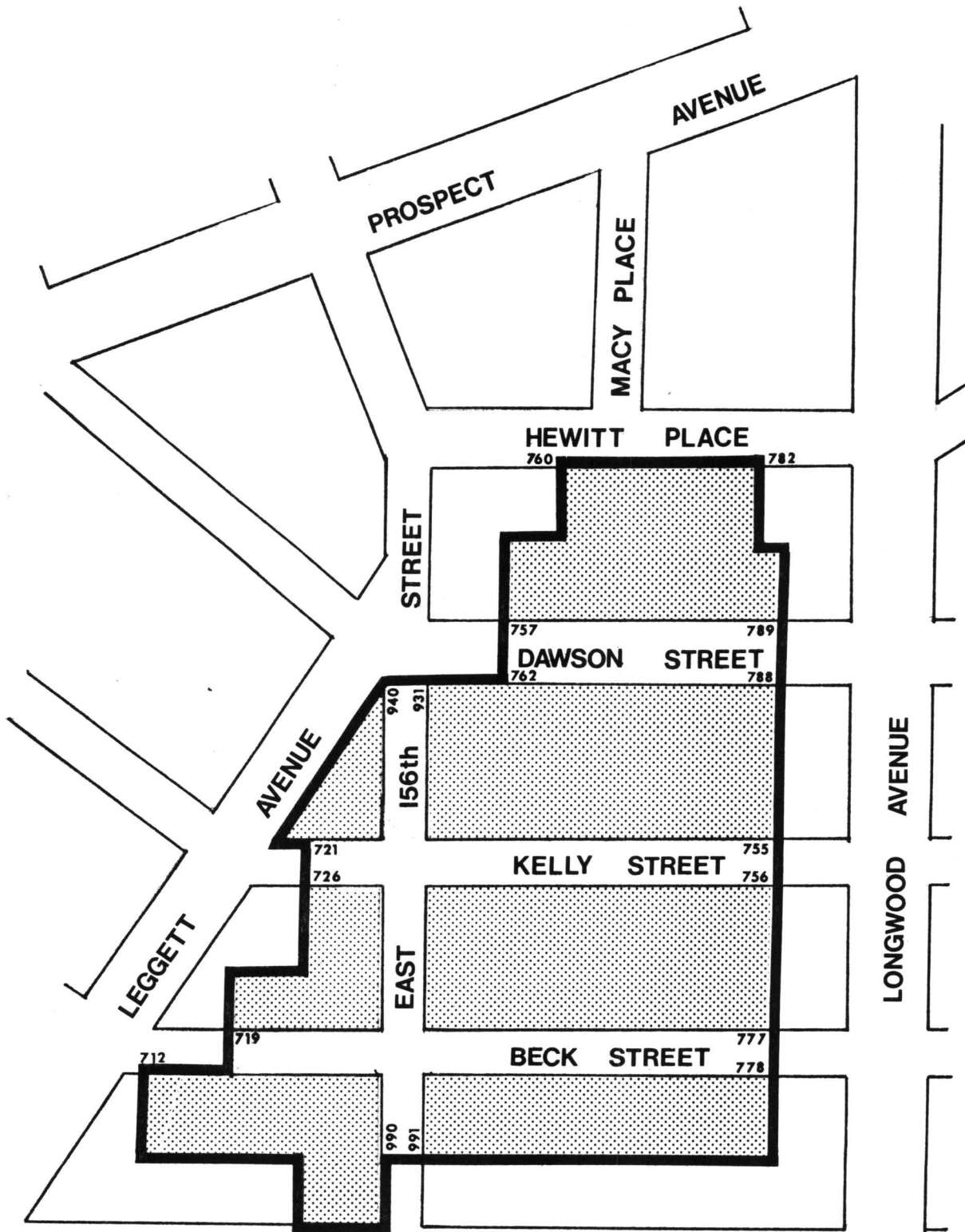

LONGWOOD
HISTORIC DISTRICT
DESIGNATION REPORT

1980

City of New York
Edward I. Koch, Mayor
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Kent L. Barwick, Chairman
William J. Conklin, Vice Chairman

Commissioners

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LONGWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Designated July 8, 1980

Landmarks Preservation Commission

LONGWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT, BOROUGH OF THE BRONX

The property bounded by East 156th Street, the eastern property lines of 991 East 156th Street and 748-776 Beck Street, the eastern and northern property lines of 778 Beck Street, Beck Street, the northern property line of 777 Beck Street, the northern property line of 756 Kelly Street, Kelly Street, the western curb line of Kelly Street, the northern property line of 755 Kelly Street, the northern property line of 788 Dawson Street, Dawson Street, the northern and western property lines of 789 Dawson Street, part of the western property line of 787 Dawson Street, the northern property line of 782 Hewitt Place, the eastern curb line of Hewitt Place, the southern property line of 760 Hewitt Place, part of the western and the southern property line of 762 Hewitt Place, part of the western property line of 761 Dawson Street, the western and southern property lines of 757-759 Dawson Street, Dawson Street, the eastern curb line of Dawson Street, East 156th Street, the northern curb line of Leggett Avenue, the western curb line of Kelly Street, Kelly Street, the southern property line of 726 Kelly Street, the southern property lines of 952-958 East 156th Street, the western property lines of 721-725 Beck Street, the western and southern property lines of 719 Beck Street, Beck Street, the eastern curb line of Beck Street, the southern and eastern property lines of 712 Beck Street, the eastern property lines of 714-726 Beck Street, the southern property line of 990 East 156th Street, the western curb line of Fox Street, and the southern curb line of East 156th Street, The Bronx.

TESTIMONY AT THE PUBLIC HEARING

On July 12, 1979, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on this area which is now proposed as an Historic District (Item No. 16). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provision of the law. Eleven persons spoke infavor of the proposed designation, including State Senator Mendez. There were no speakers in opposition to the proposed designation. The Commission has received many letters including a letter from Edward Logue of the South Bronx Development Commission and much correspondence in favor of designation.

LONGWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INTRODUCTION

The Longwood Historic District, situated just west of Hunts Point, is located in an area of the South Bronx that remained basically rural until the turn of the twentieth century. Longwood was originally part of Morrisania, one of twenty-one townships established by the State Legislature in Westchester County in 1788. Morrisania re-merged with Westchester in 1791, and, again separated as a township in 1855, was annexed to the Bronx in 1874. The township included several small villages as well as the original 18th-century Morris family manor, and embraced most of the region between the Bronx and Harlem Rivers south of the present 170th Street.

