

**HUBBARD HOUSE**, 2138 McDonald Avenue, Brooklyn. Built c. 1830-35, attrib. to Lawrence Ryder, carpenter-builder; addition 1923-24, Salvati & Le Quornik Associated Architects

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 7087, Lot 30

On June 24, 2008, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Hubbard House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 9). The hearing was continued to January 13, 2009 (Item No. 6). Both hearings had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A total of thirteen speakers testified in support of the designation, including the owner; City Councilman Domenic M. Recchia, Jr.; Brooklyn Borough Historian Ron Schweiger; representatives of the Municipal Art Society, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Historic Districts Council, and the Society for the Architecture of the City; Joseph Ditta, a reference librarian currently at work on a book on Gravesend; and several neighbors.<sup>1</sup> One speaker read a letter from architectural historian and preservationist Theodore Prudhon of the Netherland-America Foundation. The commission has also received numerous letters and e-mails in support of the designation, including letters from State Assemblyman William Colton; former Brooklyn Borough Historian John Manbeck; Linda Wolfe, Director of Preservation Services for the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities; Brooklyn Museum Chief Curator Kevin Stayton; architectural historians Sean Sawyer and Michele Moschides; historic preservation carpenter Russell Powell; Gravesend Historical Society President Eric J. Ierardi; several neighborhood residents; and individuals of Dutch descent from throughout the country. No one spoke in opposition.<sup>2</sup>

### Summary

Built around 1830-35 by Nelly Johnson Hubbard, the Hubbard House is, in part, a rare surviving early nineteenth-century Dutch-American farmhouse in Brooklyn. The older section of the house reflects traditional Dutch design in its incorporation of H-bent construction, which gives the house its characteristic one-and-one-half-story form, in its use of a gabled roof with sloping spring eaves at the front and rear, and in its incorporation of clapboard siding. It exemplifies a three-bay-wide side-hall plan type popular for Dutch houses in southern



Brooklyn at the beginning of the nineteenth century and originally included an unusual shed-roofed kitchen wing, a feature associated with the buildings of Gravesend carpenter-builder Lawrence Ryder, to whom this building is tentatively attributed. A late-example of Dutch-American design, it presents an interesting blend of traditional Dutch forms and structure with nineteenth-century construction innovations including sawn timbers and cut nails, testifying to the strength and persistence of Dutch culture in the rural areas surrounding New York City in the early nineteenth century. It retains an exceptional amount of original fabric including siding and windows. It is one of the few Dutch-American houses in New York City retaining its original orientation on its original site with sufficient surrounding property to give some sense of its original setting. Moreover, it has the further distinction of being the smallest and simplest of the surviving Dutch-American houses in the borough.

It seems probable that the house was initially occupied by Nelly Hubbard and her son Samuel Hubbard, descendants of several early and distinguished Gravesend families. From about 1850 onwards, it was leased to workers and artisans, several of whom were connected with nineteenth-century Gravesend's thriving building trades. In 1904 it was purchased by garment worker Vincenzo Lucchelli and his wife, Antoinette, immigrants who occupied the house with their five children. In 1924 the Lucchellis constructed the house's southern two-story hipped-roofed wing designed by the Brooklyn firm of Salvati & Le Quornik which incorporated a multi-windowed bedroom billed as a "sleeping porch" in response to the tuberculosis that was besetting their family. The house remained in the family's ownership until the late 1990s, when it was acquired by the present owner, John Antonides. As one of the few surviving Dutch houses in the city, as a rare surviving example of nineteenth-century rural working class housing, and as a symbol of Gravesend's rich twentieth-century history as a Italian-American working-class neighborhood, the Hubbard House remains a significant reminder of Gravesend's and New York City's past.

## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### The Founding and Early History of Gravesend<sup>3</sup>

Prior to the arrival of European settlers, Gravesend and Coney Island were inhabited by Munsee-speaking Canarsee Indians. The Canarsee established several major trails through the area, including a trail running along the path of McDonald Avenue from the Mechawanienk Trail (now Kings Highway) to Coney Island. Another path, leading to the beach, ran along the line of present-day Gravesend Neck Road, crossed through what became the town center of Gravesend. The Canarsee established planting fields in the northern part of Gravesend and fished Gravesend Bay. Their habitation sites in the vicinity of Gravesend included the settlement of Wichquawanck, near the shore of Gravesend Bay in the vicinity of present-day Bay Parkway.<sup>4</sup>

In 1639 Anthony Jansen van Salee, a mulatto Moroccan-Dutch immigrant, and his wife, Grietje Reyniers, established a plantation on Gravesend Bay between the present-day communities of New Utrecht and Coney Island. Four years later, in 1643, an English noblewoman, Lady Deborah Moody (christened 1586-1658/59) and a small contingent of religious dissenters from Massachusetts obtained a patent from the Dutch Director-General of New Netherland, William Kieft, for a vast tract of land covering all or part of a number of modern Brooklyn neighborhoods including Gravesend, Coney Island, Bensonhurst, Brighton Beach, Manhattan Beach, and Midwood. Lady Moody and her followers tried to settle the land but soon were forced to withdraw due to the war Governor Kieft had provoked with the region's Native American tribes. After the war ended in 1645, a new patent was issued. The inhabitants of Gravesend also entered into a series of agreements with Native American leaders purchasing the land for Gravesend and neighboring areas including Coney Island. The Native American "system of land tenure was that of occupancy for the needs of a group;"<sup>5</sup> sales that Europeans deemed outright transfers of property were to the Native Americans closer to leases or joint tenancy contracts where they still had rights to property. However, by the end of the seventeenth century, the Canarsee, whose numbers had been greatly reduced by war and disease, moved westward to Staten Island and eventually Ohio.

The Gravesend town charter was the first in the New World to list a woman patentee and granted the settlers freedom of religion and the right of self-government, remarkable privileges for the period. Gravesend was also remarkable in that it was one of the earliest North American villages with a rational town. It was, according to planning historian Thomas J. Campanella, "only the second settlement in the English colonies laid out on an orthogonal grid and the first to include within that grid a regular distribution of public open space."<sup>6</sup> This design, which is attributed to Lady Moody, was the only town plan in the early American colonies "initiated, planned, and directed by a woman."<sup>7</sup> Lady Moody's innovative design employed a central core of four squares divided by main roads aligned on north-south and east-west axes. Narrower lanes ran around the perimeter of the village. Each village square contained ten house lots arranged around a common yard. The houses were located near the outer streets, well back from the common, to create room for garden plots. Enclosing the town center was a six-foot-high wood palisade with corner bastions. Outside the town center, triangular farm lots, known as planters' lots radiated like the spokes of a wheel. Beyond the farm lots were orchards, pasture and woodlands. Each of the town's thirty-nine settlers was entitled to a house lot and corresponding farm lot, an allotment of the woodlands and pasture, and had the right to fish in the neighboring streams and along the town's beach at Coney Island.

The actual surveying and mapping of Gravesend was carried out by Sergeant James Hubbard (1608-95), an English soldier and surveyor who immigrated with his family to Massachusetts, where he joined forces with Lady Moody. Hubbard was one of the original

Gravesend patentees. When the Canarsee attacked Gravesend in 1643, he fled to Flatlands, where his efforts in defense of the town earned him the rank of sergeant. After Gravesend was resettled he became one of the town's most prominent citizens, serving as a magistrate, an assistant justice, and *schout*.<sup>8</sup> He was also responsible for mapping and surveying several parcels of land that Gravesend apportioned to its townspeople in the second half of the seventeenth century and may have had some experience as an engineer, since in the spring of 1649 he offered to erect and set up a water mill for the town of Gravesend.<sup>9</sup>

Following the British takeover of New Amsterdam in 1664, English-speaking Gravesend became the county seat for the county of Yorkshire comprised of Long Island, Staten Island, and Westchester. A Sessions House (completed 1667) was constructed at the northwest corner of Gravesend Neck Road and McDonald Avenue to house the county court. It met at Gravesend until 1685 when the government was reorganized and Flatbush became the county seat of the newly created Kings County. Gravesend developed as a farming and fishing village in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1706 a town landing was built at Gravesend Beach, facilitating travel to Manhattan by boat. The first public school opened at the southeast corner of Gravesend Neck Road and McDonald Avenue in 1728 and was replaced by a larger school on the same site in 1788.<sup>10</sup> The rural nature of the Gravesend is indicated by the 1773 list of town officials, which included weigh masters to determine the true weight of grain grown and milled in the town and fence viewers and pound masters to deal with stray livestock. Gravesend had 268 residents in 1738; by 1790 there were 426, including 135 slaves and five free blacks.<sup>11</sup>

