
FULTON FERRY
HISTORIC DISTRICT
DESIGNATION REPORT

1977

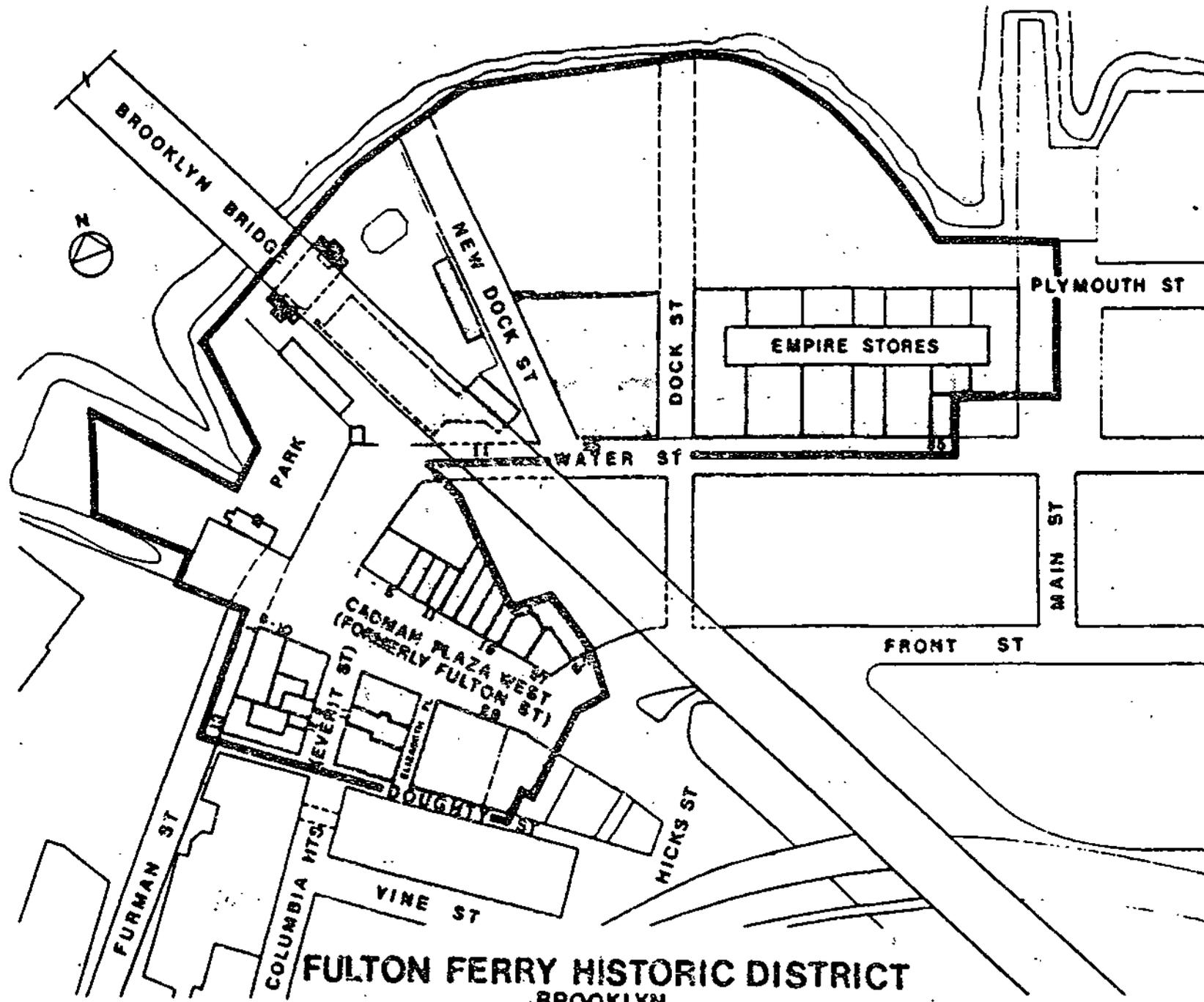
City of New York
Abraham D. Beame, Mayor

Landmarks Preservation Commission
Beverly Moss Spatt, Chairman
Morris Ketchum, Jr., Vice-Chairman

Commissioners

Margaret Beyer
Elisabeth Colt
George R. Collins
William J. Conklin
Barbara Lee Diamonstein

Stephen S. Lash
Hawthorne E. Lee
Marie V. McGovern
Paul E. Parker, Jr.



**FULTON FERRY HISTORIC DISTRICT
BROOKLYN**

DESIGNATED JUNE 28, 1977

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Preliminary research for this report was undertaken by Lea Roberts in 1969 to furnish information to HDA regarding Landmark quality buildings in the area.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to many individuals in various City agencies who made available property conveyances, tax assessment records, building plans and applications, and to other public and private repositories of information.

Grateful acknowledgment is also made especially to the South Street Seaport; to James Hurley, Director of the Long Island Historical Society and members of his staff; to James Wilson, of the Steamship Historical Society; and to Florence M. Boogaerts and Tonia Mucelli, and their co-workers, of the Junior League's New York Research Committee for the Bicentennial.

Though many individuals have been associated with different phases of this report, final responsibility for the facts and opinions expressed rests with the Commission as a whole.

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION
June 28, 1977

Historical and Architectural Introduction

The Fulton Ferry Historic District, located on the East River in the shadow of the Brooklyn Bridge, is an area of exceptional historical and architectural interest. First settled by the Dutch in the 17th century, a small but bustling community gradually grew up around the ferry. This was the place where Brooklyn began. During the Revolution, the ferry area played a crucial role in the evacuation of Washington's army to New York. The transformation of the ferry village into a thriving commercial and industrial center, from the 1830s on, is vividly illustrated by its architecture. The opening in 1883 of John Roebling's monumental bridge--the first of the city's great river spans--was decisive for the area, ultimately dooming the ferry service which had given life to this section of Brooklyn for well over two centuries. Gradually the ferry district became a backwater, its life drained away by the bridge.

The old Ferry Road was renamed Fulton Street in 1814, in honor of Robert Fulton, and is now known within the District as Cadman Plaza West. The Fulton Ferry Historic District is roughly defined as lying between Doughty Street, Furman Street, along the East River waterfront and around the bend defined by the eastern tower of the Brooklyn Bridge, to Main Street, then along Water Street and Front Street, returning to Doughty Street. This is the last bit of actual waterfront near Brooklyn Heights readily accessible to its residents along the residential street known as Columbia Heights, but cut off from direct access to Furman Street and the adjacent piers by the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. The revival and restoration of this waterfront area would provide an important amenity for the people of Brooklyn Heights and Manhattan, if ferry service were to be resumed.