Sparsely populated, Morrisania was dotted by landed estates, country homes, and farms throughout most of the nineteenth century. Even after 1840, when Irish and German immigrants settled in other parts of the township, set up farms, and formed villages, the Longwood area remained rural. It was not until the last years of the 1800's--when plans for an IRT subway connection between the Bronx and Manhattan were publicized--that Longwood became a target for real estate speculators and developers. Completed in 1904, the subway line stimulated a building boom that was to last for nearly thirty years.

Primarily residential, the Longwood Historic District, located in a community today known as Pueblo de Mayaguez, contains some of the best of the turn-of-the-century architecture that transformed the Bronx into an urban extension of Manhattan. Virtually all of the district was developed by an astute and farsighted developer, George B. Johnson, who bought the abandoned S. B. White estate around 1898. Johnson and his sons operated their lucrative real estate office out of the abandoned White mansion, which still stands at 734 Beck Street, as the Patrolman P. Lynch center, although it has been completely altered.

The cohesive character of the Longwood district results from the fact that almost all of the residences were designed between 1897 and 1900 by the architect, Warren C. Dickerson, who was born on Long Island in 1853 and educated at the Cooper Institute. After working as a carpenter for several years he opened an architectural office in San Diego and later moved to San Francisco. Dickerson returned to New York in 1893 and developed an extensive and successful architectural practice. His work was described in 1899 as:

"...in the line of fine residences and apartments, and not only represents beautiful exterior finish, but is equally noted for utility. Probably no other architect in New York has a larger practice in these lines of buildings than Mr. Dickerson."¹

Some of Mr. Dickerson's work is represented in the Mott Haven Historic District in the Bronx, as well as on Clay Avenue, east of Willis Avenue in the Bronx.

Although Dickerson did not design all of the structures included in the Longwood District, his residences, which line Dawson, Kelly, Beck, and East 156th Streets form the backbone of this unified architectural enclave. These houses are somewhat unusual in design in that they are semi-detached -- two residences joined by the same roof. Each double unit, designed for two or three families, is separated by a side driveway and handsome iron gate, but, conceived as an ensemble, the houses form continuous unified blockfronts. With few exceptions, the structures, built of Roman brick, are designed in mirror image, with the entrances and stoops paired together between flanking round or angular bays. One of the most distinctive features of the Dickerson houses is the design of the roofs, which are composed of false mansard fronts with polygonal peaks or cone-shaped roofs capping the bays. Originally, the roofs were sheathed with imbricated shingles which are still intact on many of the houses today. The same house design appears frequently throughout the district, but a variety of detail dispels any sense of monotony.

Set back from the street, most of the double residences are approached by wide, iron-railed stoops and fronted by fenced-in gardens or basement areas. This set-back, a notable feature of the Dickerson designs, contributes a pleasing sense of openness to the streetscape. Even the more modest single-family houses on Hewitt Place, designed by the Bronx architect Charles S. Clark, are fronted by gardens. In addition, an irregular street grid provides both short and long vistas, enhancing the attractive physical qualities of the neighborhood.

Stylistically, the structures in the Longwood District exhibit elements of the neo-Renaissance style with an echo of the Romanesque Revival. The neo-Renaissance, reflecting a renewed interest in classicism, was a popular style of the period, and is represented in the district by the use of the masonry bay, the concentration of ornament at doorways and carved panels, Composite and Corinthian and Ionic columns, and other classical details. The influence of the Romanesque Revival style, popular in the 1870's and 1880's is reflected by a slight heaviness of proportion, the use of rough-cut stone and arched windows.

In addition to the Dickerson and Clark-designed residences, the Longwood district includes some handsome corner apartment buildings, two churches, and Prospect Hospital, a modern facility erected in 1961-64. The presence of the hospital and the high percentage of owner-occupied dwellings has kept Longwood surprisingly free of deterioration. The community is located in one of the most devastated areas of the South Bronx, yet a uniformity of scale, consistency of style, and relative architectural intactness give the district a special sense of place.

FOOTNOTE

¹Union History Co., History of Architecture and the Building Trades of Greater New York, (New York: The Union History Co., 1899), p.368

