

PROPOSED DOUGLASTON HISTORIC DISTRICT EXTENSION  
BOROUGH OF QUEENS

Situated in the northeast corner of Queens, the proposed Douglaston Historic District Extension is composed of approximately 22 buildings, located on or near Douglaston Parkway south of the designated Douglaston Historic District. Among the buildings are 18 houses (some with separate garages), the Colonial Revival-style Public School 98 (1930-31), the Colonial Revival-style Community Church of Douglaston (William Neil Smith, 1923-24), and annex (c.1953), and a 1928-30 Tudor Revival-style apartment building. Several of the houses date back to the early sub-division of the land in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, while the bulk range in date from the 1890s to 1920s, when much of the surrounding area, including the Douglaston and Douglaston Hill Historic Districts, was developed as a commuter suburb. The buildings in the proposed extension retain the form, massing and character-defining features of the styles in which they were designed, including vernacular Greek Revival, Italianate, Colonial and Dutch Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Mediterranean Revival, and Arts and Crafts, giving the area a distinct sense of place.

The land that comprises the proposed district extension was part of the 1853 *Marathon* subdivision, one of the earliest of its type in northeastern Queens. Created by local farmer, Jeremiah Lambertson, who had purchased the property 10 years earlier, the land was laid out in an urban grid of large, almost-one-acre lots, which were sold at auction. Three buildings in the proposed district, 38-60, 38-80 and 39-18 Douglaston Parkway, date from the development of this subdivision during the 1850s and 1860s. These vernacular farmhouses, which feature Greek Revival- and Italianate-style details, mark the area's transition from its rural origins to smaller farms and suburban estates. The house at 38-80 Douglaston Parkway has a Queen Anne-style addition that appears to have been built in the late nineteenth century.

In 1866-67, the Flushing and Northside Railroad reached the Little Neck area and the local station and village were renamed "Douglaston" for William Douglas, who donated a building on his estate as the station house. The facilitated commute to Manhattan (although it still involved ferry service from Long Island City) encouraged the key period of the area's development, the suburban growth that took place in Douglaston from 1890 to 1930. Several buildings in the proposed district, built in the 1890s or first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Colonial Revival or Art and Crafts styles, retain the form and character-defining features of these styles. Notably, the stucco house at 18 Cherry Street (1900-01) with its rubble stone foundation, multi-light wood casement windows and exposed roofed beams and rafters, is an excellent example of a high-style, Arts and Crafts residence. Suburban development increased once the railroad tunnel under the East River was completed in 1909, as the direct train link to Manhattan stimulated the construction of most of the buildings in the proposed Douglaston Historic District extension from 1910 until 1930. Although some of the lots were further subdivided during this period, the setbacks and layouts of the new buildings maintained the area's park-like setting. The nine houses in the proposed extension built during this period were designed in the Arts and Crafts, Mediterranean Revival, and Colonial Revival styles, including two mirror-image, gambrel-roofed, Dutch Colonial Revival houses at 39-15 and 39-27 Douglaston Parkway.

Necessitated by the increased population of Douglaston in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Community Church was formed about 1915. A temporary church (now demolished) was

built in 1919, at which time the two-story, Arts & Crafts style residence, which still exists behind the present church, appears to have been built. The permanent brick church building, designed by William Neil Smith, was constructed in 1923-24 in the Colonial Revival style with a two-story pedimented entry porch supported by Tuscan/Doric columns and a pedimented entry with Doric pilasters and an elliptical fanlight among its prominent features. The adjacent annex, designed to be harmonious with the church, was constructed in c. 1953. To serve the educational needs of the growing community, the New York City Department of Education constructed Public School 98 in 1930-31. Still in use as an elementary school and currently known as the Douglaston School, this Colonial Revival-style brick building features a hexagon-shaped, domed cupola, a prominent central entry marked by a semi-circular pediment, a large, multi-light arched window, and cast-stone cornice brackets, quoins, keystones, door surround, and a sway and shield ornament crowning the main entry.

Constructed at the tail end of the area's major suburban development period in 1928-30, the apartment building at 38-30 West Drive (Alexander Vierling, architect) was built in the Tudor Revival style. Although the building type is unique in a district of single-family homes, the style and details of the building, including its brick veneer, half-timbering, crenellated roofline, slate-covered dormers, and steel casement windows, are found on buildings throughout the designated Douglaston and Douglaston Hill Historic Districts.

The proposed extension to the Douglaston Hill Historic District is significant for its principles of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and early-20<sup>th</sup> century community planning and development and well as the buildings' high level of architectural quality. The included buildings recall the transformation of the community from large farms and estates to smaller farms and later to the suburban-style community that it is today. Most of the buildings retain the forms and characteristics of popular architectural styles from the 1890s to the 1920s. Distinguished by these styles and large lots, the area retains a visual coherence and suburban sense of place that has become increasingly rare within the boundaries of New York City.