### Dutch Culture in Gravesend

As Gravesend developed, some of the original English settlers moved on to other towns, notably John Bowne, who built a house in Flushing in 1661 (the John Bowne House is a designated New York City Landmark), and Nicholas Stillwell, who moved to Staten Island prior to his death in 1671. Dutch families, mostly from nearby settlements in Brooklyn, began purchasing land and establishing farms in Gravesend within fifteen years of the town's establishment.<sup>12</sup> By 1698, families with Dutch surnames comprised slightly less than half of the thirty-four households in town; by 1790, they comprised more than two-thirds of the town's population. During the seventeenth century there was relatively little intermarriage or assimilation between the English and Dutch, but by the middle of the eighteenth century many descendants of founding English families such as the Stillwells, Hubbards, Terhunes, and Lakes had married descendents of long-established Gravesend Dutch families such as the Voorhees, Strykers, Ryders, and Jansens (aka Johnsons). Classes in the town's public school, established in 1728, were conducted in English. Likewise, town records were kept in English, but the only formal church services were in Dutch, conducted at the Sessions House and after 1762 in a newly erected Dutch Reformed Church.<sup>13</sup> Town records indicate that Gravesend's first carpenters were English; however, all of the surviving eighteenth and early nineteenth century houses, including the Hubbard House reflect Dutch building traditions. Thus, most residents would have been bilingual and a strong sense of Dutch culture would have been present in the town, just as in the surrounding five Dutch towns of Kings County (Brooklyn, Bushwick, Flatbush, Flatlands, and New Utrecht).

### The Hubbard House and the Development of Gravesend in the Nineteenth Century

One of the few surviving Dutch houses in New York City on its original site, the Hubbard House occupies a portion of Plantation 15, one of the original wedge-shaped farm lots that radiated from the four squares at the center of Gravesend. This lot was bordered on the east by the highway (now McDonald Avenue) that ran from the Gravesend town center to Kings

Highway, the main road to the neighboring towns of New Utrecht and Flatlands. Plantation 15 was originally allotted to Thomas Morrell and passed through several owners during the seventeenth century, including Nicholas Stillwell, Joseph Goulding, and Joachim Gulick.<sup>14</sup> By the 1770s it had been divided into several parcels, including a 5 3/10 acre tract between present-day Avenue S and present-day Avenue T that was owned by Court Johnson (aka Coert Jansen), a farmer of Dutch descent who resided in Gravesend from around 1755 and was a slave owner.<sup>15</sup> This property subsequently passed to his son Hendrick Johnson (1751-1815), a farmer prominent in Gravesend town government in the 1780s and 1790s, who married Elizabeth Lake (1758-1831), daughter of Daniel Lake and Neeltje Voorhees Lake.<sup>16</sup> Based on census records, he does not appear to have been a slave owner.

Hendrick died in 1815 without leaving a will. In 1830, shortly before the death of his wife, their five surviving children entered into an agreement to divide two pieces of land he had owned in Gravesend.<sup>17</sup> The heirs had this parcel surveyed and divided into five lots, each slightly over seventy-eight feet wide and approximately 500 feet deep, extending just beyond the west side of present-day Van Sicklen Street. Hendrick's son Court H. Johnson (1788-?) received the center lot, on which there seems to have been a farmhouse (demolished).<sup>18</sup> The other lots were probably open farmland. Two of Hendrick's daughters, Phebe Voorhies (1783-1874), widow of Jacobus S. Voorhies, and Nelly Hubbard (aka Neeltje, Ellen, or Helen; 1780-1865), widow of farmer Abraham Hubbard, a descendent of Sergeant James Hubbard, built houses on the lots they received. (The Voorhies house has been demolished.) The houses were probably constructed by 1840, when the sisters were listed in close proximity to each other on the federal census, and, were certainly standing by 1849, when the three houses were represented with the names of their owners on *Sidney's Map of Twelve Miles Around New York City*.<sup>19</sup> This house, the southernmost of the three, built for Nelly Hubbard, has been dated c. 1825-35 by Russell Powell and William McMillan of Island Housewrights Corp., specialists in the history of building technology.<sup>20</sup> Given this evidence, a date between 1830, when Nelly inherited the land, and 1835 seems most likely for this house.

When Nelly Hubbard built this small house she was already in her fifties, her two daughters had married, and her son Samuel was reaching adulthood. She may have expected to live alone here, like her sister Phoebe next door, and these factors may account for the small size of this house. As it happened, Samuel Hubbard (1812-1900) remained a bachelor until late in life. In 1840, the census recorded that Nelly and Samuel Hubbard lived together with a young girl between the age of ten and fifteen, presumably a domestic servant, and a young "free colored" male between the age of ten and twenty-four, presumably a farmhand, who would have assisted Samuel with the Hubbard family farm, which lay southwest of the town center.<sup>21</sup>

By 1850, Nelly had built a much larger Greek Revival Style house on McDonald Avenue just south of Gravesend Neck Road (demolished), where, according to the federal census, she resided with her son, her eighteen-year-old grandson, Tunis Stryker, and two servants.<sup>22</sup> The most likely occupant of this house was Henry Van Nyse [Nuyse?], based on his proximity to Phebe Voorhies in the 1850 census, the size of the household, and the fact that he was listed as a lessee rather than a property owner. Van Nyse was a sixty-three-year-old laborer who lived with Hannah Brown, a sixty-five-year-old African-American woman.<sup>23</sup> It is likely that she was Van Nyse's servant, since in 1855 she was listed as a servant at the neighboring farm of J.W. Cropsey in the New York State census. African-Americans, who had comprised about a third of Gravesend's population at the end of the eighteenth century, continued to have a significant presence in the community in the mid-nineteenth century. In addition to working as live-in servants and laborers, like the unnamed farmhand who lived and worked in this house with the Hubbards in the 1840s, they also maintained separate households, primarily earning their livings

as farmers and fishermen.<sup>24</sup> Among the African-American families living in the town during the mid-nineteenth century were the Vanderveers, Hendersons, Andersons, Dillworths, and Cooks.

While Gravesend remained primarily an agricultural and fishing community in the mid-nineteenth-century, the initial development of nearby Coney Island as a resort began to bring new residents to the area, including a number of Irish and German immigrants. During the Civil War additional hotels and restaurants were constructed at the beach. In Gravesend itself, in 1868, a group of prominent Brooklyn businessmen acquired the old Stillwell and Cropsey farms opposite this house to build the Prospect Park Fair Grounds, which incorporated a one-mile race course used for saddle and harness racing, a clubhouse, and a hotel.<sup>25</sup> The opening of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux's Ocean Parkway (a designated New York City Landmark) in 1874-76, of Coney Island Avenue in 1884, and Ocean Avenue in 1876, further contributed to the growth of Gravesend and the beachfront resorts. Beginning in 1868 Coney Island was also served by rail.<sup>26</sup>

According to Ross's *History of Long Island*, "all of these new institutions ... helped to build up Gravesend and to aid in its financial prosperity,"<sup>27</sup> however, because most of the railroads serving the beach resorts did not stop in Gravesend, there was relatively little impetus for suburban development. According to the *Brooklyn Eagle*, all this changed with the introduction of the five-cent trolley, "running everywhere," opening up "old Gravesend to city communication."<sup>28</sup>

*The population began to grow with amazing rapidity and new streets were steadily opened in reality or on paper. Old farms were abandoned to the builders, while new settlements, some of them with exceedingly fancy names sprung into existence.*<sup>29</sup>

