



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North New York NY 10007 TEL: 212-669-7700 FAX: 212-669-7960
www.nyc.gov/landmarks



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, OCT. 30, 2007
No. 07-25

CONTACT: Elisabeth de Bourbon
212-669-7938

VOELKER-ORTH MUSEUM, BIRD SANCTUARY AND VICTORIAN GARDEN IN QUEENS GIVEN NEW YORK CITY LANDMARK STATUS

Eclectic, Pink Trimmed Clapboard House and Grounds Evoke Important Moment in Flushing's History and Development

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission today voted unanimously to grant landmark status to the 116-year-old Voelker-Orth Museum, Bird Sanctuary and Victorian Garden in the Flushing section of Queens, citing its picturesque architectural details and rich history. The designation brings to 2,326 the total number of properties in Queens that have been landmarked to date, and reflects the Commission's ongoing commitment to preserving the borough's distinctive heritage.



"This house recalls the period when Flushing changed from a rural outpost to a suburban neighborhood," said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. "It merits the same protection that our Commission has extended to other significant buildings in Queens, where since 2002 the Commission has designated more buildings than in any other borough."

The Voelker-Orth house, which was constructed with a variety of materials and rooflines, sits near the southeast corner of a 10,000-square-foot lot at 149-19 38th Avenue. It was built c.1891 by a Flushing merchant who sold it in 1899 to Conrad Voelker, a German immigrant

who started a printing business in Manhattan that published several widely read German newspapers.

Designed by an unknown architect, the house is sided with clapboard as well as distinctively shaped shingle siding, and features shutters, deep eaves and leaded and stained glass. It has three different kinds of roofs -- gable, jerkinhead and flat -- made of wooden shingles, and an assortment of projecting bays and wings. Exuberant homes like the Voelker-Orth were routinely built at the end of the 19th century to reflect the wealth and success of the people who owned them.

The house remained in the Voelker family until 1996, when Conrad Voelker's last surviving heir, Elizabeth Orth, died and left instructions in her will to turn the house and grounds into a museum of Queens history, environmental education center and a bird sanctuary.

More

Other recent Queens designations by the Commission include the Sunnyside Gardens Historic District, the Douglaston Hill Historic District, Sohmer Piano, the City's Astoria pool complex, the Richmond Hill Republican Club and the Ralph Bunche House.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is responsible for protecting and preserving New York City's architecturally, historically and culturally significant buildings and sites. Since its creation in 1965, LPC has granted landmark status to some 24,000 buildings, including 1,179 individual landmarks, 120 interior landmarks, nine scenic landmarks and 88 historic districts in all five boroughs. Under the law, the Commission must be comprised of at least three architects, a historian, a realtor, a planner or landscape architect, as well as a representative of each borough. There are 11 commissioners, all of whom are appointed by the Mayor for staggered three-year terms.

-30-