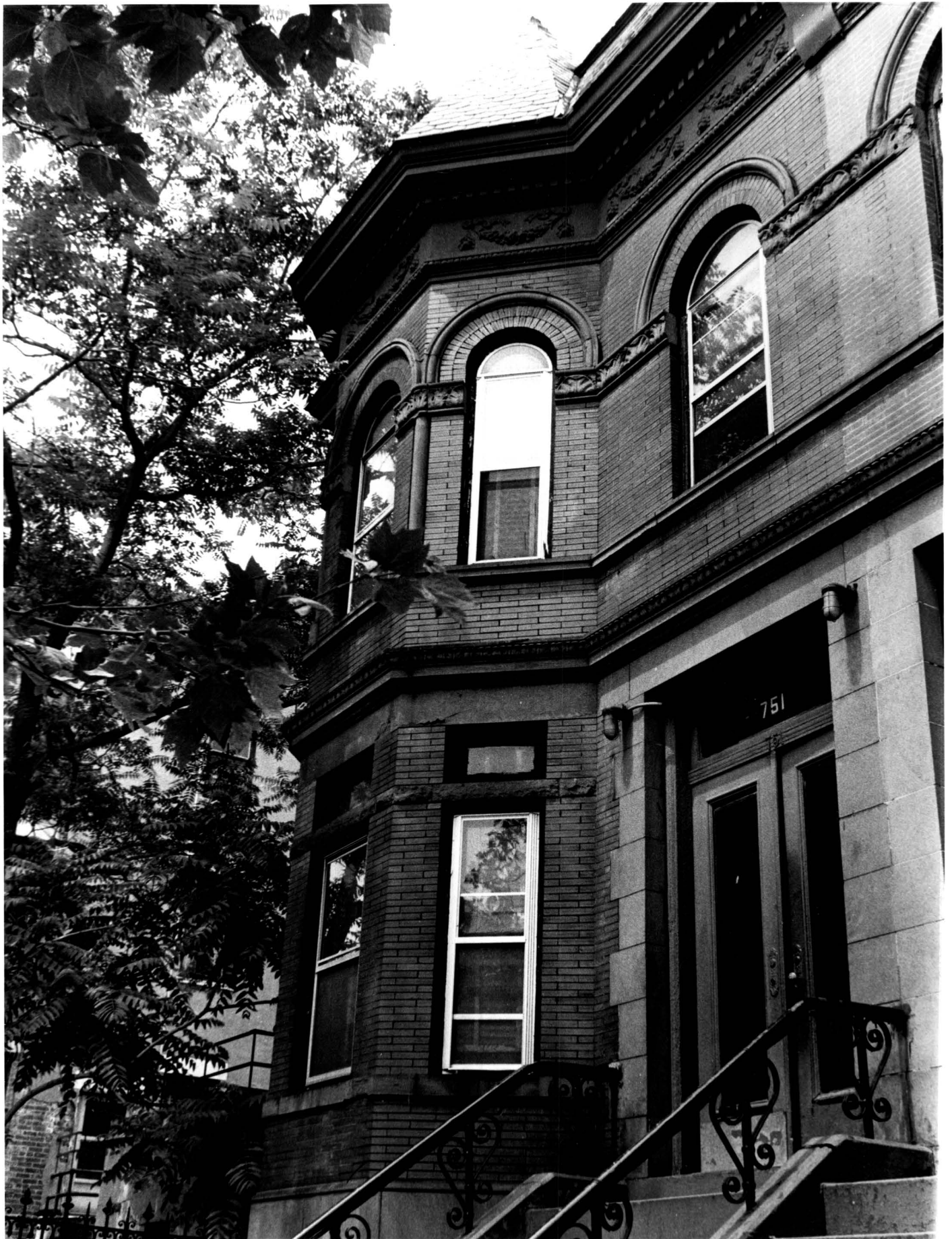


Photo Credit:
Karen Vaughan

751 Beck Street
Built-1900

Architect:
W.C. Dickerson

LONGWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

BECK STREET, between Leggett Avenue and East 156th Street

Beck Street was named after the Beck family, which owned property in the vicinity of Cauldwell and Westchester Avenues during the mid-nineteenth century.

EAST SIDE

No. 712-726. Designed in 1900 by Warren C. Dickerson for George F. Johnson, this row of eight double houses displays a variety of neo-Renaissance and late Romanesque Revival details. Among the latest residences designed by Dickerson in the Longwood District, these two-and-one-half story houses represent some of the architect's best work in the neighborhood.

Nos. 712-714 are characterized by three-sided angular bays and show a handsome use of limestone trim on the Roman brick facades. The front entries, approached by high stoops, are flanked by groups of three colonnettes crowned by a single foliate capital, while single, fluted Ionic columns appear between the bay windows at parlor-floor level. The second story is articulated by arched windows, of Romanesque Revival style, that spring from foliate-carved bands at impost level. Slender, twisted rope columns are located between the second story bay windows. The houses are crowned by false-front mansard roofs, and peaked polygonal roofs that cap the bays. The original scalloped roof shingles at No. 714 have been replaced, as has the door at No. 712.

Nos. 716-718 and Nos. 720-722 are similar in appearance to one another; their original designs remarkably intact. Approached by high stoops, the residences have rounded bays topped by low conical roofs that project from mansard fronts. Shallow porticos composed of three Ionic columns mounted on paneled pedestals and a single entablature that spans both entries mark the front doors, and emphasize the symmetry of the house designs. These porticos, typical of the neo-Renaissance style, exhibit the single difference between these two Beck Street pairs: a carved swag motif ornaments the frieze at Nos. 720-722, while a foliate design appears at Nos. 716-718.

Other ornamental elements on the building also incorporate classical motifs, such as the Ionic columns that flank the bay windows at parlor- and second-story level, and the cornice frieze, designed with modillions, dentils and wreaths. All four houses retain their original scalloped roof shingles and double wood-and-glass front doors crowned by transom lights.

Nos. 724-726 are very similar to Nos. 712-714 Beck Street. Difference in detail includes stone door surrounds that are keyed into the brick walls, narrow transom lights that appear over the parlor windows, and the swag motif that ornaments the cornice frieze. While No. 724 retains its original design, No. 726, now vacant, is in a bad state of repair. Cement blocks seal the basement and parlor windows and the front door, and the stoop has deteriorated. Unfortunately, this mars the appearance of an otherwise very handsome group of houses.

No. 734 is described under No. 990 East 156th Street.

BECK STREET, between Leggett Avenue and East 156th Street

WEST SIDE

Nos. 719 - 725. These two pairs of two-and-one-half-story, two-family houses were designed by W. C. Dickerson for George F. Johnson in 1900. The residences at No. 719-721 Beck Street are identical to the buildings described in full at Nos. 724-726 Beck Street, showing the typical use of angular bays with polygonal roofs and arched second story windows.

Nos. 723-725 are very similar to the residences described at Nos. 756-758 Beck Street. At Nos. 723-725, however, the second floor bay windows are crowned by elongated stone voussoirs and keystones. Both structures have been altered. Rectangular stone patches between the parlor and second stories have been added at No. 723, and the original door has been replaced. The corbels under the bay window pilasters of both houses have lost their carved ornament to repairs, as have the capitals of the second story pilasters at No. 725.

BECK STREET, between East 156th Street and Longwood Avenue

EAST SIDE

Nos. 744-748. These multiple dwellings were designed as a pair in 1908 by the architectural firm of **Daube** & Kreymborg and built for Kellwood Realty. Five stories high with basements, the buildings are constructed of Roman brick and detailed with limestone trim. Although they differ somewhat in design and detail, the two structures share several unifying elements. These include a wide stone band that marks the ground floor water table on both buildings, a limestone cornice over the ground floors on the front facades, splayed stone window lintels with scroll keystones, brick quoins, and an overhanging galvanized iron cornice.

The front doors of both apartment houses entered at ground floor level, are marked by rusticated stone surrounds, heavy console brackets, and hoods. The entry at No. 74 Beck Street is located to the left of two large double windows while similar windows light the upper stories. The facade of No. 748 is more elaborately detailed, displaying stone bands on a symmetrically-massed ground floor facade. An elaborate stone window enframingent located directly above the front door emphasizes the handsome balanced design.

No. 750 is a vacant lot.

Nos. 752 - 778 are a row of fourteen houses, designed in seven pairs by W. C. Dickerson in 1900 for George F. Johnson.

Nos. 752-754, 760-762, and 768-770 originally all had the same design as the houses described at Nos. 724-726 Beck Street. Nos. 752-754 and 760-762 are remarkably intact: only the additions of awnings at Nos. 754 and 760 alter the original appearance of the pairs.