A ferry service between Brooklyn and New York had begun here in the mid-17th century. It was from the "Brookland Ferry" landing, as it was known in the 18th century, that the American army's retreat to New York was launched on the night of August 29, 1776, after the Battle of Long Island had been lost to the 20,000-man British army. Washington was faced by the imminent threat of being cut off by the British navy in the East River. This strategic retreat across the East River was characterized by the British historian George Trevelyan as "that master stroke of energy, dexterity and caution by which Washington saved his army and his country"--an historic event to be remembered at this time of the Bicentennial.

The history of the Fulton Ferry area is inextricably linked with the ferry which served it. The existence of this ferry resulted in the growth of a small settlement beneath Brooklyn Heights, occupied in the early days by large landowners and farmers whose descendants were later to control its development. The waterfront area below the Heights, in contrast, with its busy ferry landing, a large public market and adjacent slaughter houses, had been teeming with activity since long before Revolutionary times. By 1815 there were a number of taverns along the western end of Fulton Street, serving the ferry district, and in 1816 the Village of Brooklyn was incorporated.

A ferry service of sorts between Breuckelen and New York began in 1642, when Cornelis Dirksen, who owned a small inn near the present Peck's Slip in New York, ran a small boat to the spot which later became the Ferry Road and Fulton Street. The early ferries were rowboats, flat scows with sprit-sails or, at best, two-masted sailboats, dependent upon wind and tide. In 1655, Egbert Van Borsum, the ferry-master, built the first ferry-house tavern, a year after Governor Stuyvesant had enacted the first ordinance controlling the ferry service. Of frame construction and measuring eighteen by thirty feet, it stood at the foot of the road to the ferry. In 1704, when the ferry road was officially laid out, it was known both as the Road to the Ferry and the Road to Jamaica. It was the principal street in Brooklyn, running from the Brookland Ferry landing to Jamaica and thence to eastern Long Island, and it was along this road that farmers brought their produce to market and livestock to slaughter. A new stone ferry-house and tavern, contracted for by the New York Corporation in 1699 and completed the following year, replaced the original wood structure. According to an early print, it was a three-story rectangular building with stepped gables at each end. In 1748 it was put to the torch and burned by Brooklynites as part of their continuing quarrel against ownership of

Brooklyn property and shoreline by the New York Corporation--an early instance of the bitter rivalry between Brooklyn and New York.

The most conspicuous building in the ferry area during the 18th century was the "Corporation House," a large, two-story stone building about sixty feet square, set so far forward into Ferry Road that it impeded the flow of traffic to the Brookland Ferry. It served as a tavern and was located on the site later occupied by Nos. 19-23 Fulton Street (described under Nos. 19-23 Cadman Plaza West).

During the British occupation of Brooklyn and New York after 1776, the tavern was taken over by Loyalists Charles Loosely and Thomas Elms. It was renamed the "King's Head Tavern" and rapidly became the favorite rendezvous for sportsmen. We have record of a festive celebration in honor of her Majesty's birthday which was held here in the late 1770s when the tavern was brilliantly illuminated by over two-hundred "wax-lights," and statues of the king and queen, under a canopy and set above the royal coat of arms, were prominently displayed. The first Brooklyn newspaper was published in 1782 from "Brooklyne Hall," as the tavern was called after the dissolution of Loosely's partnership with Elms. The building was burned in 1812.

At the time of the Revolution, according to the Ratzel Map of 1766-67, the shoreline in the area of the Brooklyn Ferry was quite different from today. At the southwestern end of the Fulton Ferry, Historic District, the present Furman Street, at the Fulton Street or Cadman Plaza end, was under water. Front Street, toward the northeastern end of the District, was the last street above the waterline. John Rapalje's stone farmhouse, which stood at the northwest corner of Front Street and Ferry Road, adjoining the present site of the Long Island Safe Deposit Company building, had gardens which extended down to the East River. Water Street did not exist, since this area was then below the waterline. The greatly expanded shoreline of today is the result of successful landfill operations.

The year 1814 saw the introduction of a steam-propelled ferry on the Fulton Ferry line to New York. Seven years earlier, Robert Fulton's steamboat, the "North River" (not the "Clermont"), made the first run to Albany, and in 1812 the first steam ferry from New York to Hoboken was introduced by the enterprising Stevens family. A law permitting increased ferry fares induced Fulton & Cutting to form the New York & Brooklyn Steamboat Ferry Association, which put the steamer "Nassau" into service between Brooklyn and New York. With the inauguration of this steamboat service, Ferry Road was renamed Fulton Street in honor of the inventor. These ferry boats or "floating bridges," as they were known, had decks thirty feet wide by eighty feet long which rested on two separate hulls with a propelling wheel between them, well-protected from butting the piles at the ferry landing. The new ferries could carry several hundred passengers, as well as horses and wagons. The trip across the East River took about eight minutes and the boats were capable of forty crossings a day.

In 1839, the New York and Fulton Ferry Company was organized, uniting the South Ferry with the Fulton Ferry under one management. In negotiating a new lease in 1844, Henry E. Pierrepont was the high bidder and organized a new company: the Brooklyn Union Ferry Company. Then, in 1854, the Fulton, South, Main and Hamilton Avenue ferries were merged to form an even larger corporation, the Union Ferry Company of Brooklyn, which also acquired the Roosevelt Gouverneur and Wall Street ferries. It soon became evident, however, that the short-run Fulton Ferry was the only one of these Brooklyn ferries which more than paid its way each year. The others were operated at a loss, and were sustained only through an equalization of fares maintained by the Union Ferry Company.

After the Civil War, a large ferry house was built in 1865 by the Union Ferry Company of Brooklyn at the foot of Fulton Street, opposite Furman Street, to accommodate the ever-increasing flow of traffic. Ironically, plans for the Brooklyn Bridge were already being formulated. The picturesque ferry building, which provided a gateway to Brooklyn and a terminal vista on Fulton Street, combined "stick-style" Eastlavian elements with a tall, truncated pyramidal French Second Empire roof over the tower wing. This wing extended out nearly to the center of Fulton Street and

contained the office of the United Ferry Company at ground floor, with a board room above. The ferry building stood until 1926 when it was demolished, two years after the ferry service had finally been discontinued. The statue of Robert Fulton, which originally had stood in a niche on the Fulton Street facade of the ferry building, was salvaged from the wreckage and later transferred to Fulton Park, just outside the Stuyvesant Heights Historic District in Brooklyn.