The construction of the new highways, railroads, hotels, racetracks, and houses in Gravesend and the nearby beachfront communities in the second half of the nineteenth century fostered a thriving construction trade in the town. This trend seems to have been reflected in the tenancy of this house, which census records appear to indicate was occupied by at least three men connected with the building trades. They include carpenter Peter H. Rumph (1826-1904), who the Federal census suggests resided in this house in 1860 with his wife, Jane, and their infant daughter, Mary.<sup>30</sup> Rumph later became a prominent politician in Gravesend serving as town supervisor in the 1890s.<sup>31</sup> Based on their listings in the federal census of 1870 and the state census of 1875, it is probable that the English-born house painter William Andrews and his wife, Susan, resided in this house for several years in the 1870s.<sup>32</sup> Later a resident of Sheepshead Bay, Andrews became a painting contractor and an associate of boss John Y. McKane, who controlled political patronage in Gravesend and the beachfront communities of Coney Island and Sheepshead Bay in the late 1880s and early 1890s.<sup>33</sup> Carpenter Peter W. Johnson, his wife, Margaret, and their sons John, aged 15, and Peter, aged 9, seem to have occupied this house in 1880.<sup>34</sup> Johnson was a house carpenter who later lived on Ryder Place (now Village Road North). According to an 1899 *Brooklyn Eagle* article, he was responsible for repairs and renovations to the no longer extant Voorhees House on Ocean Avenue at Neck Road, then one of the oldest surviving Dutch houses in Gravesend, and was builder-developer for several houses on Van Sicklen Street. It seems very likely that he was responsible for carving the initials "PWJ" discovered on an old clapboard on the north gable of this house during renovations and restoration conducted in 2000.<sup>35</sup>

### The Hubbard Family

Nelly Hubbard died in 1865. In her will she divided her real estate holdings between her son, surviving daughter, and grandchildren. This house and lot passed to her daughter, Elizabeth [Eliza] Johnson, and granddaughters, Aletta Elizabeth Stryker and Johanna Stryker.<sup>36</sup> In 1866 Samuel Hubbard purchased this house from the heirs, then immediately sold a half interest in the property back to his sister Eliza.<sup>37</sup>

Following his mother's death Samuel Hubbard continued to live in the house on McDonald Avenue near Gravesend Neck Road.<sup>38</sup> In 1877 he married his housekeeper, Maria Louisa Hinman. About nineteen months later, in June 1878, she died of strychnine poisoning under suspicious circumstances. Hubbard was arrested but was released after a Grand Jury voted not to bring an indictment against him.<sup>39</sup>

Samuel Hubbard resided in his Gravesend home until his death in 1900 at the age of eighty-eight.<sup>40</sup> Eliza Johnson died in 1886, leaving her half interest in this house to be let, managed, and taken care of by her brother Samuel and her step-son John N. Johnson in trust for her son from her first marriage, Jacobus Emmons, a deaf-mute, during his lifetime and then to pass to her granddaughter Elizabeth Voorhees [Stillwell].<sup>41</sup> In 1899, shortly before his death, Samuel Hubbard and his grand-niece Elizabeth Stillwell sold the rear portion of the lot for this house extending from Lake Street to Van Sicklen Street to Michael Shea.<sup>42</sup> In his will, Hubbard bequeathed his half interest in this house which he described as "the little house situate on Gravesend Avenue" [now McDonald Avenue] to the children of his niece Aletta Elizabeth Emmons, wife of John Van Dyke Emmons.<sup>43</sup> In April 1903, Elizabeth Stillwell and various heirs of Samuel Hubbard conveyed this house to Jane Gilfeathers.<sup>44</sup> In June 1903 Gilfeathers sold the property to Agnes Somerville, and in July 1903 Somerville conveyed it to Joseph Walsh.<sup>45</sup> The following year, in May 1904, Walsh sold the house to Vincenzo Luccelli, whose family would occupy it through the 1990s.<sup>46</sup>

### The Design of the Hubbard House

A late example of Dutch-American design, the Hubbard House, as built, was a small (33-foot-wide, 15-foot-deep), spring-eaved, gable-roofed, one-and-a-half-story, one-room-deep structure consisting of a side hall, parlor, and one-story shed-roofed kitchen wing on the first floor, and small bedrooms in the attic above the main portion of the house. Its interior detailing was modest, with decorative interest focused on a late Federal-style mantle and built-in china cupboard in the parlor. (The interior of the house is not included in this designation.)

In their structural analysis of the building conducted in 1998, Powell and McMillen observed that the northern (original) portion of the house rests on a foundation of red sandstone and brick. The vast majority of the floor joists, timbers, posts, studs, and even the curved rafters of the spring eave in this portion of the house were sawn rather than hewn, in keeping with a construction date in the early nineteenth century. The original section is sheathed with wide pine clapboard siding that "has been on the house since its original construction."<sup>47</sup> Its corner boards and window frames are edged with a bead molding with a quirk or groove running alongside the bead "that is of nineteenth century form."<sup>48</sup> At the north corner of the façade, the original entry has been closed and the bay currently contains an early-twentieth-century window. The center and southern windows, currently six-over-ones, retain their original sashes although the muntins were removed and had to be refabricated for the upper sashes based on mortise profiles that although filled remained visible. These muntin profiles, Powell and McMillen suggested, were typical of the 1820 to 1840 period. According to Powell and McMillen, "these windows are well made though the construction detail at the stile and rail juncture suggests that they were made by a local carpenter and not a sash and blind shop."<sup>49</sup> Throughout the original portion of the house

machine cut nails typical of period between 1825 and 1880 are used for all “framing work, trim work and lathing except for a portion of the second floor remodeled in 1924.”<sup>50</sup> It was the opinion of Powell and McMillen that, “the carpenter or carpenters who built the house were working in an older form obviously familiar and thus comfortable to them. Within this form they only felt the need to add the convenience of sawn timber and cut nails as well as some up-to-date details such as molding profiles.”<sup>51</sup>

Dutch Colonial architecture was characterized by its use of a timber-framing system incorporating “bents” that consisted of two squared posts joined by a girder or tie beam.<sup>52</sup> The Dutch employed two kinds of bents: one II-shaped and the other H-shaped. The first was created by simply placing a girder on top of the posts or by trenching the girder into the top of the posts and was typically employed for multi-story buildings. H-bents were formed by tenoning girders into posts several feet below the tops of the posts to create something resembling a goal post. Used primarily for rural buildings, H-bent framing was responsible for the distinctive one-and-a-half-story form and knee-walled attics characteristic of most surviving Dutch houses.<sup>53</sup>

While H-bent framing was common to all Dutch houses, there was considerable variation in the different regions settled by the Dutch. This reflects differences in climate and local materials, and in some cases, it is theorized, the local building traditions brought to this country by settlers from various parts of Holland, Belgium, Northern France, and Western Germany. The Hubbard House is representative of a sub-regional building type found in western Long Island, Staten Island, and Monmouth County, New Jersey, and is quite different from the Dutch-American houses of the middle and upper Hudson River valley or northern New Jersey, where masonry traditions prevailed. In Brooklyn and the other areas of the sub-region, Dutch American colonial houses were usually wood-framed, one-and-a-half-story, shingle-covered structures with low-pitched gable-ended roofs that came down in gracefully curving projecting eaves, often called spring eaves or overshot eaves, that extended in front and sometimes in back of the house. This type of eave may have been inspired by similar overhangs on Flemish houses that protected the soft stucco facings commonly used on exterior walls.<sup>54</sup> In America, where spring eaves were used on shingled or clapboard-covered houses, their primary purpose may have been to provide shelter for the entrances and shade in summer. Sometimes they gained a porch when posts were installed to support the spring eaves, which might extend as much as five feet beyond the front wall.

The earliest form of the Long Island-Central New Jersey house type may be seen in the Pieter Clasesen Wyckoff House (c. 1652 and later, a designated New York City Landmark). Over the next century and a half the building type evolved as houses became larger and more complex in plan and structure. By the mid-eighteenth century they began to incorporate features from contemporary Anglo-American sources including center hall “Georgian” plans, corner fireplaces, and gambrel roofs.