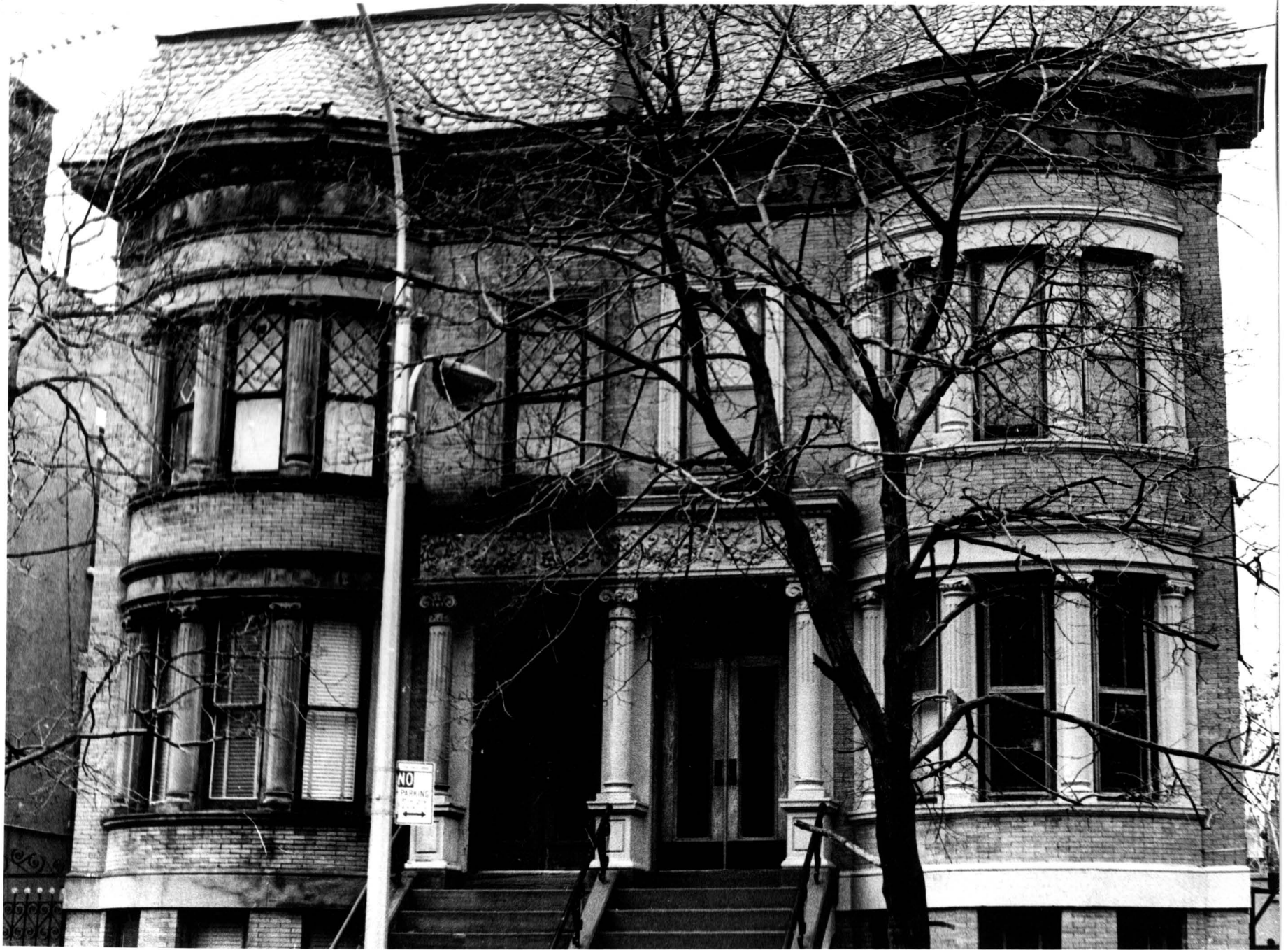


Photo Credit:
Karen Vaughan

767-769 Beck Street
Built: 1900

Architect:
W. C. Dickerson

Nos. 751-777. Designed by W.C. Dickerson, these seven pairs of two-family residences were built for George F. Johnson & Sons in 1900, and echo the appearance of many of the houses on the east side of the street.

Nos. 751-753 are identical to the houses described at Nos. 724-726 Beck Street, but they are in better condition. The main entries are framed by limestone quoins and retain their original double wood-and-glass doors and transoms. The elongated parlor floor windows are separated from transoms by narrow bands of rusticated stone, while narrow arched windows light the second story. A dentilled, galvanized iron cornice with a swag frieze is located above. One of the most distinctive features of the building is its false-front mansard roof with polygonal peaks marking each bay, a typical Dickerson feature.

Nos. 755-757, 759-761, and 767-769 are all identical in design to the houses described at 716-718 Beck Street.

Nos. 763-765 are quite different in design from the other Dickerson houses on the block front. Here the architect has combined elements from a variety of styles. The elegant ogee arches that crown the front doors, ornamented with carved finials and corbels, show the influence of the Francois I style. The bow-front bays that rise on either side of the doors are detailed with rusticated stone bands and stone label lintels that terminate in tiny corbels, a late Romanesque Revival style feature that is also found in Tudor architecture. This eclectic combination of details is completed by steeply-pitched gable ends that project from the roof over each bay, and stepped gables on the north and south ends of the structure.

Nos. 767-769. These houses are identical to those described at 764-766, 716-718, and 720-722 Beck Street.

Nos. 771-773 are identical to those houses described at 723-725 and 756-758 Beck Street.

Nos. 775-777 terminate the row, a handsome pair characterized by distinctive decorative detail. Typically, the residences are built with two stories over a high basement and approached by high stoops. The front entries are composed of single glass doors topped by transom-lights with rounded corners and flanked by colonnettes crowned by foliate capitals. At parlor floor level, the foliate carved band courses articulate the three-sided angular bays, while splayed lintels with scroll keystones appear over the second story windows at 775. Metal cornices ornamented with elaborate swag and wreath designs crown the houses which are capped by polygonal peaks and false mansard fronts. With the exception of one replaced keystone, the original design of No. 775 is intact, although that of No. 777 has been considerably altered by the addition of new siding.

Nos. 756-758 are quite different in appearance from the other houses on this blockfront and are characterized by round bays capped with conical roofs. Decorative Ionic pilasters with carved corbels flank the bay windows, surmounted by simple stone entablatures, while elongated stone voussoirs and keystones crown the windows, emphasizing their tall, narrow proportions. Decorative stone moldings frame the original double-wood-and-glass doors topped by transoms. Like the other residences on the block, these two-story houses are built over high basements and approached by steep stoops. A dentilled cornice with a rinceau-patterned frieze crowns the buildings. The only alteration on this handsome pair is the addition of a new roof covering to No. 758.

Nos. 764-766 are identical to those houses described at Nos. 716-722 Beck Street. The original appearance of No. 764, however, has been considerably altered by the addition of artificial stone siding. The roof shingles on No. 766 have also been replaced.

