

BROOKLYN CITY RAILROAD COMPANY BUILDING, 8 Cadman Plaza West (8-10 Fulton Street), Borough of Brooklyn. Begun 1860, completed 1861.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 200, Lot 1.

On June 23, 1970, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Brooklyn City Railroad Company Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 13). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law.

The present owner of this building has requested that the Commission designate it a Landmark.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Erected in 1860-61, this handsome building is a dignified commercial example of the French Second Empire style of the Civil War period. It was built as an office for the Brooklyn City Railroad Company, which had been incorporated in 1853 and had replaced the old stage lines which once provided transportation to Fulton Ferry.

This building, at the intersection of Fulton and Furman Streets, stands on the site of William Furman's house, seen on a map of the Old Ferry District in 1816. Judge Furman moved to Brooklyn from Newtown just after the Revolution and rapidly became one of the county's leading citizens. He served as county judge from 1808-23, was a trustee and later a supervisor of the village of Brooklyn and, in 1827, became a member of the State Legislature. He was a personal friend of Governor Clinton, president of the Brooklyn Fire Insurance Company, incorporated in 1827, and was closely identified with many civic activities in Brooklyn. Furman died in 1852 in his 87th year. His son, Gabriel, a lawyer and Brooklyn historian, whose library was one of the finest at the time in the United States, was born in the old Furman house in 1800. The house stood at the water's edge, on Old Ferry Road, now Fulton Street, directly in front of the ferry stairs. Furman is said to have kept an oyster house in his basement. Later, the land was extended by fill out into the East River, and Furman Street, named in honor of William Furman, was cut through to Fulton Street.

The Brooklyn City Railroad Company Building is five stories in height, and its brick facade is clearly defined by granite quoins. It is further enlivened by granite window enframements and roof cornice. At street level, cast iron piers provide large window openings. The grouping of the windows above the ground floor is symmetrical, with a single window at each side and two paired windows in between, resulting in a one-two-two-one rhythm.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

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 Brooklyn City Railroad Company Building has a special character, 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 Brooklyn City Railroad Company Building is a handsome symmetrical commercial building built of brick with granite trim and that it was constructed as a result of the ever-increasing flow of traffic between Brooklyn and New York City and, as such, is a tangible manifestation of that growth and expansion.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of 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 a Landmark the Brooklyn City Railroad Company Building, 8 Cadman Plaza West (8-10 Fulton Street), Borough of Brooklyn and designates Tax Map Block 200, Lot 1, Borough of Brooklyn, as its Landmark Site.