Georgian firehouse on Hicks Street (c.1915) and a Beaux-Arts style library on Clinton Street (c.1905), among other structures. Private institutions also expanded so as to increase services to the new community. Several commercial and residential structures were also erected. The Long Island College Hospital erected the Neo-French Renaissance style Dudley Memorial Building in 1902 (within the historic district) and a number of Beaux-Arts/Neo-Georgian style hospital buildings that are outside of the historic district. The South Brooklyn Savings Bank, now the Independence Savings Bank (the 1976 name change is indicative of the larger change in the neighborhood, reflecting a decline in the use of the old neighborhood designation), erected a magnificent Florentine Renaissance style limestone building at the corner of Atlantic Avenue and Court Street in 1922. A movie theater and a three-story office building were also constructed on Court Street and several private houses and multiple dwellings from this era are scattered throughout the neighborhood.

These buildings and others from the early twentieth century are an integral part of the history and development of South Brooklyn and are architecturally distinguished structures that contribute to the special character of both the Cobble Hill Historic District and the larger South Brooklyn area. When Cobble Hill was designated an historic district by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, the importance of these buildings was recognized in the official designation report (printed in 1969). These later buildings generally complement the older structures, using many similar design features and preserving the scale of the area. They are important elements in the local streetscape. Perhaps even more important is the role they play as symbols of the changing ethnic and economic character of the community in the early twentieth century when working-class ethnic immigrants were becoming the dominant population group.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Cobble Hill Historic District

Continuation sheet Kings County New York Item number 8

Page 6

Development in Cobble Hill in particular, and in South Brooklyn in general, has come full circle. Today the working-class population is declining and more affluent families are again moving into the old row houses, often converting these homes back into one-family units. As the older population has aged, many of the institutional buildings have become redundant. This is particularly true of the once thriving Roman Catholic institutions within the historic district. In recent years St. Peter's Church on Hicks Street has closed and two schools, St. Peter's and Sacred Heart, have been discontinued. As of June 1984, St. Peter's School was in the process of being converted into cooperative apartments and the conversion of the Sacred Heart school building into residences was in the planning stages. This trend towards the reuse of older buildings reflects, in many ways, the changes of the early twentieth century. Cobble Hill is adapting to a changing population and it remains one of Brooklyn's most dynamic neighborhoods.