Nos. 768-770 and Nos. 776-778 originally had designs identical to the houses at Nos. 724-726, 752-754, and 760-762 Beck Street. Covered with stone siding, these houses are quite altered in appearance, although much of the original detail, notably the arched moldings and decoratively carved impost bands at second story level, and the cornice, remains intact. The awnings and storm doors at No. 768 Beck Street are later additions, and the present roof shingles on both houses replace the original imbricated roof covering.

Nos. 772-774 were designed to be identical to the residences described at Nos. 756-758 Beck Street. No. 774 retains its original character, while No. 772 has been replaced with imitation stone siding and its original stone trim removed.

BECK STREET, between East 156th Street and Longwood Avenue

WEST SIDE

No. 749 Beck Street (969 East 156th Street). This handsome three-story brick structure at the northwest corner of East 156th Street was designed as a two-family house for John McGrath by the architect James Meehan. The building, constructed in 1904, exhibits some neo-Renaissance style elements, and simply designed, is distinguished by full-height three-sided angular bays on its south and east facades. Classical swags, small fluted Corinthian pilasters and beveled panels ornament the bays, while splayed brownstone lintels with elaborate scroll keystones complete the facade detailing. A dentilled cornice with a swag frieze crowns the building, which has been left largely unaltered. The original, handsomely-detailed iron fence that separates the building from the street is still intact.



787-789 Dawson Street
Built: 1898



Photo Credit:
Rachel Carley

766-768 Dawson Street
Built: 1897

DAWSON STREET, between East 156th Street and Longwood Avenue

Dawson Street was named after Henry B. Dawson, a nineteenth-century historian who was a life-long resident of Morrisania.

EAST SIDE

Nos. 762-788. Designed by W.C. Dickerson, this group of seven pairs of semi-detached residences was built for George F. Johnson in 1897.

Nos. 762-764 and 774-776 have the same original design. The two-and-one-half-story residences are built with high basements and central stoops, with three-sided angular bays flanking the central entries. Pilasters in the Composite order appear on both sides of the double glass-and-wood doors, and are surmounted by heavy carved foliate brackets that support the projecting door lintels. Narrow windows with crowning transom-lights light the parlor floor, while arched windows appear at second-story level. The upper stories are handsomely detailed with heavy rough-cut arches and bands that contrast with the plain brick facades. The use of rough-cut stone is typical of the Romanesque Revival style. A dentilled cornice with a decoratively patterned frieze crowns the buildings, while polygonal peaked roofs joined by mansard frontscap the bays. Both pairs of houses are remarkably intact--only the roof shingles at No. 764 have been replaced.

Nos. 766-768 are the only pair of their type to appear in the Longwood District. Characterized by a handsome use of stone trim, they represent one of Dickerson's more unusual and distinctive designs. The residences are two stories high, with attic and basement levels and are approached by central stoops. The centrally placed front doors are capped by fanlights, and marked with wide, arched stone enframements keyed into the brick facade. Above the fanlights, arched moldings spring from elaborately carved impost blocks and are crowned by richly carved anthemion motifs. The arched parlor windows, paired on either side of the front entries, are similarly treated with arched enframements divided by stone pilasters designed in the Ionic order. A narrow molding terminating in small scrolls runs beneath both pairs of windows, an unusual motif. The second story is designed in the neo-Classical mode, with an ordered facade divided into six bays by Ionic pilasters. The narrow double-hung windows are capped by splayed stone lintels with paneled keystones, while a modillioned cornice with a classical swag frieze appears above. At attic-level, triangular pediments project from the mansard-fronted, imbricated-shingled roof, lit by small rectangular windows. With the exception of one missing pediment finial, this pair retains all original elements, even the low iron fence and driveway gates which are part of a handsome and distinctive composition.

Nos. 770-772 are also an unusual pair, characterized by rounded bays. The front doors are crowned by transom-lights and flanked by brick piers capped with foliate capitals carved of stone. Decoratively carved stone panels appear between the bay windows at both levels and an Ionic pilaster marks the division between the two houses at the second story. A modillioned cornice crowns the structure, and peaked-roof gables

fronted by decorative iron railings that follow the line of the curved bays appear above. The gables are lit by arched windows marked with stone voussoirs. The roofshingles at No. 770 have been replaced, as has the original door at No. 772.

Nos. 778-780 are similar to the houses described at Nos. 756-758 Beck Street. Round bays flank the central entries and stoops and splayed lintels and paneled keystones mark the second story windows.

Nos. 782-784 Dawson Street have three-sided angular bays and low polygonal roofs and are distinguished by unusual door enframements. Elongated stone projections topped by small urns flank the entry transom lights, and elaborate, foliated swan's neck pediments capped by carved anthemions crown the doors. Double-hung windows and narrow transoms light the parlor floor, while elongated windows flanked by slender colonnettes appear above. A metal cornice ornamented with a classical swag motif caps the residences, completing an unusual and handsome composition.

Nos. 786-788. These houses, with their angular bays, arched windows, and keyed door surrounds are identical in design to the residences described at Nos. 724-726 Beck Street.

WEST SIDE

Nos. 757-789 (Nos. 765, 775, 785 have been omitted from the street numbering system). This group of seven pairs of semi-detached houses was designed by W.C. Dickerson in 1898 for George F. Johnson.

Nos. 757-759 and 787-789 terminate the group and are almost identical in design to one another. With keyed door surrounds and arched windows, the residences are similar in appearance to the houses described at Nos. 724-726 Beck Street. These buildings, unlike most in the district, were built with three stories over a basement, and capped by flat roofs, were designed for three families instead of the customary two. The only difference between the pairs is evident in the design of the front doors and the cornice friezes, which exhibit different ornamental patterns. Nos. 757-759 have unusual multi-paned front doors, while the entries at Nos. 787-789 are the double glass doors with transom lights that are evident on so many of the houses in the Longwood District. Both pairs are in excellent condition and retain their original architectural integrity.

Nos. 761-763 are characterized by angular bays with steeply-pitched polygonal roofs. The Roman brick facades are articulated by splayed stone lintels, stone band courses and transom bars, and slender colonnettes. The front entries are marked by foliated pediments and urns similar to those described at Nos. 782-784 Dawson Street and a classically inspired cornice ornamented with an anthemion motif crowns the pairs. The original roof shingles at No. 761 and the doors at Nos. 761-763 have been replaced. The appearance of No. 783 has also been considerably altered by the addition of artificial siding.

Nos. 767-769 and 777-779 are distinguished by round bays with low conical roofs and handsome egg-and-dart door mouldings. Narrow, rough-cut stone bands articulate the facades at parlor level and splayed stone lintels cap the second story windows. The doors at Nos. 767-777 and the roof sheathing at No. 768 are replacements, and a modern brick wall fronts at Nos. 767-769. In spite of these changes, the structures are a handsome addition to the block.