By the mid-19th century, the problem of transit to the ferry from the newly developed inland sections of Brooklyn and from Long Island's towns and villages had become acute. The old stage-coach lines were soon replaced by a new, faster, and more efficient system inaugurated by the Brooklyn City Railroad Company. Incorporated in 1853, this was the oldest of the Brooklyn horse-car companies, and the first to be authorized to use the city streets for transit purposes. Twelve lines converged at Fulton Ferry and extended out to Greenpoint, Greenwood, East New York, Fort Hamilton, Hamilton Ferry, Powers Street and to the following avenues: Fulton, Myrtle, Gates, Flushing, Flatbush and Graham. These lines covered some thirty-seven miles and, by 1867, transported some twenty-two million passengers a year. The Brooklyn City Railroad Company's handsome offices, constructed in 1860-61, still stand within the District at the corner of Furman and Fulton Streets, near the former site of the ferry.

When the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge was begun, the ferries were carrying about fifty-million passengers a year. It is ironic that John Roebling, the designer of this great bridge--which ended the prosperity of the ferry district--died as a result of injuries sustained at the Fulton Ferry slip while supervising preliminary surveys for its construction. In August 1869 his son, Washington A. Roebling, was appointed to succeed him as Chief Engineer.

The great Brooklyn tower, which occupies such a conspicuous site at the bend of the East River just north of the Fulton Ferry slips, was begun in January 1870 when watermen commenced to clear the site. The sinking of a wood caisson to support the tons of masonry for the massive tower was then a novel method of construction in this country. To steady it against the tides, masonry for the tower walls was begun on top of the wooden caisson. Three shifts of men, working eight hours each inside the caisson, began the lengthy process of sinking it some forty feet to firm ground. Finally, the caisson reached solid bearing. The laying of the stone courses of the tower had kept pace with the sinking of the caisson, until ultimately it attained a height of 272 feet above high water. This great pylon with its twin Gothic-style arches and buttresses, supports a gossamer web of cables. On May 24, 1883, the bridge was formally opened with great festivities on both sides of the East River. The cities of Brooklyn and New York were joined, first by roadway and walkway and then, in September, by transit. It was originally a toll bridge, until its operation was taken over by New York in 1895.

In the recent book, The Great Bridge (1972), David McCullough recounts at length the hold which the Brooklyn Bridge had, and continues to have, on the imagination of everyone who sees it--writers, artists, urban planners, and people who just love to walk across it. Montgomery Schuyler wrote the first serious critique of the bridge as a monument, and judged it "one of the greatest and most characteristic" structures of the 19th century in an article in Harper's Weekly, published immediately after the opening. The Brooklyn Eagle claimed that there was nothing on earth, save the Pyramids, to rival "this great tower of ours," the tower which daily casts its shadow on the area beneath it.

By the 1830s, plans for the commercial and industrial development of this largely residential area had advanced to such a degree that several streets were widened in the expectation of increased trade and traffic. The streets within the District which were affected were Fulton Street, begun on September 7, 1835, and Water Street, a landfill creation of the earlier 19th century, begun on November 19, 1835.

Among the factors which precipitated these changes was the presence on Front Street from the mid-1820s of a number of commercial institutions, notably banks, fire insurance companies and numerous law firms. The role and character of Front Street, which has been compared to New York's Wall Street of the period, was thus established very early. Still to be seen

here is perhaps the oldest surviving office building in the City--the Long Island Insurance Company building of 1834 at Nos. 5-7 Front Street. The Brooklyn Fire Insurance Company and the Long Island Bank, located down the street just outside the District, were incorporated in 1824. One of the most important occupants of the Long Island Insurance Company Building by 1840 was Lott & Murphy, attorneys and counsellors. Henry Cruse Murphy (1810-1882) was one of the dominant figures of 19th-century Brooklyn, "the closest thing to a Founding Father Brooklyn ever had," in the words of David McCullough. Mayor of Brooklyn in 1842, State Senator and a candidate for the presidency of the United States in 1852 (he lost to Franklin Pierce by only one vote), and later the American minister to the Netherlands, he devoted himself unstintingly to the improvement and progress of his native city. The Brooklyn Eagle was founded in 1841 in his Front Street office; he fostered the building of Dry Dock #1, a recently designated New York City Landmark; and it was he who drew up the charter of incorporation for the N. Y. Bridge Company, which was responsible for the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge. The development of Front Street ended with the construction of the Long Island Safe Deposit Company, a handsome cast-iron building of 1869.

Water Street has been predominantly industrial throughout its existence. The earliest iron foundry in Brooklyn was established in 1824 on the south side of the street, outside the District, by Alexander Birkbeck who by the 1850s had expanded the business to a large industrial complex, the "Union Foundry," located a short distance from the corner of Fulton Street. By the late 1830s, this end of Water Street was occupied by small industries relating to the building and outfitting of ships: ship carpenters and a chandlery, smiths, coopers, a paint shop and a cloth factory. Early warehouses were ranged along the waterfront and replaced in 1869 by the present monumental Empire Stores. These warehouses were used for general storage of such raw products as sugar, molasses, coffee, etc. A sugar refinery conveniently stood directly across the street. These great privately owned warehouses on Water Street, originally with docks, are representative of the type which once lined the waterfront, and earned Brooklyn the nickname the "walled city."

Fulton Street (Cadman Plaza West), was always the "main street" of the District. By the late 1830s--after the widening of the north side of the street in 1835--it was lined on both sides by four-story brick structures with neighborhood stores on the ground floor and lodgings above. Interspersed among these buildings were taverns, oyster saloons, and modest hotels which catered to farmers, salesmen and tradesmen. Of these hotels, "Franklin House" was the most important, the most elegant and the longest lived, surviving until the turn of the century. By 1840, a large public bath house had opened at the foot of Fulton Street, at the edge of the East River, with a bathing area in the river.

The row of buildings at Nos. 7-23 Cadman Plaza West (formerly identically numbered on Fulton Street) illustrated the complete transformation of the street to an exclusively commercial thoroughfare. Between the end of the 1830s, when some of the buildings still had lodgings on the upper floors, and the late 1850s, the use of these structures had become strictly commercial, often with multiple commercial tenancy in one building. Across the street, the Brooklyn Eagle--Brooklyn's foremost newspaper--had long occupied its own large building, a wide four-story structure crowned by a low gable. Isaac Van Anden, publisher and owner, remained its sole proprietor until 1870. Walt Whitman was a frequent contributor to its pages and served as editor from 1846 to 1848. In 1860, the Eagle was joined on the south side of Fulton Street by another large commercial building, the Brooklyn City Railroad Company offices at the corner of Furman Street and, in 1869, by the Long Island Safe Deposit Company on the opposite side of Fulton at the corner of Front Street. The next phase in the history of the street is represented by the Eagle Warehouse of 1893-94, built on the site of the Brooklyn Eagle which, like so many of the old, long-established commercial enterprises, had finally abandoned its building, after fifty years on Fulton Street.