The Hubbard House belongs to a sub-grouping of the Long-Island-Central New Jersey type, the one-story plus attic, three-bay-wide-house with the entry at one end of the façade. Typically such houses were two rooms deep and had a side hall containing a staircase leading to the attic.<sup>55</sup> Often a lower service wing was attached to the side or rear of the main part of the house. The earliest known example of the three-bay type is the one-room-deep Woodard-Schoonmaker House (aka Wyckoff Farmhand House, pre-1769, demolished), formerly located at 1306 Flushing Avenue in Ridgewood, which was built into the side of a hill and had a basement kitchen.<sup>56</sup> Late eighteenth-century examples include the Joost and Elizabeth Van Nuyse House (aka Coe House, before 1792, a designated New York City Landmark) at 1128 East 34<sup>th</sup> Street and the Van Pelt-Woolsey House (c. 1791, demolished 2003) at 4011 Hubbard Place, both in Flatlands.<sup>57</sup> The main section of the Hendrick I. Lott House at 1940 East 36<sup>th</sup> Street in



Flatlands (built 1800, a designated New York City Landmark) also conforms to the three-bay type. One of the largest and most elaborate of the surviving Dutch Colonial houses in Brooklyn, the Lott House, incorporates a one-and-one-half-story service wing on the west side of the house, built at the same time as the main block, and a one-and-a-half-story kitchen wing on the east side of the house dating from 1720 that was removed from the house of Hendrick Lott's grandfather and attached to the Hendrick Lott House in 1800.<sup>58</sup>

The Hubbard House was one of at least three, three-bay-wide Gravesend houses dating from the 1830s and 1840s that had shed-roofed service wings immediately adjoining the gable-roofed main block. In addition to the Hubbard House, they included the Johnson House, formerly at 1953 Gravesend Avenue, just north of Kings Highway,<sup>59</sup> and the Lawrence Ryder House (aka the Ryder-Van Cleef House), formerly at 26 Village Road North and now at 38 Village Road North, built c. 1840 for his own use by carpenter Lawrence Ryder (1808-1863).<sup>60</sup> Gravesend scholar Joseph Ditta has proposed that the no longer extant Court J. Van Sicklen House, formerly at the corner of Village Road North and Van Sicklen Street in Gravesend, which traditionally has been dated c.1776, was also part of this group based on its stylistic similarities to the Lawrence Ryder House.<sup>61</sup> In addition to its unusual pairing of a gable-roofed main block and shed roofed kitchen wing, which does not appear to be a house form used elsewhere in Brooklyn,<sup>62</sup> comparison of these four buildings reveals striking similarities in size, plan, use of materials, proportions and in the placement of doors and windows. While no means certain, it seems possible that they may all have been built by Lawrence Ryder perhaps in collaboration with his brother Jacobus, who is known to have worked with him on the Gravesend Dutch Reformed Church parsonage in 1844 (demolished).<sup>63</sup>

In 1945, historian Maud Esther Dilliard, who was concerned that the Dutch, Huguenot, and Walloon colonists who first settled in the towns on the western end of Long Island, "not be forgotten in the hurly-burly of twentieth-century Brooklyn," cataloged the remaining Dutch houses in Brooklyn.<sup>64</sup> At that time she documented forty such structures. Today the Hubbard House is one of only thirteen houses from Dilliard's original group that still survive.<sup>65</sup> Within this group, the north wing of the Hubbard House has a number of special distinctions. It retains an exceptional amount of original fabric, including original siding and windows; it presents an interesting marriage of traditional Dutch Colonial forms with early-to-mid-nineteenth-century construction techniques; it is one of the few surviving Dutch-American houses that retains its original orientation on its original site; and in particular, it is the smallest and simplest of the surviving Dutch-American houses in the borough. Such small houses were typically occupied by laborers and artisans, as was the case here. Perhaps because their small size made them less adaptable to modern needs and perhaps because they lacked the familial associations of the ancestral homes of the gentry, workers' houses and especially rural workers' houses have not survived in great numbers in New York City. Thus, on a number of counts, the Hubbard House is a rare survivor.

#### Later History: The Lucchellis and John Antonides

In 1904, when Vincenzo Lucchelli purchased this house, Gravesend was beginning to suburbanize, thanks in part to the electrification of the Sea Beach (1898) and Culver (1899) rail lines, which had shortened commuting time to Manhattan to forty-five minutes. In 1919 construction began on the elevated line on McDonald Avenue running in front of this house. The el brought increased population to Gravesend and encouraged commercial development on McDonald Avenue, including a lumber company at 2126 McDonald Avenue and the National Biscuit Company at McDonald and Avenue T by 1929.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the population of Gravesend remained mostly American-born with a sizable minority of Irish immigrants, Germans, and African-Americans. There were also a handful of Italian families including the Micuccis, whose shop at Avenue T and McDonald Avenue was the site of the first mass offered in the newly created parish of S.S. Simon and Jude in 1897. The Italian population in Gravesend grew exponentially over the next decade following national trends that saw 1.9 million people move from Southern Italy to the United States between 1899 and 1910 and the Italian population of New York City increase from 220,000 to 545,000.

Vincenzo Lucchelli (1868-1935), emigrated in 1893 from Ferrandina in Basilicata, Italy, with his wife Antoinette (Petruccelli) Lucchelli (c.1876-1946). A tailor by trade, Lucchelli worked in the men's garment industry throughout his career. The Lucchellis first settled on the Lower East Side and are thought to have lived in Gravesend prior to buying this house in 1904.<sup>66</sup> By the time they purchased the property, the couple already had four children; another was born in this house. The Lucchellis seem to have immediately made alterations to accommodate their growing family. The first-floor entry hall was converted to a bedroom and the entry was replaced by a third window on the façade. The former kitchen became a dining room and the main entry to the house.<sup>67</sup> A smaller shed-roofed addition with board-and-batten vertical siding (probably a pre-existing summer kitchen) attached to the rear of the former kitchen became the main kitchen.

During World War I, the Lucchellis' eldest son Peter (1898-1989) was employed as a mechanic's helper and their second son, Vincent (1899-1922), worked as a rigger's helper at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Following the war, both Peter and Vincent were employed as automobile mechanics and a third son Giacomo (Jack, 1902-1978) became a pipe fitter. Vincent, who suffered from tuberculosis, died in 1922 at the age of twenty-three. The Lucchellis' youngest daughter, Angela (1905-56), usually known as Babe, also was infected with the disease. Concerned about her health, in 1923, the Lucchellis decided to upgrade their house, installing a bathroom in the attic of the main portion of the house,<sup>68</sup> wiring the house for electricity, and replacing the dining room and kitchen with a new two-story wing that would contain a many-windowed bedroom, to be used as a sleeping porch, "considered therapeutic for TB patients during the 1920s."<sup>69</sup> The Lucchellis hired Salvati & Le Quornik [Domenick Salvati and Herman Le Quornik] Associate Architects, a firm with offices in downtown Brooklyn that specialized in the design of Catholic rectories, parish halls, and schools and industrial buildings, particularly parking garages, for which the partners patented a ramped flooring system in 1932.<sup>70</sup>

The new wing was 12 feet wide and 29 feet deep and two full stories in height. Colonial Revival in inspiration, without being particularly historicizing, it was designed to harmonize with older parts of the house. The facades were sheathed with wood clapboards and featured six-over-one wood sash. Some modifications were also made to the older part of the house to bring more light and air into the second story.

In 1930, when the census was taken, seven people lived in this house: Vincenzo and Antoinette Lucchelli, their sons Peter and Jack, and their daughters, Theresa (Tess) and Angela (Babe), and Peter's wife, Dorothy. Vincenzo died in 1935 and Antoinette in 1946. The house passed to Peter Lucchelli following his parents' death.<sup>71</sup> He subsequently moved to Florida and remarried. In 1989 ownership of the house passed to his widow Gemma. Tess was the last member of the family to occupy the house, living here until her death in 1997.

In 1945 the Hubbard House was included in Maud Dilliard's study of Dutch Colonial houses in Brooklyn, and in 1975 it was featured in Eric Ierardi's history of Gravesend. John Antonides, a descendent of the Kings County Dutch Reformed clergyman Vincentius Antonides (c. 1670-1744) and Gravesend founder John Bowne (1628-1695), who edits publications for the

Brooklyn Museum, became interested in the Dutch architecture of Brooklyn through his work in editing Kevin Stayton's book *Dutch by Design* for the museum in 1990. He began visiting and researching the houses and published an article "The Houses with the Funny Roofs" in which he discussed the Hubbard House.<sup>72</sup> In the course of his research Antonides formed a friendship with Tess Lucchelli and became a prime proponent for the designation of the house. In 1998, following Tess's death, he purchased the house from Peter Lucchelli's widow, Gemma Payne, and began repairs financed in part with a grant and loans from the New York Landmarks Conservancy, to whom he granted a permanent façade easement on the house. Performed under the direction of preservation architect Page Ayres Cowley and the Neville Engineering group, the project entailed repair and in-kind replacement of the wood clapboards, shingle roof replacement, replacement of portions of the foundation, installation of new wood shutters, and the repair and in-kind replacement of the windows.<sup>73</sup> Mr. Antonides continues to reside in the house.

