

Manida Street Historic District

Borough of the Bronx

Proposed Action: Propose for Calendaring January 21, 2020



East side of Manida Street, LPC 2020

The proposed Manida Street Historic District, located between Garrison and Lafayette avenues in the Hunts Point section of the Bronx, consists of facing rows of semi-detached, brick houses executed in a modest Renaissance Revival style with rounded projecting bays and classically-inspired facade trim. Designed by architects Daub & Kreymborg and James F. Meehan, and built in 1908-09, the block is an intact example of the early-20th century development that occurred in the neighborhood in response to transportation improvements and rapid industrialization.

For much of its history Hunts Point was a rural area known as West Farms. Dotted with large country estates owned by wealthy families, West Farms was originally part of Westchester County. This community and others west of the Bronx River were annexed to New York City in 1874. The expanded West Side Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) subway which arrived in the Bronx in 1904, and the 1910 completion of the Intervale Avenue station just northwest of Manida Street, brought rapid development and a population increase to the still largely rural Hunts Point.

With its access to rail services and freight terminals, as well as available land near the waterfront, Hunts Point became attractive for industrial activity in the early 20th century. In addition to improved public transportation, the anticipation of new manufacturing operations in the area and the influx of skilled and well-paid employees that was expected to follow prompted the residential development of this block of Manida Street.

In the fall of 1908, newspapers began referencing the start of construction on Manida Street. Two developers and two architects completed the 42 houses by the spring of 1909: the Manida Company developed the east side with the architectural firm of Daub & Kreymborg, while James F. Meehan, who also served as architect, developed the west side. The semi-detached houses share a uniform style and form with rounded projecting bays and mirror-image facades. Ornamentation is restrained on the east side of the street, while the west side features more embellishments including Flemish Revival parapets and varied classical motifs.

The mid-20th century brought drastic economic and infrastructure changes that had devastating impacts on the South Bronx. Today, however, Manida Street appears much as it did more than a century ago, with a strong sense of place and historic character distinct from its more industrial and commercial surroundings. It remains a remarkable example of the early-20th century construction boom that occurred in the South Bronx as a result of expanded transportation routes and industry in the area.