Stylistic development of the buildings within the District begins with the late-Federal, seen in a surviving example on Water Street. Greek Revival elements appear in the Long Island Insurance Company Building on Front Street and in the Cadman Plaza West row. Franklin House, adjoining this row, was completed in 1839 in Greek Revival style, but was later altered in accordance with the taste for the fashionable Italianate style of the late 1850s and sixties. Two handsome variants of this style still survive on the street: the Brooklyn City Railroad Company's building and the cast-iron structure erected for the Long Island Safe Deposit Company. The Empire Stores are superb examples of the vernacular and functional architecture of the third quarter of the 19th century, while the much later Eagle Warehouse is significant as the only building in the District designed by a noted architect. Frank Freeman designed a functional building, executed in his own, highly personal version of the late Romanesque Revival style. The much later, city-owned buildings of the 20th century in the Historic District are stylistically typical.

This brief summary of the architectural development of the District clearly demonstrates that its golden age ended with the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge. Thereafter, the area began a rapid decline which was virtually to terminate its viable existence as a commercial district forty years later, with the abandonment of ferry service to Manhattan. As a fortunate result, what we see today remains little changed from its appearance in the 19th century.

Today, it is hoped that new life may be infused into the old ferry district. As early as 1969, it was studied for possible redevelopment, as evidenced in the publication by the HDA of The Brooklyn Waterfront-Historical Sketch. A preliminary study in 1971 by the Brooklyn Office of the New York City Planning Department resulted in a comprehensive report, published in 1972, prepared jointly by the Office of Downtown Brooklyn Development of City Planning and HDA's Office of Brooklyn Development. These reports covered an area considerably larger than the Historic District but provided invaluable data for our guidance. An Ad Hoc Committee, consisting of residents of the waterfront area, had been formed in 1972 and was joined by the Brooklyn Heights Association, giving the community an opportunity to respond to and meet problems affecting the area. As a result of these reports and subsequent developments, various proposals have been made and certain plans have already been implemented which will most certainly improve and upgrade the entire area.

The first sign of real activity on Cadman Plaza West came with the conversion of the Old Brooklyn City Railroad Company building into apartments. This waterfront property at the corner of Furman Street was designated a Landmark on February 20, 1973. Subsequently, a number of property owners along Cadman Plaza West expressed an interest in redevelopment plans and, more recently, an attractive small park has been introduced at the western end of Cadman Plaza West, just south of the Bridge, by the New York City Department of Ports & Terminals. In conjunction with the park, a floating restaurant, with kitchen facilities adjoining it on shore, is now located alongside one of the piers at the end of Cadman Plaza West. Next to this proposed facility stands the old Fire Boat Station which, as an added attraction, now serves as the Fulton Ferry Museum administered by the National Maritime Historical Society. The building is owned by the New York City Department of Ports and Terminals.

A proposal for a renewal of ferryboat service from the South Street Seaport, using one of their boats, may also become a reality, making the old ferry area once again approachable by sea. A further proposal for another restaurant, to occupy one of the buildings on the north side of Cadman Plaza West, has been considered which, if carried out, might encourage the opening of shops along this row, already partly in use by artists and artisans. Another restaurant is being planned on Water Street, and a restaurant has already been opened at 5-7 Front Street.

In terms of long-range planning, the New York City Department of Purchase buildings directly under the Bridge, although still in use by the City, are being considered for use as an art school or for other educational purposes when the buildings are vacated. Before their acquisition by Consolidated Edison, the Empire Stores on Water Street had been considered ideal by a developer for the creation of a complex including a restaurant

and an arcade with stores, similar to Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco. Monumental warehouses such as this, with their round arches-- a fine expression of brick bearing-wall construction--are worthy of re-development as an important manifestation of the City's maritime heritage.

While the ferries ruled supreme on the river, this area enjoyed a golden age of commercial prosperity. After a long period of stagnation, it now shows signs of reawakening and, in view of the ever-increasing interest in our past and our new-found ability to discover living uses for old buildings, the time seems ripe for a rebirth of the Fulton Ferry area.

Block-by-Block Description

CADMAN PLAZA WEST, Formerly Fulton Street (Between Furman Street and Columbia Heights [Everit Street])

SOUTH SIDE (Nos. 8-18)

No. 8 (Nos. 8-10) Brooklyn City Railroad Company Building. Erected in 1860-61 just prior to the Civil War, this handsome building is a dignified example of the Italianate style, strongly influenced by British commercial architecture of the mid-19th century. It was built as an office for the Brooklyn City Railroad Company. Incorporated in 1853, the Company had replaced the old stage lines which had previously provided transportation to and from Fulton Ferry. Five stories in height, the building is clearly defined by granite quoining. The brick facade is enlivened by stone window enframements and by its roof cornice. At street level, on the Fulton Street front, cast-iron piers make possible a series of large openings. These simple channeled cast-iron piers with block capitals are good examples of the work of the foundries of the period--in this case, E. B. Jackson & Company, a well-known Manhattan firm. Above the ground floor, the grouping of the windows is symmetrical, with tiers of single windows at the sides, enframing two tiers of paired windows between them. Shallow pediments above the paired windows of the second story are characteristic of the Italianate style. The window lintels rest on vertical console brackets, which are elaborately carved at the second and third stories and simpler above. Dentils enrich the upper section of the window enframements at the second and third floors. The brackets rest on paneled pilasters which end at windowsill level, and the windows are supported on corbel blocks, another typical feature of the Italianate style, and are continued between openings as bandcourses, clearly demarcating the floors.

The building, located at the southeast corner of Fulton and Furman Streets, occupies the site of a house built in the late 18th century for William Furman. It stood at the water's edge, adjoining Ferry Road (later renamed Fulton Street) directly in front of the stairway leading to the ferry. Furman, who had moved to Brooklyn from Newtown in Long Island, rapidly became one of the leading citizens of Kings County. Until his death in 1852, in his eighty-seventh year, he was closely identified with the county's political, judicial and economic life. He served as county judge, as a supervisor of the Village of Brooklyn and then as a member of the State Legislature. He later became president of the Brooklyn Fire Insurance Company, the first such company in Brooklyn, located on Front Street within the District.

Judge Furman's son, Gabriel, who was born in the house in 1800, was intimately associated with the development of Brooklyn's cultural life. A lawyer by profession, he devoted much of his time to writing a history of Brooklyn and to his library, reputedly one of the finest of the time in the United States. His Notes, published in 1824, preserve reminiscences of Brooklyn's early days which might otherwise have been lost to posterity.