### Description

The Hubbard House remains in its original location and is surrounded by a portion of its original farm lot. The current lot is trapezoidal in shape, has a frontage of 78.26 feet on McDonald Avenue, and is 76.57 feet deep. Non-historic chain-link fences extend along the east, north, and west sides of the lot. The eastern fence along McDonald Avenue has two gates providing access for pedestrians and vehicles. The south property line is defined by the north wall of the building at 2170 McDonald Avenue and the north wall of the masonry fence surrounding the backyard of that property. A non-historic concrete path extends from the sidewalk to the McDonald Avenue entrance to the house. Flagstones (which do not appear to be fixed) lead from the path to an entry on the south side of the house (now the principal entrance) and to the rear yard. A portion of a historic brick path that extended from the McDonald Avenue entry to the basement hatch survives in front of the hatch. In the rear yard there appear to be the remains of an old privy or well with a non-historic modern cover, which may have potential as an archaeological resource.

Oriented on a north-south axis with its main façade facing McDonald Avenue, the L-shaped Hubbard house consists of two sections: on the north, a Dutch-American one-and-one-half-story, one-room-deep, gable-roofed, spring-eaved, main block and, on the south, a 1920s Colonial Revival, two-story, one-room-wide, two-room-deep, gable-roofed addition. Both the main block and wing are sheathed with their original clapboards. The main block originally had an entry leading to a side hall at the north corner of the façade. This was closed and replaced by a window in the first decade of the twentieth century. Presently there is a small historic wood-and-glass entrance porch at the south end of the McDonald Avenue façade of the 1920s wing. The wood-and-glass door on the main façade is original; the wood Dutch door on the south façade is non-historic. The main block originally had six-over-six windows. The windows in the center and south bays of the McDonald Avenue façade and the first-story window on the north gable wall retain their original frames, casings, and sash but their original muntins were removed by the 1990s. In 2001 the muntins were replaced in the upper lights of these windows. There are also small horizontal window openings with historic wood windows in the basement and attic of the main block. The 1920s wing retains its original six-over-one wood sash windows. Most of the windows are protected by non-historic vinyl-covered aluminum storm windows. The spring eaves of the 1830s portion of the house remain remarkably intact. The house retains its historic brick chimney located at the south corner of the 1830s wing; however, the chimney has been extended with a non-historic masonry-and-metal cap. The roofs of both wings are covered with non-historic asphalt shingles.

**The McDonald Avenue façade of the 1830s main block** rests on a low brick basement. At some point the bricks had been parged, but the parging was removed and the bricks were repointed in 2001. The metal hatch cover and concrete curb at the south end of the façade were installed in 2001, replacing an earlier wood hatch cover. (Probably the house always had a basement hatch since such entries are a characteristic feature of Dutch-American architecture.) The center basement window retains its historic molded wood window frame and deep-set single-light hopper wood window. The double-light basement storm window is non-historic. Between the hatch and basement window there are two non-historic circular metal vents.

The first story and attic are sheathed with wide pine clapboards fastened to frame with machine-cut nails and original corner boards. Most of the clapboards, as well as the corner boards, are original. Portions of the bottom three rows were replaced with clapboards that match the existing boards in their width and thickness. The siding beneath the northernmost window bay dates from the early twentieth century when the original entry was closed. The 1830s windows in the center and south bays have relatively narrow casings; the framing elements of the early-twentieth-century window in the early twentieth-century window in the north bay are much heavier. All three windows have replacement muntins in their upper lights fabricated to match the profile of the original muntins. All of the first-story windows have non-historic vinyl-covered aluminum storms.

The first story is capped by the deeply projecting eaves of the gabled roof. The eaves retain their simple molded detailing and the planking below the overhang remains remarkably intact. The present dormer was installed as part of 2000-01 restoration; it replaces an earlier dormer installed in the 1920s. The sloping roof is covered with non-historic asphalt shingles.

**The north gable wall of the 1830s wing** retains most of its original siding except for the bottom three rows of clapboards. The parging was removed from the basement and the bricks were repointed in 2001. The first-story window appears to be original, but it is now configured as a six-over-one with replacement muntins in the upper light. The paired windows in the gable appear to date from the 1920s. They retain their original six-over-one lights. All three windows have non-historic storm windows.

**The west (rear) façade of the 1830s wing** retains most of its original siding. The basement is faced with sand-colored stucco parging scored to look like stone. The basement window retains its original molded wood frame and historic single-light wood hopper window. There is a pair of non-historic metal vent covers near the south corner of the basement wall. The first-story window dates from the 1920s.<sup>74</sup> The small horizontal window, just under the eaves at the center of the façade appears to be nineteenth century, though perhaps not original. It has a pair of historic wood casement windows.

**The east (McDonald Avenue) façade of the 1920s wing** has an exposed brick basement that survives from the original 1830s kitchen wing and was reused for this wing. The upper stories are faced with wood drop siding. The original half-hipped-roofed entry porch is approached by a non-historic low wood stoop. The riser board supporting the top step is marked with non-historic numerals reading “2138.” The multi-light wood-and-glass door, clapboarded dados, and quadripartite fixed windows that enclose the porch are historic, added soon after the 1920s wing was completed.<sup>75</sup> The small light fixture just beneath the overhanging porch eaves is non-historic. The porch roof is covered with non-historic asphalt shingles installed in 2001. Sheltered by the porch, the original paneled wood front door with a single-light window remains very intact and retains its original hardware. Both the first- and second-story windows retain their original molded frames and six-over-one wood sash. Both have non-historic storm windows. The overhanging roof eaves have been pierced with small ventilating disks, installed in 2001 when the attic was insulated.

**The south façade of the 1920s wing** is articulated into three bays with the first-story entrance near the center of the façade, single windows at the first and second stories in the east bay, and paired windows in the west bay. The drop siding on this façade remains largely intact, but the bottom fascia and two bottom rows of boards were replaced in 2001. The brick foundation is visible near the eastern corner of the façade; but much of the foundation to the east of the stoop remains covered with scored stucco. The foundation to the west of the stoop is faced with rusticated blocks (probably cast stone treated to resemble granite) and has been painted. The wood railings flanking the entrance are non-historic.<sup>76</sup> The bracketed hood over the doorway is original to the wing. The wood Dutch door and metal Dutch letter box were installed in 2001. The light fixture to the east of the door is also non-historic. All the windows retain their original molded surrounds and six-over-one sash and are protected by non-historic storm windows. As on the McDonald Avenue front, the soffits of the eaves are pierced by small non-historic ventilation disks.

On the **western façade of the 1920s wing** many of the clapboards between the north corner and the windows were replaced in 2001 when an old chimney at the north corner of the façade was removed. The painted concrete block foundation has a center opening sealed with brick fill with a perforated brick at its center for ventilation. There is a single window at the first story and a pair of windows at the second story. They retain their original casings and six-over-one wood sash and non-historic storm windows. The eaves soffits are pierced with ventilating disks.

On the **north elevation of the 1920s wing** most of the siding is original except for some replacement clapboards near the east corner of the façade. The painted concrete block foundation has a center opening with brick fill with a perforated brick at its center for ventilation. There is a single window at the first story and a pair of windows at the second story. They retain their original casings and six-over-one wood sash and have non-historic storm windows. The eave soffits are pierced with ventilating disks.

Report researched and written by  
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#### *NOTES*

<sup>1</sup> Councilman Recchia arrived after the designation vote had taken place. The hearing was reopened to allow him to testify in support of the designation.

<sup>2</sup> This item was previously heard on October 21, 1997 (LP-1974).

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<sup>3</sup>This information on the early development of Gravesend is based on Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Old Gravesend Cemetery Designation Report*, (LP-0921), (New York: City of New York, 1976); Thomas J. Campanella, "Sanctuary in the Wilderness: Deborah Moody and the Town Plan for Colonial Gravesend," *Landscape Journal* 12:2 (Fall 1993), 106-130; Victor Cooper, *A Dangerous Woman: New York's First Lady Liberty: The Life and Times of Lady Deborah Moody* (Bowie MD: Heritage Books, 1995); Eric J. Ierardi, *Gravesend: The Home of Coney Island* (New York: Vantage Press, 1975); Henry Reed Stiles, ed., *The Civil, Political, Professional and Ecclesiastical History and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn* (New York: W.W. Munsell, 1884), v. 1, 157-169; Peter Ross, *A History of Long Island* (New York: Lewis Publishing Co. 1902); William H. Stillwell, "Gravesend Settlers: Ancestors and Descendants," manuscript at the New York Genealogical & Biographical Society, 11-15.

