

PROPOSED PARK PLACE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Borough of Brooklyn

The proposed Park Place Historic District consists of 13 Romanesque Revival style row houses with Queen Anne style details that were constructed in 1889-90 and designed by Joseph Mason Kirby, of Atlantic City, New Jersey. Located to the east of Prospect Park in the neighborhood of Crown Heights, this group of attached single-family residences, including 651 to 675 Park Place, was a speculative development of brothers F.W and W.S. Hammett of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Park Place row is characteristic of late-19th century development in this area of Brooklyn, which was almost entirely built up between the 1870s and 1890s with speculative row houses in response to improved public transportation and increasing demand for middle-class housing. These modest, but inventively detailed two-story houses with raised basements and high stoops are constructed of brick, sandstone and terra-cotta. The row features three facade designs that are arranged to create a picturesque composition of alternating triangular-gabled and flat-roofed houses, culminating in a central section of two unusual round-gabled houses flanking a triangular-gabled dwelling. The five triangular-gabled houses feature rusticated sandstone trim, a variety of terra-cotta decorative moldings below the second floor windows and at the cornice, overscaled bead and reel brickmolds, and a decorative triangular terra-cotta plaque surrounded by bull-nose decorative bricks at the gable. The six flat-roofed houses feature heavily rusticated door and window surrounds, corbelled projecting pilasters at the second floor, and bracketed and elaborately molded cornices. The two unusual round-gabled houses feature smooth and rusticated door and window surrounds and a molded cornice with a decorative keystone. The proposed Park Place Historic District is an excellent example of modest row houses made unusual by the architect's inventive detailing and picturesque composition. A surviving row of 15 houses with strikingly similar composition and detailing was designed by Kirby and constructed c. 1891 at 587-611 Decatur Street, in eastern Brooklyn near the border with Queens; Kirby was also responsible for a two-story commercial building located at 217 West 125th Street in Manhattan (1899).