Nos. 12-18. Once the site of a four-story hotel (Nos. 12-16) and a four-story building with store (No. 18), this large open lot, extending back to No. 8 Columbia Heights, is occupied by a gas station.

CADMAN PLAZA WEST (Between Columbia Heights [Everit Street] and Elizabeth Place)

SOUTH SIDE (Nos. 20-26)

This block is now an empty lot extending back to No. 11 Columbia Heights. It was once occupied by a four-story building with store (No. 20) and a three-story building, also with store (No. 26); by 1912 there was an empty lot between them.

CADMAN PLAZA WEST (Between Elizabeth Place and Hicks Street)

SOUTH SIDE (Nos. 28-44 only)

No. 28 (Nos. 28-44) The Eagle Warehouse and Storage Company of Brooklyn, erected in 1893-94, is an exceptionally handsome brick warehouse which was designed by Frank Freeman in the rugged Romanesque Revival style. The symmetrical facade is dominated by an impressive central archway, which provides access to the building. This arch is flanked at each side by small windows protected by handsome iron grilles. The base of the building, containing the ground story and a mezzanine, is separated from the wall above by a pair of exceptionally fine iron gates which open into the magnificent barrel vaulted entry. A small gate and steps on the right-hand side lead to the office, while the larger left-hand leaf of the gate is for vehicular access. Both gates are hinged from an upright goose-necked post with fanciful horse's head. The entrance arch displays the inscription: "Eagle Warehouse & Storage Co."

The brick wall above the base story has five vertical tiers of windows extending up through four stories. The three central tiers are set in a slightly recessed portion of the wall which creates the effect of end pavilions for the two outermost tiers of windows. The entire building is crowned by a parapet, resting on a row of small arches set on brick corbels, resembling the machicolations of a fortress. Small windows lighting a sixth floor have been ingeniously inserted in groups between these corbels and aligned with the tiers of windows below them. All the windows, except those of the sixth floor and the heavily grilled openings at the mezzanine, are crowned by flat arches having exceptionally high splayed keystones and end keys, all of which are executed in brick. Above the corbels a high brick parapet is ornamented by a central clock flanked by the words: "The Eagle Warehouse & Storage Company of Brooklyn."

By 1882 the company, which had been in business since 1821, was located on Fulton Street. When the Brooklyn Eagle moved to its new building opposite the main post office, the warehouse company purchased the Fulton Street property at the corner of Elizabeth Place, and commissioned architect Frank Freeman to design a fireproof warehouse on this site. The warehouse company probably took the "Eagle" name because two of its directors were former executives of Brooklyn's most famous newspaper and actually appropriated the emblem of the daily.

This warehouse building, used primarily for the storage of household furnishings and silverware, provided vaults for this purpose in the cellar. The new fireproof warehouse was joined to an earlier building at the northeast corner of Doughty Street and Elizabeth Place at the rear of the lot. This three-story structure, designed as a pressroom by G. S. Morse, was built in 1882 as a part of the original Brooklyn Eagle establishment. Most of the old Eagle building was demolished in 1892.

In 1906, Freeman designed a six-story addition (No. 44), east of the main warehouse, which was entirely in character with it. A round-arched entrance, slightly higher than the one at the center of the original building providing access for moving vans, has been replaced by three square-headed truck access doors. The metal eagle which is now attached to the Fulton Street front of the warehouse, on the line where the new addition joins the original building, once graced the old Brooklyn Eagle building.

Frank Freeman was the chief standard bearer of the Romanesque Revival in Brooklyn. He was born in Canada in 1861 and came to New York about 1885. He soon settled in Brooklyn where he lived until 1941, maintaining an office in Manhattan. Unfortunately, much of his work has been razed, but he also made a significant contribution to the architectural scene in the New York area during his lifetime. He designed a number of handsome residences on Riverside Drive in the 1890s and several houses in Flatbush and on Long Island. On Brooklyn Heights he designed the Behr house, the Hotel Margaret (1889), the old Brooklyn Fire Headquarters on Jay Street (1892), and the Bushwick Democratic Club (also 1892), both of which are designated New York City Landmarks. The influence of the noted architect Henry Hobson Richardson is evident in these early Freeman works, but the growing enthusiasm for classical architecture, brought about by the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, was evident in Freeman's Brooklyn Savings Bank of the same year.

CADMAN PLAZA WEST (Between Water Street and Front Street)

NORTH SIDE (Nos. 1-27)

No. 1-5. "Franklin House," the most important dining saloon and hotel in the District during the 19th century, is located at the foot of Fulton Street at the Water Street corner. It was conveniently situated across from the ferry landing and welcomed visitors to Brooklyn for over sixty years. Built soon after the widening of Fulton Street in the autumn of 1835, it replaced a succession of taverns and the "Steamboat Hotel," which had occupied the site from 1822 to 1835. This hotel, which had a large ballroom on the second floor, was run by Gerardus C. Langdon, who named his new hostelry after an inn he had owned on South Street in New York. He moved to Brooklyn in 1822, and subsequently became an active member of the ferry area's economic community. He gave up the hotel business, presumably when the street was widened and the old property was at least partially razed, and by late spring of 1836, had moved next door to No. 7 Fulton Street, where he opened a coal office. He soon expanded the business to include the sale of stoves and tea.

The property on which Franklin House stands was owned by the Corporation of the City of New York until 1835, when it was sold to William Ogilvie, a prosperous land speculator whose interests ranged as far afield as New Hampshire and North Carolina, according to the deed of 1855 in which he conveyed his holdings to his son, William H. Ogilvie. The first proprietor of Franklin House, according to the Directory of 1836/37, was William Carew, but it may not have been completed at that time. The Brooklyn Directory of 1839/40 carried a display advertisement, dated July of that year, in which the new management, L. & E. Simons, proudly announced that the hotel, at "the most convenient and pleasant situation in Brooklyn, having been completely refitted, is now open on the European plan." During the years which followed, there was considerable turnover of management. Despite the waning commercial activity in the ferry area after the Brooklyn Bridge was completed, Franklin House was still in business at the turn of the century.

The hotel, a substantial four-story brick structure, was built in the Greek Revival style. Originally, the evenly spaced and proportionally graduated windows of the upper floors, like those of the neighboring commercial row, all had simple rectangular stone sills and lintels. Some time after 1857--probably in the 1860s--alterations in the then fashionable Italianate style were made to the upper floors, no doubt, with the intention of "modernizing" the hotel. The most conspicuous changes are the capping of the simple Greek Revival window lintels by sheetmetal, pedimented at the second story and rectangular above, with both types resting on shallow brackets. The panelled metal roof cornice with dentilled fascia, supported by brackets of the same design as at the windows, provides an emphatic termination to the building, raising it somewhat above its neighbors. The typical six-over-six Greek Revival sash preserved at the second floor windows at the rear of the building were replaced by one-over-one sash at the time of the alteration.