<sup>4</sup>Historical Perspectives Inc., "New York City School Construction Authority PS. 721K Gravesend, Brooklyn: Phase 1A Archaeological Assessment, 1991; Carlyle Shreeve Smith, "The Archaeology of Coastal New York," 43, pt. 2, *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History* (NY: Mus. of Natural History, 1950).

<sup>5</sup>Reginald Pelham Bolton, *New York City in Indian Possession*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, 1920, reprint, 1975), 7, 14-15.

<sup>6</sup>Campanella, 107.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>A *schout* was an official with administrative, law enforcement, and prosecutorial responsibilities.

<sup>9</sup> In the 1660s James Hubbard was one of a group of Gravesend citizens who obtained permission from Governor Stuyvesant to settle the Raritan Valley in New Jersey and who purchased the Monmouth Patent, encompassing all of present-day Monmouth County as well as parts of Ocean and Middlesex Counties, from the Navesink Indians. Hubbard served as one the commissioners who settled the boundary between Piscataway and Woodbridge, New Jersey.

<sup>10</sup>The first road to Coney Island was started in 1734, and in 1763 another road was opened to the middle of the island. At that time Coney Island was principally used for grazing and fishing with buildings limited to a few fishing huts.

<sup>11</sup>In 1790 in rural Kings County almost sixty percent of the white households used black laborers and Dutch farmers were steadfast slave owners with as many as ten slaves in a household quite common. See Graham Russell Hodges, *Root & Branch: African Americans in New York & East Jersey, 1613-1863* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 164.

<sup>12</sup>These included Jacob Swart, progenitor of the Swartwout family; Jan Van Cleeve, progenitor of the Van Cleef family; Carsten Jansen; Lurus Van Lophorst; and Jan Hans [probably Jan Hansen Van Nostrand]. In 1660, Anthony Jansen Van Salee, fearing a new Native American uprising, also moved into town with his family which included his daughter Eva and her husband Ferdinandus Van Sicklen. Another of Anthony's daughters, Sarah and her husband, Jan Emans (born to English parents who had fled to Holland) also settled in Gravesend at about the same time.

<sup>13</sup> The early English settlers held religious meetings in private homes, including some of the first Quaker services. When the Sessions House was built, the town donated the land for the building and promised to keep the building in repair in exchange for the right to use it for religious services or town purposes. In 1685 when the county government was removed to Flatbush, ownership of the Sessions house passed to a number of Gravesend residents. It is not certain whether there was any distinct and separate Dutch Reformed Church in Gravesend between 1685 and 1715. In 1715 the town agreed to assume a third of the Dutch Reformed Church of New Utrecht's costs for the salary and accommodation for the services of Dominie Bernardus Freeman and Dominie Vincentus Antonides. The earliest surviving records of baptisms at the Gravesend Dutch Reformed Church date from 1715. *The 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformed Dutch Church of Gravesend* (Gravesend: printed privately, 1905), 10-15; *Baptisms in Gravesend, New York Church Records, 1715-1763* at <http://www.olivetreenealogy.com/nn/chuch/gravesend1.shtml>.

<sup>14</sup>On the early history of this property see Maud Dilliard, *Old Dutch Houses of Brooklyn* (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1945), 19; Kings County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 2, 111, 111A, 134.

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<sup>15</sup>This tract was referred to in a conveyance for a neighboring piece of property that had been confiscated following the Revolutionary War. See Conveyances Liber 6, 344E. Court Johnson (aka Coert Jansen) was the son of Hendrick Johnson, a New Utrecht farmer, and Eva Van Sicklen, a descendent of Anthony Jansen van Sallee and Grietje Reyniers, who had grown up in Gravesend in the Van Sicklen House (aka as the Lady Moody House) at 27 Gravesend Neck Road. Court was first listed in the Gravesend town records in 1755 and served at various times as a pound master, weigh master and assessor. He probably married twice: 1 undetermined, 2 Phebe Styker aka Phebe Griggs (parentage undetermined). Because Court had a nephew named Court Johnson who lived in Gravesend during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the two in historic records. The first Federal Census of 1790 lists two Court Johnsons in Kings County, one residing in Brooklyn and the other living in Gravesend. Both were slave owners, listing one slave in each of their households. For the Johnson family genealogy see Stillwell, "Gravesend Settlers," 201-202; *Abstracts of Wills on File in the Surrogates Office, City of New York*, Collections of The New-York Historical Society 1892-1908 [hereafter WNYHS], v. 6, 166; New York City Municipal Archives, "Gravesend Town Records: Town Meetings 1704-1872," Translations/ Transliterations, reel, 145, 37, 39, 40,46; Perry Streeter, "The Griggs Family of Gravesend and New Jersey, *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* [hereafter NYG&B Record], v. 137, 121, 124; United States, Census 1790, Kings County, Gravesend, 13 [stamped 345], Kings County, Brooklyn, 6. Richard McCool also generously made a portion of an unpublished manuscript on the Van Sicklen family genealogy available to me through Harry Macy, Jr. of the New York Genealogical & Biographical Society in 2006.

<sup>16</sup>Hendrick resided in New Utrecht in 1779 when he served as a witness to the will of Johannes Emans WNYHS, v. 9, 244. The United States Census, 1800, for Kings County indicates that he was residing in Gravesend with his wife, four daughters, and son. He does not appear to have owned slaves. For Hendrick Johnson see also "Gravesend Town Records," reel 145, 60, 62, 64, 66; Josephine Frost, *Inscriptions from Gravesend Cemetery, Brooklyn, New York* (Brooklyn, 1913), 48, 49; Devereaux Lake, *A Personal Narrative of Some Branches of the Lake Family in America* (Lorain, Ohio: privately printed, 1937, 51; Arthur Adams and Sarah Anna Risley, *A Genealogy of the Lake Family of Great Egg Harbour* (Hartford, Ct, privately printed, 1912), 31.

<sup>17</sup> Kings County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 710, 465.

<sup>18</sup>The obituary of a subsequent owner, Jacobus Ryder, indicates that the house had stood "for almost a century." Ryder replaced it with a large two-story frame dwelling on Van Sicklen Street in 1885. See "Obituary, Jacobus Ryder," *Brooklyn Eagle*, Apr. 19, 1900, 3; "Old Gravesend," *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 30, 1899, 199.

<sup>19</sup> Court H. Johnson sold his house and lot to Jacobus Ryder in 1845 (Deeds Liber 142, 427). The name of A. Ryder (Ann Ryder), Jacobus's wife, appears on the 1849 map.

<sup>20</sup>Russell Powell, Island Housewrights Corp., to Roger Lang, New York Landmarks Conservancy, March 8, 1998; Russell Powell, Island Housewrights Corp., to Karen Ansis, Historic Properties Fund Inc., New York Landmarks Conservancy, July 5, 1999. [Copies in the LPC Hubbard House Research file].

<sup>21</sup> United States, Census 1840, Kings County, Gravesend, 810.

<sup>22</sup> United States, Census 1850, Kings County, Gravesend, 18.

<sup>23</sup>United States, Census 1850, Kings County, Gravesend, 20. There are two 1923 photographs of this house, formerly located at 2338-40 Gravesend Avenue, in the collections of the Brooklyn Historical Society, see V1974.1.618 Photographic and V1974.1.619 Photographic.

<sup>24</sup> This analysis of the African-American population of Gravesend in the mid-nineteenth century is based on the United States Census of 1850 and New York State Census of 1855.

<sup>25</sup> For the fairgrounds see "Prospect Park Fair Ground," *New York Times*, Jun. 1, 1868, 5; Prospect Park \*Fair Ground," *New York Times*, Apr. 19, 1869, 8; "Kings County Fair," *Brooklyn Eagle*, Sep. 17, 1870, 3.