Nos. 771-773 are identical to the houses described at Nos. 724-726 Beck Street. The door at No. 771 is a modern replacement.

EAST 156TH STREET, between Dawson Street and Kelly Street.

SOUTH SIDE

No. 940 St. Margaret's Episcopal Church.

Designed in a simplified neo-Gothic style C.1920, St. Margaret's Church replaced an earlier frame church that was designed by Warren C. Dickerson. The free-standing brick structure is set back from the street on a corner site and fronted by a large lawn. Constructed with its gable end facing East 156th Street, the asymmetrically-massed, peak-roofed church is distinguished by a crenelated polygonal tower at its north-west corner where the main entrance is located. Narrow brick buttresses articulate the side and front facades, contributing to the solid appearance of the building. Multi-paned colored glass casement windows light the sides of the church, while a single large, Gothic-arched window with brick voussoirs appears on the principal facade. Restrained ornament, including a plain stone band course that circles the tower, and limestone coping stones complete this simple, dignified design.

A simple, two story, concrete parish house is located to the rear of the church, on Leggett Avenue, and was designed in 1961 by the firm of Adams and Woodbridge.

No. 948. Located on the southwest corner of Kelly Street, this two-and-one-half-story stuccoed brick, vernacular-style structure was designed by Ernest A. Lynde in 1926. The building, constructed as the Rectory for St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, is set back from the street and fronted by a small garden enclosed with an iron fence.

The principal facade on East 156th Street is characterized by a simple, symmetrical design. A centrally placed entrance, located at ground-floor level is marked by wooden pilasters and entablature, and a sloping door hood mounted on brackets. Flat-arched windows flank the entry, while three identical windows light the second story. Although simple in design, these windows are deeply recessed and subtly articulate the plain facades. A steeply-pitched peaked roof crowns the structure, contributing to the building's simple, picturesque appearance. While a modern front door replaces the original, the remainder of Lynde's original design is intact and makes a handsome contribution to the block.

NORTH SIDE

Nos. 931-949 East 156th Street (Nos. 935 and 945 East 156th Street have been omitted from the street numbering system).

This row of eight two-family houses was designed by W.C. Dickerson and built for George F. Johnson in 1897. The residences are among the earliest Dickerson-designed houses in the district.

Nos. 931 and 949 East 156th Street terminate the row, and are free-standing, single structures in contrast to the semi-detached pairs that they flank. Designed in mirror-image, these end residences, built over high basements, are distinguished by round corner towers that are capped with steep conical roofs. These narrow towers, or bays, are lit by elongated double-hung windows at parlor-and second-story levels, and half-windows at attic-level. Incised ogee arches with carved floral motifs cap the parlor floor transom lights, and the bay is further ornamented with plain stone bands. Similar, lower bays with low conical roofs mark the rear corners of the buildings, and elaborate stone bands carved with a foliate design and urns frame the front entries. The houses are crowned by peaked roofs that are pierced by high chimneys and small dormers. No. 931 retains its original galvanized iron cornice ornamented with foliate modillions, while the cornice at No. 949 has been replaced by metal sheathing. A contemporary front door replaces the original at No. 949.

Nos. 933-937 East 156th Street. This pair is identical to the houses described at Nos. 767-769 Dawson Street. All of the original elements are intact.

Nos. 939-941 East 156th Street are identical in design to those houses described at Nos. 741-743 Kelly Street. The original front doors at No. 941 have been replaced, but the remainder of the design of these semi-detached houses is intact.

Nos. 943-947 East 156th Street are identical in design to the residences described at Nos. 962-966 East 156th Street.



939-941 East 156th St.
Built: 1897



Photo Credit:
Rachel Carley

958-960 East 156th St.
Built: 1899

EAST 156TH STREET, between Kelly and Beck Streets

SOUTH SIDE

950 East 156th Street. This building is described under No. 726 Kelly Street.

Nos. 952-966 East 156th Street (Nos. 954 and 964 East 156th Street have been omitted from the street numbering system.)

This group of three pairs of two-family houses was designated by W.C. Dickerson and built for George F. Johnson & Sons in 1899.

Nos. 952-956 East 156th Street and 962-966 East 156th Street. The end pairs of the group, had the same original design, but have since been somewhat altered in appearance. The houses, nearly identical to those described at Nos. 767-769 Dawson Street, are approached by steep stoops that are flanked by rounded bays with low, conical roofs. Elongated, double-hung windows, giving a verticle accent to the design, light the interior. These windows are crowned by plain stone lintels at parlor-level and splayed stone lintels with keystones at the second story. All four residences retain their original double wood-and-glass doors with transom lights. The facade at No. 952 has been sheathed in synthetic siding, considerably altering the original design of the house, and the original roof covering of Nos. 962-966 has been replaced.

Nos. 958-960 East 156th Street, the central pair, are more elaborately designed. Built with two stories over a basement and high stoops, the residences are distinguished by three-sided angular bays and unusual ornaments that mark the central entrances. Here, double wood-and-glass doors with transoms are crowned by carved stone swan's-neck pediment's and flanked by stone colonnettes. This design is identical to the one described at Nos. 761-763 Dawson Street, and, remarkably intact. It represents on of the Dickerson's more interesting house designs.

No. 968, SWC Beck Street. This three-story corner residence, built during the early twentieth century, was designed as a two-family house. The main entrance, located on the East 156th Street facade, is shaded by a heavy, bracketed, hip-roofed door hood, and a one-story, hip-roofed extension projects from the north end of the building where a second entrance is located. The design is characterized by simple, restrained ornament that includes a narrow stone string course running below the third story and a carved, oval medallion that accents the north facade. The most striking feature of the residence is the flat roof with deep, overhanging eaves supported on unusual, wide, stylized brackets.

NORTH SIDE

Nos. 951-953 are described under Nos. 730-732 Kelly Street.

Nos. 957-967 East 156th Street (Nos. 955 and 963 have been omitted from the street numbering system.)

This row of five residences was designed in 1889 by W.C. Dickerson and built for George F. Johnson. No. 957 is a two-story house built over a basement and approached by a steep stoop. A rounded bay with a low conical roof appears to the right of the entrance. Nos. 959-961 are identical to those described at Nos. 939-941 East 156th Street. The original elements are completely intact.

Nos. 963-967 East 156th Street are identical to the houses described at Nos. 952-956 East 156th Street.

No. 969 East 156th Street is described under No. 749 Beck Street.