At street level some of the original handsome granite piers with molded capitals and the granite architrave are preserved. Large windows alternate with brick panels marking the location of the original dining saloon fireplaces. Large shop windows, originally small-paned, visually linked the building with the adjoining commercial row. Two stores at No. 3 and No. 5 were occupied respectively by Anthony Crown, a confectioner, succeeded by William Smith, "fruiterer" and confectioner, and by David Levy's variety store, all still typical kinds of hotel shops.

At the present time the building is occupied by a corner restaurant and apartments above, some of which still have Greek Revival mantelpieces.

CADMAN PLAZA WEST (Between Water Street and Front Street)

Nos. 7-23. The Commercial Row. A row of brick buildings, adjoining Franklin House, originally extended almost to the Front Street corner. This row was erected between 1836 and 1839, after the widening of the north side of Fulton Street in September 1835, which established a new building line affecting the entire blockfront between Water and Front Streets.

This row has special significance as one of the few surviving examples in the City of Greek Revival commercial architecture, and as a building type once characteristic of Lower Manhattan. This type, which first appeared in 1829 on Pearl Street, had granite piers and lintels enframing large ground floor openings and supporting brick walls above. After the Great Fire of 1835, which destroyed a large area of New York, the type became standard, not only in New York but elsewhere in the U.S. The Fulton Street row is an early Brooklyn example.

The buildings are four stories in height, and retain much of their original appearance at the upper floors. The windows, regularly spaced and well-proportioned, have simple stone sills and lintels, and probably all originally had six-over-six sash, as at Nos. 7 and 11. A typical Greek Revival brick fascia crowns each building. The cornice lines are stepped in conformity with the upward slope of the street. No. 13 best preserves the original appearance of the stores at street level. Here, the granite piers with shallow molded capitals and the lintels are fully revealed. There are wood panels at the bottom of the two central double doors; the handsome paneled doors at the right are of a slightly later date. At No. 15, a wooden canopy shelters the first floor, and tie-rod stars strengthen the upper brick wall, doubtless installed when the upper floors were converted to warehouse use. The roof cornice with Italianate style brackets at No. 17 dates later. Despite a long period of neglect and the loss of several buildings, the blockfront retains much of its original character. This row, simple and restrained in its architectural detail, harmonizes with the adjacent Franklin House.

The change in occupancy and use of these buildings illustrates the transformation of Fulton Street to an exclusively commercial thoroughfare between the late 1830s, when some buildings still had lodgings at the upper floors, and later decades. The early tenants pursued a variety of trades and occupations, many of which now have a quaintly evocative ring.

Among the earliest occupants was "Gerardy" Langdon, earlier the proprietor of the Steamboat Hotel, who by 1840 had expanded his coal business, begun in 1836 at No. 7, to No. 9 (now demolished). A saddler and harness maker occupied No. 11 from 1837 until another saddler appeared at No. 21 in 1845. The Carman family, established on the sites of Nos. 13 and 15 since the 1820s, continued in business here, with Samuel Carman's tavern and livery stables at No. 13, renamed in 1840, Miller and Carman's Long Island Hotel. In 1851, William Smith, provision dealer, moved in and used the upper floors for lard-rendering, barrel making and salt storage; this company was still here at the turn of the century. Another long-lasting business, Carman & Valentine, grocers, later Valentine & Bergen, was established at No. 15 by mid-1836. At No. 17, a bar and oyster house, in business by 1840, was upgraded to an "Eating Saloon" by 1844, when it was taken over by a former manager of Franklin House. In 1840, the upper floors were occupied by a boarding house and by a "monthly nurse." Another grocer, J. Schenck Suydam, moved into No. 19 (now replaced by a taxpayer) by 1840. No. 21 (now demolished) had a number of interesting tenants, including a newspaper publisher, and the saddler mentioned above, and by 1843 Roche Bros. & Co., agents for packet ships to and from Ireland and England and for the Royal Bank of Ireland. Their business flourished for many years, doubtless the result of the wave of Irish immigration to the U.S. after the famine of 1846. No. 23 (now demolished) was occupied by a number of craftsmen.

The last building of the original row, No. 25 (replaced by the cast-iron building), housed a bookbindery and was the printing establishment and office of Isaac Van Anden, best known as the co-founder, owner and publisher, from late 1841 on, of Brooklyn's most famous newspaper, the Eagle, which was first printed here, under the name Brooklyn Eagle and Kings County Democrat.

CADMAN PLAZA WEST (Between Water Street and Front Street)

No. 25-27. The Long Island Safe Deposit Company Building. This handsome cast-iron Italianate building, with a diagonally placed entrance at the corner of Fulton and Front Streets, is two stories high. Designed in a style reminiscent of Venetian palaces by architect William Mundell, it was erected in 1868-1869 by the Long Island Safe Deposit Company. Such companies were new to Brooklyn and New York at the time, the first having been founded in 1861. The Safe Deposit Building stands on the site occupied in the early years of the 19th century by Abraham Remsen's home and dry goods store which had replaced the old stone farmhouse of the Rapalje family. A small firehouse once stood next to the Rapalje house on a gore-lot, which is now part of the Safe Deposit Company Building site.

The Long Island Safe Deposit Company shared its new quarters with the Brooklyn Bank, organized in 1832, which until the move to the corner site, had been located in the building directly east of No. 5-7 Front Street. Both the Safe Deposit Company and the Bank moved to the corner of Clinton and Fulton Streets in the early 1890s, as a result of the rapidly diminishing commercial activity of the Fulton Ferry area after the completion of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883. The Safe Deposit Company Building became a warehouse. More recently the building has served a variety of commercial purposes.

The facade of this building is constructed entirely of cast iron and is in this respect unique within the District. Cast-iron construction during the second half of the 19th century was most commonly employed for stores and warehouses; its use here is therefore of special interest and was perhaps the result of the desire for a safe and fireproof building. A most unusual feature of this building is that the interior and its ornament are also of cast iron, a further guarantee against fire, as were the granite foundations on which the vaults rested.

The two street facades flanking the corner entrance bay are identical. Both are three bays wide with enframing quoins surmounted by acanthus console brackets. At the first floor, large round-arched windows with scrolled keystones, protected by iron window guards with fleur-de-lis cresting, are separated by pilasters with egg-and-dart capitals. The windows of the second story are more delicately detailed and are inspired by the windows of some of the great Venetian Renaissance palazzi. Like those of the story below, they have enframing pilasters, but with Corinthian capitals. A dentil-course divides the two floors and another adorns the roof cornice, above which there was originally a balustrade with a rectangular panel at the corner, surmounted by a scrolled pediment. The arched doorway has the same detail as the windows on the first floor and the single window above it opens onto a shallow balcony with balusters. The design of the building is boldly scaled, lending to this rather small structure an unexpectedly monumental character.

