

Audre Lorde Residence

207 St. Paul's Avenue, Staten Island
St. Paul's Avenue-Stapleton Heights Historic District
Tax Map Block 516 Lot 32

Built: 1898

Architect: Otto Loeffler

Style: Neo-Colonial

Action: Calendared May 14, 2019; Public Hearing June 4, 2019



207 St. Paul's Avenue, 2018, Cyclomedia

This neo-colonial-style house at 207 St. Paul's Avenue on Staten Island was designed by Otto Loeffler in 1898, and is located within the St. Paul's Avenue-Stapleton Heights Historic District. From 1972 to 1987, the house was the primary residence of renowned African-American and lesbian writer Audre Lorde.

Audre Lorde was born in 1934 to Caribbean immigrants in New York City, where she attended Hunter College and Columbia University. She worked as a public school librarian for several years before finding success as a writer, and later became an English professor at Hunter and John Jay Colleges. Lorde wrote many of her most famous books and poems during the time she occupied this house. In 1973, her third volume of poetry, *From a Land Where Other People Live*, was nominated for a National Book Award, and over the next several years she published important poetry collections, essays, and novels, including *Coal* (1976), *The Black Unicorn* (1978), *The Cancer Journals* (1980), and *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1982).

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Lorde also became a prominent political activist in a number of arenas, including African-American civil rights, feminism, and the gay and lesbian movement. In 1979 Lorde spoke at the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, and in 1980 she co-founded Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, a publisher dedicated to producing work by and about women of color. Her book *I Am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing Across Sexualities* (1986) was one of its publications. For her contributions to literature and activism, in 1991, Lorde was appointed as the Poet Laureate for New York State, a position she held until her death in 1992.

Constructed during a period when several previously-undeveloped tracts in the neighborhood were built up with Queen Anne, Shingle-style, and Colonial-style homes, 207 St. Paul's Avenue is distinguished by its gabled roofline and by its open porch featuring turned columns and a pediment with sunburst decoration. The House retains a high degree of integrity to the period it is associated with Audre Lorde.