EAST 156TH STREET, between Beck and Fox Streets

SOUTH SIDE

No. 990. The Patrolman P. Lynch Community Center. The Lynch Community Center is the oldest existing building in the Longwood District and was erected C.1850 as a private residence. The house was part of a large, landed estate, and appears in 1885 records under the ownership of S.B. White. At the turn of the twentieth century, the estate was purchased by George Johnson, who operated his real estate office out of the residence. In 1900, after Johnson completed development on Dawson, Kelly, Beck, and East 156th Streets, the building was redesigned by W.C. Dickerson as a clubhouse. Since then, the structure has housed many clubs and organizations, among them the Unity Club, the Longwood Club, the Martinique Club, and the Juvenile Service League, and has contained several facilities, including a bowling alley, ballroom, dancehall, and nursery.

Originally, the large residence was located between Southern Boulevard and Leggett Lane, slightly north of their junction, and was probably moved when the streets in Longwood were laid out at the end of the century. Because of extensive alterations, virtually nothing remains of the original design. At one time, a large, six-columned portico fronted the structure, but this has been reduced to a small entrance porch supported on Doric columns. Doric pilasters, possibly original elements, mark the corners of the building, which is crowned by a dentilled, galvanized-iron cornice. The principal facade was once articulated by three bays, but all of the windows have been removed, and today the center stands as a sad reminder of the dignified residence it once was.



Photo Credit:
Karen Vaughan

Hewitt Place

Architect:
Charles Clark



Photo Credit:
Karen Vaughan

760-764 Hewitt Place
Hewitt Place United Church
Built: 1906

Architects:
Daumer & Co.

HEWITT PLACE, between Longwood Avenue and East 156th Street

EAST SIDE

No. 760 Hewitt Place. This two-and-one-half-story frame structure was designed as a two-family house in 1895 by E.H. Hammond for William Wainwright. Aluminum siding has considerably altered the original appearance of the structure, which was designed with a three-sided angular central bay, and a small Palladian-type window at attic level. The entrance, to the right of the bay, is shaded by a hip-roofed porch enclosed with decorative iron grill-work. The concrete wall that fronts the house is a later addition.

Nos. 760-764, United Church. Originally a synagogue, this imposing church was designed by the Brooklyn architectural firm of Daumar & Co., and was built for the Montefiore Hebrew Congregation in 1906. The two-story structure has a balanced design characterized by repeating arch motifs and a central entrance flanked by onion-domed side towers. A wide stoop with double staircase and wrought iron railings approaches a recessed entrance porch designed with a broad arch that springs from free-standing Doric columns. The arched entrance, composed of double doors and a stained glass fanlight, is echoed in shape by tall, arched, stained glass windows, framed by Doric pilasters, that light the side towers. A third stained glass window appears at second-story level, its broad arch identical in size to the entrance porch below. The most striking feature of the church is its distinctive roofline, designed with galvanized iron onion domes that balance a central, shoulder-arched gable marked by a modillioned cornice that is distinguished by a filigree design and crowning sunburst. This church, with its elaborate design and imposing size makes a handsome addition to the District.

Nos. 762-782. Designed as single-family residences by the Bronx-based architect Charles S. Clark, this row of eight two-and-one-half-story houses. was constructed for C. Bull in 1908. Once identical in appearance, all of the structures have been somewhat altered, but the row stills maintains a pleasing sense of continuity.

Each house, set back from the street, is fronted by a small garden and is distinguished by a hip-roofed entrance porch that appears to the left of a two-story angular bay. Located at parlor-level, the porches are approached by short stoops that were originally designed with wooden posts (still intact at NO. 774) and dentilled, galvanized-iron cornices. Flat, splayed stone lintels with keystones (neo-Federal style) appear over each window contrasting with the red brick walls. A projecting galvanized-iron cornice ornamented with dentils and modillions marks the top of each facade, while hip-roofed domers light the attic stories. These dormers, each containing three windows, project from mansard-fronted roofs that were once finished with metal tiles meant to resemble slate. The original tiles are still intact at Nos. 772 and 774.

Substantially altered, No. 782 contrasts markedly with the remainder of the row. Converted to apartments in 1923, the residence was redesigned by the original architect, Charles Smith. A third story was added and the three-sided angular bay now extends the full height of the house. Other alterations to the row include new doors at No. 780, brick porches at Nos. 768 and 770, and iron posts at Nos. 776-780.

KELLY STREET, between Leggett Avenue and East 156th Street

Kelly Street, dominated by Prospect Hospital at the northeast corner of East 156th Street, was developed by George Johnson in 1899. The street was named after Captain Samuel Kelly who owned a farm adjoining Longwood Park during the early part of the nineteenth century.

EAST SIDE

No. 726, SEC East 156th Street. Designed for Samuel Greenstein by John O. Hamilton, this two-family residence was constructed in 1921. The two-story stuccoed building set on a brick water table has a simple, symmetrical design. Its plain facades are articulated by decorative brick quoins, band courses, and window and door enframements. Entered by a central doorway on its main Kelly Street facade, the wide, low building makes a handsome corner addition to the block.

WEST SIDE

No. 721 is described under 940 East 156th Street.

KELLY STREET, between East 156th Street and Longwood Avenue

EAST SIDE

Nos. 730-732, NEC East 156th Street. Prospect Hospital. Designed by architect Theodore Soontop, Prospect Hospital was built by William Iser between 1962 and 1965. The original hospital, containing thirty-five beds, was established in 1919 and then located in two Kelly Street residences. Nothing remains of these except an interior elevator that is now incorporated into the main building of the new hospital.

The 175-bed, seven-story brick hospital, with four-story extension that occupies the original hospital site, is a massive structure situated on five building lots. Its design is simple and functional, with pairs of louvered windows piercing plain white brick walls. A marquee marks the Kelly Street entrance, while iron balustrades crown the building.

Nos. 734-756. This group of six semi-detached, two-family residences was designed in 1899 by W.C. Dickerson. Typical of Dickerson's Longwood houses, each pair was built in a mirror image, with central entrances and flanking round or three-sided bays.

Nos. 734-736. This two-and-one-half story double unit, now part of Prospect Hospital, is almost identical to the houses described at Nos. 724-726 Beck Street. The Kelly Street house design shows the same

use of three-sided bays with conical roofs, keyed door surrounds, and arched windows flanked by colonettes. The difference between the two pairs is evident in a variation in the swag motif of the cornices. Both Nos. 734 and 736 Kelly Street have new doors and the stone transom bars have been removed from above the parlor windows at No. 736.