<sup>26</sup>In 1876 Andrew Culver opened the Prospect and Coney Island Railroad, providing reliable, efficient service running along the path of the present-day F train down Gravesend (now McDonald) Avenue directly in front of this house. In 1877, banker-developer Austin Corbin established the New York and Manhattan Beach Railroad (a spur of the Long Island Railroad), running parallel with the line of the present-day B and Q trains, to serve the new resort community he was developing in Manhattan Beach. With the introduction of railroads, the seaside resorts of Coney Island, Manhattan Beach, and Brighton Beach flourished. The railroads also served three racetracks: the Brighton Beach Racing Associations' track in Brighton Beach (opened 1879), the Coney Island Jockey Club's course in

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Sheepshead Bay (opened 1880), and the Brooklyn Jockey Club's course on the old Prospect Park Fair Grounds in Gravesend, (opened 1886 with a new grandstand on McDonald Avenue across the street from this house).

<sup>27</sup> Ross, 369.

<sup>28</sup>“Old Gravesend,” 19.

<sup>29</sup> Ross, 369.

<sup>30</sup>United States, Census 1860, Kings County, Gravesend, 793. The Rumphs had three other children — Emma (1860-77), Lizzie (1862-65), and David (1864-65) — who might also have lived in this house. See Frost, 27.

<sup>31</sup>“Rumph Secures Two Writs,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Jan. 27, 1895, 24; Peter Rumph Loses His Case,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Feb. 8, 1895, p. 12; “Burned to Death,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Dec. 4, 1904, 20.

<sup>32</sup> United States, Census 1870, Kings County, Gravesend , 24; New York State Census, 1875.

<sup>33</sup> By 1884 Andrews was living in Sheepshead Bay and advertising for painters and scaffold hands for his house painting business. See “Wanted,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Apr. 27, 1884, 7. For his association with McKane see “McKane’s Friend,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Sep. 24, 1886, 6; “Real Estate,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Jan. 19, 1889, 2.

<sup>34</sup> United States, Census 1880, Kings County, Gravesend, 328.

<sup>35</sup> The board was replaced at that time but is preserved in the house.

<sup>36</sup> Kings County, Office of the Surrogate, Wills Liber 31, 46.

<sup>37</sup> Deeds Liber 719, 437, 440.

<sup>38</sup>“Old Gravesend,” 19; “Obituary — Samuel Hubbard,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Nov. 14, 1900, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Maria Hinman was a much-married English émigrée who had formerly kept a restaurant in the Fulton Market. After they married, Hubbard made a new will providing a life interest in his estate for his new wife. This provoked a feud between his wife, who thought she should inherit everything, and his relatives, especially his sister Eliza Johnson, who feared that nothing would be left in the estate by the time it passed to Hubbard’s nieces and nephews. Maria Hubbard began quarreling with her husband whenever he went to see his relatives, and his existence became “most wretched.” In late June 1878, Maria Hubbard drank a half-bottle of lager left over from the previous night’s supper and immediately exclaimed that “it tasted as if it had poison in it.” In a little over an hour she was dead. As she lay dying, Maria Hubbard accused Hubbard’s nephew Jacob Stryker of poisoning her. He was arrested but soon freed. After an autopsy revealed that Maria Hubbard had died of strychnine poisoning, suspicion fell on Samuel Hubbard, who had purchased strychnine about five weeks earlier, purportedly to kill rats. Following a coroner’s inquest, Hubbard was arrested and taken to the Raymond Street jail in Brooklyn. In late July the case was presented to a Grand Jury over the course of two days and after hearing a number of witnesses they voted fourteen to four not to indict. For more on the case, see “A Farmer’s Wife Poisoned,” *New York Times*, Jun. 20, 1878, 5; “A Poisoning Plot,” *National Police Gazette*, Jun. 29, 1878, 11; “Poisoned,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Jun. 20, 1878, 4; “Mysterious: The Suspicious Death of Mrs. Maria L. Hubbard,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Jun. 21, 1878, 4; “The Gravesend Mystery,” *New York Times*, Jun. 21, 1878, p. 8; “The Gravesend Poisoning,” *New York Times*, Jun. 23, 1878, 7; “Mrs. Hubbard,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Jun. 26, 1878, 2; “Mrs. Hubbard,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Jun. 30, 1878, 4; “Hubbard,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 2, 1878, 4; “The Gravesend Poisoning, Case,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 3, 1878, 4; “The Gravesend Poisoning,” *New York Times*, July 3, 1878, 8; “Brooklyn,” *New York Times*, July 11, 1878, 8; “Discharged,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 27, 1878, 4; “Mrs. Maria L. Hubbard’s Will,” *New York Times*, Aug. 20, 1878, 3; “Mrs. Hubbard’s Ghost,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Sep 3, 1878, 2; “That Spook,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Sep. 4, 1878, 4; “The Case of Mrs. Maria L. Hubbard,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Oct. 6, 1878, 2; “City and Suburban News,” *New York Times*, Oct. 26, 1878, 8.

<sup>40</sup>“Samuel Hubbard,” *New York Tribune*, Nov. 15, 1900; “Obit. Samuel Hubbard,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Nov. 14, 1900, 3.

<sup>41</sup> Kings County, Wills Liber 119, p. 188.

<sup>42</sup> Deeds Liber Section 21, Liber 7, p. 78. See also “Conveyances,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Mar 23, 1899, p. 14

<sup>43</sup> Kings County, Wills Liber, 275, p. 274. Hubbard had other real estate, particularly the Hubbard farm, which had become extremely valuable. In 1902, one of the heirs to his estate, Jane A. Bennett, was successful in getting a court order for a partition of the estate. “Legal Notices,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 17, 1902, p. 14.

<sup>44</sup> Deeds Liber, Sec. 21, Liber 14, p. 349 and p. 351.



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<sup>45</sup> Deeds Liber, Sec. 21, Liber 16, p. 198, and p. 214.

<sup>46</sup> Deeds Liber, Sec. 21, Liber 16, p. 482.

<sup>47</sup> Powell to Lang, March 8, 1998, p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> This section on Dutch–American construction and design is based on Jeroen Van Den Hurk, “The Architecture of New Netherland Revisited,” in Kenneth A. Breisch and Alison K. Hoagland, *Building Environment: Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture X* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005), 133-152; Clifford W. Zink, “Dutch Framed Houses in New York and New Jersey,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 22 (Winter 1987), 265-294; David Steven Cohen, *The Dutch-American Farm* (New York: New York University Press, 1992); Roderic H. Blackburn, *Dutch Colonial Homes in America* (New York: Rizzoli, 2002); Kevin L. Stayton, *Dutch By Design* (New York: Brooklyn Museum, 1990); Harrison Frederick Meeske, *The Hudson Valley Dutch and Their Houses* (Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, c. 1998); John Stevens, *Dutch Vernacular Architecture in North America, 1640-1830* (West Hurley, NY: Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture, 2007).

<sup>53</sup> The Voorlezer’s House in Historic Richmond Town (c. 1696, a designated New York City Landmark) is a rare example of an early two-story Dutch building. It has “double anchor bents, with the second piggybacked over the first.” Zink, 288.

<sup>54</sup> Scholars are divided on the origins of this feature. For two recent and very differing opinions see Stevens, 58-60; Meeske, *Hudson Valley Dutch*, 195-98.

<sup>55</sup> Of the known examples of Dutch three-bay houses in Brooklyn, only the Hubbard House and the Woodard-Schoonmaker House (aka Wyckoff Farmhand House) were one room deep, or in the parlance of historians of vernacular historians, single piles. While the Woodard-Schoonmaker House may well have had only one room directly accessible from the outdoors on its main floor, the Hubbard House had a more complex plan incorporating a side passage and parlor in the mainblock as well as the lean-to service wing. Side passages, which invariably contained the main staircase, served both a social function by providing a social distance between the outside and the interior living spaces and a practical function by providing an air lock between the outside and the heated rooms. In their book on vernacular architecture in the Mid-Atlantic States, Gabrielle Lanier and Bernard Herman note that side-passage single-pile houses were relatively rare. The plan-type developed in the post-Revolutionary period and remained in use throughout much of the nineteenth century, appearing most often in villages and towns. Lanier and Herman also suggest that in such houses “the principal first-floor room often served simultaneously as parlor, dining room, and chamber.” See Gabrielle M. Lanier and Bernard L. Herman, *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 25-28, 32-38.

<sup>56</sup> For the Woodard-Schoonmaker House see Dilliard, 46; HABS NY-526 @ <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/hhhtml/hhTitles372.html>.