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS [formerly Everit Street] (Between Cadman Plaza West and Doughty Street)

EAST SIDE (No. 11)

No. 11. This warehouse building which extends through to Elizabeth Place stands alone in the middle of the block. The buildings which once stood to each side of it have been razed.

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS [formerly Everit Street] (Between Cadman Plaza West and Doughty Street)

WEST SIDE (Nos. 8-12)

Nos. 8 and 12. These two small brick buildings, two stories in height, although used for commercial purposes, are among the few buildings in this part of the District which recall the one-time residential character and scale of nearby Doughty Street.

DOUGHTY STREET (Between Furman Street and Columbia Heights)

NORTH SIDE ONLY (Nos. not given)

This one-story rectangular brick building, attached to the rear of the Brooklyn City Railroad Company building and originally serving as an adjunct to it, is set back from the street. A portion of the old railroad tracks which once ran between the building and Doughty Street may still be seen where they curve around from Furman Street.

DOUGHTY STREET (Between Columbia Heights and Elizabeth Place)

NORTH SIDE ONLY (Nos. not given)

The four-story buildings which once stood on Doughty Street, and two smaller buildings behind them which faced Columbia Heights and Elizabeth Place, have all been razed, leaving a large empty lot between Doughty Street and No. 7 Columbia Heights.

DOUGHTY STREET (Between Elizabeth Place and Hicks Street)

NORTH SIDE ONLY (Nos. not given)

That portion of the rear of the Eagle Warehouse & Storage Company Building which incorporates the old pressroom of the Brooklyn Eagle and the rear of the new addition to the east occupy only part of the block front. This building is described under No. 28 Cadman Plaza West.

FRONT STREET (Between Cadman Plaza West and Dock Street)

WEST SIDE (Nos. 1-7)

No. 1-3. The Long Island Safe Deposit Company is described under No. 25-27 Cadman Plaza West.

No. 5-7. Long Island Insurance Company. This small early Greek Revival structure was designed specifically for use as an office building, an architectural type now very common, but one which was still quite unusual in the early part of the 19th century. It may be the earliest example of an office building which still survives in the entire city. It housed the offices of the Long Island Insurance Company, a firm founded in

FRONT STREET (Between Cadman Plaza West and Dock Street)

WEST SIDE (Nos. 1-7)

1833 which specialized in fire insurance. In 1834 the company moved to its new offices at No. 5-7 Front Street where it remained until 1867 when the property was sold to the Long Island Safe Deposit Company. Soon after the Safe Deposit Company erected the adjoining cast-iron building at the corner. Recently the building has been occupied as a restaurant by the Front Street Tavern.

The well-proportioned, three-story facade has stone load-bearing piers and lintels at the first floor which enframe three doorways and two windows. The original iron hand railings, ornamented with scrolls and acorns, are preserved at the central doorway. Above the first floor, the facade is executed in Flemish bond brickwork, an interesting treatment with alternating headers and stretchers, usually found in earlier buildings of the Federal period. The exceptionally close spacing of the windows, and the resulting slenderness of the wall sections, may account for the use of this especially strong type of bonded construction. Stone windowsills and lintels with cap moldings contrast effectively in texture and color with the brickwork. Beneath the roof cornice there appears a brick fascia, a feature typical of the Greek Revival style.

FULTON STREET (Recently renamed Cadman Plaza West. See all references under this name.)

FURMAN STREET (Between Cadman Plaza West and Doughty Street)

EAST SIDE (Nos. 1-13)

No. 1. The Brooklyn City Railroad Company building is described under Nos. 8-10 Cadman Plaza West.

No. 13. Rear-lot building for the Brooklyn City Railroad Company building.

WEST SIDE (End of Cadman Plaza West)

Marine Fire Boat Station. This small, shingled frame building with attached tower and small outbuilding is located on the dock at the foot of Fulton Street. Erected in 1926, it served the New York City fire boats which once were berthed here. The fire tower rises the full height from ground level at the north and has paired round-arched windows on each side with simulated balconies beneath, carried on brackets. This effective termination of the tower is sheltered by the eaves of a low pyramidal roof. The two-story building with hipped roof has a main entrance facing the river and a secondary entry at the southeast corner facing Fulton Street. The fenestration is very simple with four-over-one double-hung sash. A new use has been found for the building which now houses a small museum.

NEW DOCK STREET (Between Water Street and the East River)

EAST SIDE The Tobacco Inspection Warehouse is described under Nos. 25-39 Water Street.

WEST SIDE The New York City Department of Purchase Storehouse is described under No. 11 Water Street.

WATER STREET (Between Cadman Plaza West and the bend in the street)

EAST SIDE (Nos. 2-8)

No. 2. Franklin House is described under No. 1-5 Cadman Plaza West.

No. 4-8. Located between the old Franklin House at the corner of Fulton Street and the site of iron and brass foundries to the east, this three-story brick building is typical of vernacular commercial-industrial architecture in the third quarter of the 19th century. A cast-iron storefront with wide openings between neo-Grec piers supports the brickwork above. At the third floor, a large opening with diagonally-braced doors and loading-hoist beam above interrupts a series of regularly spaced segmented-arched windows. The present structure replaced two earlier buildings and a small structure on a gore-lot at the corner.

WATER STREET (Between Cadman Plaza West and the bend in the street)

WEST SIDE

Fulton Ferry Park. This small waterfront park, located between the old Marine Fireboat pier and the New York City Department of Purchase buildings under the Brooklyn Bridge, is a welcome addition to this commercial-industrial area. With its carefully interrelated wood platforms and attractive planting it supplies a much needed note of greenery to the District. The view from the park of the Brooklyn Bridge and the lower Manhattan skyline is one of the finest in Brooklyn. Originally designed in 1974 by David Hirsch of the Office of Downtown Brooklyn Development, the plans were further refined and executed under the direction of Edward Weinstein of the New York City Department of Ports and Terminals which now administers the park. The planting, carried out by the landscape architect J. Turofsky, was the gift of Michael O'Keefe.

WATER STREET (Between the bend in the street and Main Street)

NORTH SIDE ONLY (Nos. 11-85)

No. 11. The New York City Department of Purchase Storehouse (B-53) was built in 1936 under the Brooklyn Bridge, just behind the great Brooklyn Tower of the Bridge. Horizontal concrete bands accentuate the steel strip windows. A concrete coping crowns a low brick roof parapet. Interesting features of this building are the diagonal corners, reminiscent of such notable buildings of the period as the Lehigh-Starrett Warehouse on the west side of lower Manhattan.