Nos. 738-740 are quite different in appearance from the other Dickerson-designed residences in the Longwood District. Three stories high, the houses have central ground-floor entries flanked by round bays that swell at the base and are crowned by iron railings. Carved stone bands flank the front entries and the windows directly above, at second-story level, are designed with shouldered architraves. These details, and the engaged Ionic columns that flank the bay windows are characteristic of the neo-Renaissance style. A modillioned cornice ornamented with classical wreaths crowns the houses, which were originally capped by mansard roofs. Pedimented dormers and a parapet have been added at No. 740.

Nos. 742-744, a three-story pair with peaked polygonal roofs marking angular bays, are characterized by handsome stone detailing. A neo-Renaissance door enframingent, composed of free-standing columns mounted on pedestals and a decoratively carved entablature, dominates the ground floor. Directly above, a pair of windows boast a striking combination of shouldered architraves and carved pediments crowned by finials. Other stone ornament includes shouldered window architraves at third-story level, slender twisted rope columns that mark the corners of the angular bays, and molded band courses. Unfortunately, the original cornice has been removed, but the houses are crowned by a sloping mansard roof that retains its original shingles.

Nos. 746-748. This pair of houses is identical in design to those described at Nos. 734-736 Kelly Street. The original character of No. 746 has been altered by the addition of imitation stone siding, and the ground floor windows and door of the vacant No. 748 have been replaced by concrete blocks. A new door replaces the original at No. 738, but the cornice, roof tiles, stone elements, and iron railings are all intact.

Nos. 750-752. This pair is similar in design to the houses described at Nos. 734-736 Kelly Street, but show variations in detail. Nos. 750-752 Kelly Street are distinguished by carved swans'-neck pediments that appear over the doors, similar to those described at Nos. 782-784 Dawson Street, and splayed lintels with elongated, paneled keystones that crown the second story windows.

Nos. 754-756 terminate the row, and, designed with three stories over basement, are the tall houses on the east side of the street. The three-sided bays, the arched windows, the twisted rope columns and the keyed door surrounds that comprise the design are elements often combined by Dickerson in the Longwood district. However, the height of the building, the flat roof and the prominent modillioned cornice are more unusual.

WEST SIDE

Nos. 729-755. These houses, like those across the street, were designed in 1899 by W.C. Dickerson for George Johnson. The row is composed of seven pairs of semi-detached residences.

Nos. 729-731. This three-story double unit, designed as three-family flats, is identical to the houses described at Nos. 754-756 Kelly Street.

Nos. 733-735 have the same design as the residences at Nos. 750-752 Kelly Street but are taller, with raised, rather than sunken, basements. Steep stoops approach the front doors which are marked by the unusual combination of carved pediments and angular pilasters that appear on other Dickerson houses in the district. The basement of No. 733 has been altered for commercial use with its windows removed and a new door added. A new front door has also been installed at the main entrance of No. 733.

Nos. 737-739 have the same design as the house described at Nos. 767-769 Dawson Street. Although some of the stone trim has deteriorated, the residences are unaltered in design and still retain much of their original integrity. The original scalloped roof shingles, window grills, double doors, iron gates and fences, and a finial at No. 737 are all intact and contribute to the character of the blockfront as a whole.

Nos. 741-743, a handsome pair, are identical in design to the houses described at Nos. 724-736 Beck Street. With the exception of a new door at No. 741, the original elements are completely intact. This pair with its pointed roofs, high stoops, arched windows, and decorative stonework, exhibits some of the architectural elements most frequently combined in Dickerson designs.

Nos. 745-747. These houses are identical to those described at Nos. 737-739 Kelly Street. No. 747 is vacant and the basement and parlor floor windows have been sealed with concrete blocks.

Nos. 749-751 are identical to those houses described at Nos. 733-735 Kelly Street.

Nos. 753-755 are identical to the pair described at Nos. 754-756 Kelly Street.

Report prepared by Rachel Carley
Research department

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this area the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Longwood Historic District contains buildings and other improvements which have a special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value which represent one or more periods or styles of architecture typical of one or more eras in the history of New York City and which cause this area, by reason of these factors, to constitute a distinct section of the city.

The commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Longwood Historic District was originally part of Morrisania, one of twenty-one townships established by the State Legislature in Westchester County in 1788; that the Historic District contains some of the best examples of the turn-of-the-century architecture that transformed the Bronx into an urban extension of Manhattan following the linking of the two boroughs by the I.R.T. subway system; that virtually all of the District was developed by an astute and farsighted developer, George F. Johnson; that the Longwood Historic District has an especially cohesive character as a result of the fact that almost all of the residences were designed between 1897 and 1900 by architect, Warren C. Dickerson, and exhibit elements of the neo-Renaissance and Romanesque Revival styles; that these houses were conceived as an architectural ensemble and although the same house designs appear frequently throughout the Historic District, a variety of details and roof lines dispels any sense of monotony; that the use of the setback, a notable feature of the Dickerson house designs, contributes a pleasing sense of openness to the streetscape; that an irregular street grid, providing both long and short vistas enhances the attractive physical qualities of the District; and that a uniformity of scale, consistency of style and relative architectural intactness give the Longwood Historic District a special sense of place.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 21 (formerly Chapter 63) of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as an Historic District the Longwood Historic District, Borough of The Bronx, containing the property bounded by East 156th Street, the eastern property lines of 991 East 156th Street and 748-776 Beck Street, the eastern and northern property lines of 778 Beck Street, Beck Street, the northern property line of 777 Beck Street, the northern property line of 756 Kelly Street, Kelly Street, the western curblines of Kelly Street, the northern property line of 755 Kelly Street, the northern property line of 788 Dawson Street, Dawson Street, the northern and western property lines of 789 Dawson Street, part of the western property line of 787 Dawson Street, the northern property line of 782 Hewitt Place, the eastern curb line of Hewitt Place, the southern property line of 760 Hewitt Place, part of the western and the southern property lines of 762 Hewitt Place, part of the western property line of 761 Dawson Street, the western and southern property lines

of 757-759 Dawson Street, Dawson Street, the eastern curb line of Dawson Street, East 156th Street, the northern curb line of Leggett Avenue, the western curb line of Kelly Street, Kelly Street, the southern property line of 726 Kelly Street, the southern property lines of 952-958 East 156th Street, the western property lines of 721-725 Beck Street, the western and southern property lines of 719 Beck Street, Beck Street, the eastern curb line of Beck Street, the southern and eastern property lines of 712 Beck Street, the eastern property lines of 714-726 Beck Street, the southern property line of 990 East 156th Street, the western curb line of Fox Street, and the southern curb line of East 156th Street, The Bronx.

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