<sup>57</sup> Among the notable early nineteenth-century examples, both incorporating service wings, are the John and Altje Baxter House (aka the Stoothoff-Baxter House, main house 1811, wing c. 1747, a designated New York City Landmark) at 1640 East 48<sup>th</sup> Street, Flatlands and the Elias Hubbard Ryder House (built 1834, wing altered 1929, a designated New York City Landmark), at 1926 East 28<sup>th</sup> Street, Gravesend.

<sup>58</sup> The Hendrick Lott House is also distinguished by its high gambrel roof, which accommodates both a full second story and an attic. Two other no longer extant three-bay-wide houses had similar roofs, the Jeromus Lott House, built by a cousin of Hendrick I. Lott on a corner of the family property in 1831, and the Van Nuyse-Ditmas House, erected by George Van Nuyse, which formerly stood at 150 Amersfort Place in Midwood.

<sup>59</sup> The Johnson House was long occupied and perhaps built by Nelly Hubbard’s son-in-law Nicholas Johnson. For images of this house see Dutch American Houses of Gravesend see the New York Public Library Digital Library and Brooklyn Public Library website; Brooklyn Historical Society V 1974.1.632 Photographic ; New York Public Library, Digital Images Collection, “Brooklyn, McDonald Avenue, No. 1953.”

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<sup>60</sup> For this house see Dilliard, 20; Dutch American Houses of Gravesend; Brooklyn Historical Society V 1973.2.77 Photographic.

<sup>61</sup> The Court J. Van Sicklen House originally stood next door to it prior to the Ryder House being moved and the Van Sicklen house being demolished in 1929.

<sup>62</sup> While this combination appears to be extremely rare, shed-roofed ancillary wings were quite common in Dutch houses, appearing, for example, at the Lott House, Johannes Van Nuyse House (aka Van Nuyse-Magaw House) at 1041 East 22<sup>nd</sup> Street (1800-03, a designated New York City Landmark), and the Elias Hubbard Ryder House at 1926 East 28<sup>th</sup> Street (1834, a designated New York City Landmark). In all these cases the shed roofed portion was an appendage to a gable-roofed kitchen wing.

<sup>63</sup> For the attribution of the parsonage to the Ryders see William H. Stillwell, *History of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Gravesend, Kings County, N. Y.* (Gravesend: Printed by the Consistory, 1892), 28-29.

<sup>64</sup> Dilliard, foreword.

<sup>65</sup> These houses are sometimes called “Dutch Colonial,” although almost all the buildings postdate the Dutch colonial period and the building type reached its peak after the American Revolution.

<sup>66</sup> In August 1902 Gravesend midwife Justina Ryder recorded the birth of “Giocoma Luchelly” to Antonete Petteriselle” and “Vincenzo Luchelle.” The author is grateful to Joseph Ditta and John Antonides for sharing this information with the Commission.

<sup>67</sup> The staircase that had formerly been located in the hall was removed and relocated to the dining room.

<sup>68</sup> Prior to that point the house’s occupants had been using a privy in the yard.

<sup>69</sup> John Antonides to Gale Harris, Jan. 16, 2008. The room is labeled as a sleeping porch on New York City, Brooklyn, Department of Buildings, Alteration Permit 13349-1923. The plans and permit for the wing are missing from the files of Brooklyn Building Department, but the present owner of the house, John Antonides, made available to the author a copy of the plans that he discovered within the house itself.

<sup>70</sup> Office for Metropolitan History, Manhattan NB Database; “Dominick Salvati, Partner in Brooklyn Architect Firm,” *New York Times*, Feb. 25, 1976, p. 40; United States Patent Office, Patent 1,863,753, filed Aug. 27, 1929, granted June 21, 1932

<sup>71</sup> Peter was a machinist and mechanic during the 1930s, an airplane mechanic for the U.S. Navy during World War II, and worked for Grumman Aircraft after the war. Tess trained as a secretary and was employed as a typist and stenographer during the 1930s, but spent most of her working life as a cocktail waitress at the Elbow Room in Manhattan’s Beekman Tower Hotel. Jack operated a series of small businesses, including a moving company, a tavern, a car dealership, and an inn and restaurant near Bushkill, Pennsylvania. Babe was a jazz and blues singer who performed in nightclubs and on the radio under the name of Ann Shelly. She later became a real estate agent.

<sup>72</sup> John Antonides, “The Houses with the Funny Roofs,” *Brooklyn*, September 1990, 15-25.

<sup>73</sup> Brooklyn, DOB, job # 30110588, filed July 6, 2001; NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, 01-2151, NOR 01-3226. There were also a number of interior alterations, and the second story was enlarged to provide a more workable bathroom.

<sup>74</sup> It replaces an original window that in typical Dutch practice was located closer to the fireplace on the south wall of the parlor. That window had to be sealed because the 1920s wing partly wraps around the southwest corner of the 1830s wing.

<sup>75</sup> The porch without the enclosing elements and later with them is seen in early photos of the house in the collection of John Antonides.

<sup>76</sup> They do not appear in a photo of the house taken in the 1970s in the Collection of the Brooklyn Historical Society, V1974.42.74 Photographic.

## 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 Hubbard House, has a special character and 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 Hubbard House, built around 1830-35 by Nelly Johnson Hubbard, is, in part, a rare surviving early nineteenth-century Dutch-American farmhouse in Brooklyn; that the older section of the house reflects traditional Dutch design in its incorporation of H-bent construction, which gives the house its characteristic one-and-one-half-story form, in its use of a gabled roof with sloping spring eaves at the front and rear, and in its incorporation of clapboard siding; that it exemplifies a three-bay-wide side hall plan type popular for Dutch houses in southern Brooklyn at the beginning of the nineteenth century and originally included an unusual shed-roofed kitchen wing a feature associated with the buildings of Gravesend carpenter-builder Lawrence Ryder to whom this building is tentatively attributed; that it is a late-example of Dutch-American design and presents an interesting blend of traditional Dutch forms and structure with nineteenth century construction innovations testifying to the strength and persistence of Dutch culture in the rural areas surrounding New York City in the early nineteenth century; that it retains an exceptional amount of original fabric including siding and windows; that it is one of the few Dutch-American houses in New York City retaining its original orientation on its original site with sufficient surrounding property to give some sense of its original setting; that it has the further distinction of being the smallest and simplest of the surviving Dutch-American houses in the borough; that it seems probable that the house was initially occupied by Nelly Hubbard and her son Samuel Hubbard, descendants of several early and distinguished Gravesend families; that from about 1850 onwards, it was leased to workers and artisans, several of whom were connected with nineteenth-century Gravesend's thriving building trades; that in 1904 it was purchased by Italian immigrants Vincenzo and Antoinette Lucchelli who in 1924 constructed the house's southern two-story hipped-roofed wing designed by the Brooklyn firm of Salvati & Le Quornik; that the addition incorporated a multi-windowed bedroom billed as a "sleeping porch" in response to the tuberculosis that was besetting their family; that the house remained in the Lucchelli family's ownership until the late 1990s when it was acquired by the present owner, John Antonides; and that as one of the few surviving Dutch houses in the city, as a rare surviving example of nineteenth century rural working class housing, and as symbol of Gravesend's rich twentieth-century history as a Italian-American working-class neighborhood, it remains a significant reminder of Gravesend's and New York City's past.

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 Hubbard House, 2138 McDonald Avenue, Borough of Brooklyn, and designates Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 7087, Lot 30, as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair; Pablo E. Vengoechea Vice-Chair  
Diana Chapin, Margery Perlmutter, Elizabeth Ryan, Roberta Washington, Commissioners



Hubbard House  
2138 McDonald Avenue, Brooklyn  
*Photo: Gale Harris, 2008*



Hubbard House  
McDonald Avenue façade, 1830s wing  
*Photo: Gale Harris, 2008*



Hubbard House  
Spring eave, 1830s wing  
*Photo: Gale Harris*



Hubbard House prior to 1920's addition  
Lucchelli family members on steps  
*Photo: Courtesy of John Antonides*



Hubbard House  
Rear facade, 1830s wing  
*Photo: Gale Harris, 2008*





Hubbard House  
South facade, 1923-24 wing  
*Photo: Gale Harris, 2008*



HUBBARD HOUSE (LP-2292), 2138 McDonald Avenue.  
 Borough of Brooklyn, Tax Map Block 7087, Lot 30.

Designated: January 13, 2009

Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 06C, December 2006.  
 Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, JM.