The entrance, at the intersecting angle formed by the two rectangular portions of the building, has striking raised block lettering of Art Deco design, characteristic of the 1930s. On the grounds a boiler house with boldly designed, tiered and faceted chimney-stack, is attractively related to the brick yard wall and gate. Within the yard are a closed shed along the south wall and an open shed along the north wall.

No. 25-39. Tobacco Inspection Warehouse. This large brick warehouse, built in conformity with its trapezoidal site, stands on the waterfront side of Water Street between New Dock and old Dock Streets. In the 1850s this site contained a number of frame buildings, a marble yard, and a lumber yard which fronted on the river, all of which were replaced by the warehouse. The warehouse was used for storage of tobacco and was also the customs inspection center for tobacco imports. By the 1890s, ninety percent of Brooklyn's tobacco trade was carried on here. More recently the building was occupied by the Metal Reclaiming Company and is presently owned by Consolidated Edison of New York.

NORTH SIDE ONLY (Nos. 11-85)

Now reduced to two stories, the warehouse was originally a five-story structure and thus formed, in combination with the neighboring Empire Stores, a visual continuum along the Water Street blockfront. Like these stores, the utilitarian design of the elevations includes rows of round-arched windows and doors. The original iron shutters of the warehouse have been removed and the windows are now covered with sheet metal. Metal cross-shaped tie-rod ends appear between floors.

No. 53-83. The Empire Stores, which give the impression of one monumental building, are actually a series of seven brick warehouses occupying almost the entire waterfront block between Main Street and the former Dock Street, now closed off. Built in two separate stages, the warehouses have continuous facades with long rows of similar round-arched windows and doors. This simple exterior design, in which functional considerations are primary, achieves through logical clarity and regularity an austere impressiveness.

The major portion of the land on which the stores are situated was acquired in 1856 by James Nesmith, a wealthy shipping merchant and long time Brooklyn resident. At that time a group of brick warehouses, dating from the very early part of the 19th century, occupied the site. When, in 1869, a fire destroyed these early buildings, Nesmith began construction of new four-story warehouses at the western or Dock Street end of the Empire Stores site. These were completed in 1870 and were known as "Nesmith & Sons' Empire Stores." Business flourished, and in 1885 James' son, Henry E. Nesmith, a partner in the family firm and a director of the Mechanics' National Bank, commissioned the Brooklyn architect Thomas Stone to design and build the five-story eastern section of the stores at the Main Street end.

Stone retained the general character and style of the 1870 buildings in his design, although he varied the pattern of the fenestration which in all of the 1870 buildings is alike: on both the Water Street and the waterfront elevations three large round-arched openings are symmetrically flanked by single, small, arched windows at each story. All seven warehouses are executed in dark red brick and have corbelled brick roof cornices. Loading hoists project from the flat roofs of each section above the doors on the water side. All doors and windows are provided with heavy iron shutters carried on pintle-type hinges. Metal tie-rod caps in the shape of stars, a pleasing decorative detail, appear between floors on the exterior walls.

The two easternmost warehouses which align with the waterfront facades of the other sections do not, however, extend through to Water Street. This was a feasible arrangement since, at the time they were built, Plymouth Street extended behind the stores on the water side and private loading docks served all the sections. The Empire Stores originally were used for general storage of raw materials such as coffee beans, animal hides, grains, raw sugar and molasses, brought in by cargo ships from Africa, South America and Cuba. During the 1890s they also housed the Customs Inspection Offices for the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Districts of Brooklyn.

The Empire Stores were among the many warehouses constructed during the post-Civil War economic boom along the Brooklyn waterfront. By 1870, the waterfront was so completely lined with privately owned warehouses and docks that Brooklyn had earned the nickname the "walled city." Many of these warehouses are no longer standing. The Empire Stores, owned since 1963 by Consolidated Edison, are among the few survivors, and bear mute testimony to the prosperous commercial activity of Brooklyn during the second half of the 19th century.

WATER STREET (Between the bend in the street and Main Street)

NORTH SIDE ONLY (Nos. 11-85)

No. 85. This small, late Federal-style house, built after the widening of Water Street in 1835, now nestles within the shadow of the great Empire Stores. Originally a residence on a commercial street, No. 85 was converted in the 1880s to commercial use, by which time Water Street had become exclusively industrial. Alexander Birkbeck, who owned the land on which No. 85 was erected, had established Brooklyn's first iron foundry in 1824 on the south side of Water Street. In the mid-1830s he also had a blacksmith shop located on the property adjacent to No. 85. Later, Birkbeck expanded the operation on the south side, entitling the new large industrial complex, the "Union Foundry." This was located only a short distance from the Franklin House, on the corner of Fulton and Water Streets.

This four-story brick house has a ground floor entrance and canopied loading dock. A simple fascia board separates this altered ground story from the three above. The windows of the upper floors, adorned at the second and third stories by handsome, late Federal-style lintels with delicately carved central panels and Tudor roses set at the corners, have typical six-over-six sash. A brick fascia crowns the facade.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

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 Fulton Ferry Historic District contains buildings and other improvements which have a special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value and 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 Fulton Ferry Historic District is a commercial area of exceptional historical and architectural interest, that it is an area rich in historic associations, that it grew and flourished with the development of ferry service to New York, that the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883 ultimately doomed both the ferry service and the economic life of the District, that the building types and styles range over roughly a century, that the buildings in the District remain standing as reminders of 19th century commercial life and development in Brooklyn, and that there are encouraging signs of a rebirth of the District, through the use of the old buildings for new purposes.

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 an Historic District the Fulton Ferry Historic District, Borough of Brooklyn, containing the property bounded by part of the eastern and part of the southern property lines of 40-44 Cadman Plaza West, the remaining part of the eastern property line of 40-44 Cadman Plaza West, Cadman Plaza West, Front Street, the northeastern and northwestern property lines of 5-7 Front Street, the northwestern and northeastern property lines of 19 Cadman Plaza West, the northeastern property lines of 17 through 13 Cadman Plaza West, the northeastern property line of 4-12 Water Street, Water Street, the eastern property line of 85 Water Street, part of the southern property line of Block 26, Lot 1, Main Street, part of the southern property line of the dock at the foot of Main Street, the shoreline of the East River to the north side of the dock at the foot of Cadman Plaza West, the dock at the foot of Cadman Plaza West, the shoreline of the East River at the foot of Cadman Plaza West, the south side of Cadman Plaza West, Furman Street, Doughty Street to the eastern end of the rear of that building described as 40-44 Cadman Plaza West.