

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
April 12, 2016, Designation List 487  
LP -2395

**William H. Schofield House**, 65 Schofield Street, City Island, Bronx, New York,  
Built: c. 1860; architect unknown

Landmark Site: Borough of The Bronx Tax Map Block 5628, Lot 146.

On January 19, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the William H. Schofield House and the proposed designation of the related landmark site (Item No. 1). The hearing was duly advertised according to the provisions of law. Representatives of the Historic Districts Council and Community Board 10 spoke in favor of the designation. There were no speakers in opposition to the proposed designation. The Commission received six letters requesting that the Commission refrain from designating the building at that time and continue further outreach to the property owner.

On October 8, 2015, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a special public hearing on the Backlog Initiative items Borough of the Bronx, including the William H. Schofield House, (Item No. I - Borough of the Bronx Group, D). The hearing was duly advertised according to the provisions of law. At that hearing six people testified in favor of the proposed designation of the William H. Schofield House, including: the owners, representatives of the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Historic Districts Council, the Municipal Art Society of New York, The Society for the Architecture of the City, and The Victorian Society of New York. The Commission also received three letters of support for the designation including letters from the Bronx Borough Historian, the Guide's Association of New York and the Sunnyside Gardens Preservation Alliance.



## Summary

This transitional Italianate style farmhouse was constructed around 1860 as part of the estate of William Schofield, a member one of the first families to settle City Island in 1826.

The residence is a fine example of the Italianate style of architecture that dominated American house design from 1850 to 1880, and is characterized here by a square plan and tall windows, combined with Greek Revival style features such as a flat roof with overhanging cornice and elaborate paired brackets under the eaves that flank the octagonal shaped windows.

The house represents a period of progress on the island when it began to transition to a suburban residential community, concurrently developing from farming to industries unique to the island such as oyster fishing and ship building, which played an important role during the 19th and 20th centuries.

The house's most striking feature is the one-story veranda that runs the width of the ground floor main facade and set-back addition. Turned posts rise from a baluster railing to support the projecting porch roof; each is flanked by wooden jig-sawed brackets. Directly above are pairs of smaller brackets ornamented with acorn drop pendants. The house has undergone a recent sensitive restoration by its current owners, and the additions they added to the house is subservient in size and harmonious in terms of style and materials.

City Island was first established as an English settlement in 1654, when the English crown granted Thomas Pell ownership of the island and parts of Westchester County. City Island was privately owned, first by the Pell family and then by the Palmer family. It became a part of the town of Pelham, in Westchester County, in 1819 and was then sectioned off into large parcels of land as ownership passed to other individuals.

Schofield Street takes its name from the estate of one the first families to acquire land on City Island after it became part of Westchester County; William Schofield acquired the land in 1826.<sup>1</sup> The residence at 65 Schofield is attributed to his son William Henry Schofield, who resided there until his death in 1902. The property was later passed to his sister, Elizabeth Schofield, who married Captain Samuel Pell (1821-1894), son of Thomas and Maria Pell, who was a descendant of the Pell family of Pelham Manor. Samuel Pell was one of the island's leading oystermen; with oyster harvesting being the principal industry of City Island in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> The William H. Schofield House at 65 Schofield Street is significant as a rare surviving transitional Italianate farmhouse on City Island, and for its association with the Pells and Schofields, two prominent City Island families, and for Samuel Pell's association with City Island's oyster industry.

## Building Description

Built in 1856,<sup>3</sup> the William H. Schofield House is situated on the corner of Schofield Street and William Avenue and sits on a full corner lot that has a frontage of 114 feet along Schofield Street and a frontage of 69 feet 17 inches along William Avenue.<sup>4</sup> A non-historic chain-link fence with a non-historic center gate surrounds the property on all four sides. William H. Schofield House is a transitional Italianate style farmhouse, and is characterized by a square plan and tall windows combined with Greek Revival style features such as the flat roof with overhanging cornice and elaborate paired acorn drop brackets under the eaves that flank octagonal shaped windows. The main body of the house is sheathed in wood clapboard and retains its historic character.

*Historic:* The historic northeastern addition is set back from the main body of the house, and has a separate entrance but shares the elaborate veranda. The house is unusually massed with

two windows to the right of the main entrance and one to the left. The front entrance has a double-leaf wood paneled doors with a transom window above. The house's most prominent feature is the one-story veranda that runs the width of the ground floor level across both sections. Turned posts rise from a baluster railing (may be later replacements) supporting the projecting porch roof and each is flanked by wooden jig-sawed brackets. Directly above are pairs of smaller brackets ornamented with acorn drop pendants.

Prior to the Landmarks Preservation Commission designation vote, the owner made several sensitive alterations to the historic building, including: several additions to the historic main structure, and historic addition.<sup>5</sup>

*Alterations:* Historic Structure: the existing house has been moved several feet southwest, closer to the corner of Schofield Street and William Avenue, and rests on new foundations and porch footings; roof replaced; original Yankee gutters with copper downspouts reproduced; deteriorated wooden clapboards replaced throughout with matching clapboards made of composite material; all replacement windows and projecting lintels match original design; porch posts, acorn drop brackets at eaves and porch roof, and jig sawed brackets were repaired and reused.

**Main Façade (East): (Southeast, facing Schofield Street):**

Several wood clapboards replaced; windows replaced, lintels replaced, porch rebuilt and porch roof replaced, window added to northeast façade at second floor, roof replaced.

**Southwest façade: (facing William Ave):**

One-story projection with metal vent and flanking light fixtures; two-small basement windows with light-wells; first and second-floor windows and projecting lintels replaced.

**Northwest façade: (not street facing):**

Two-story, five-bay wide addition clad in cement board; first floor contains eight windows with projecting lintels and one secondary entrance with shallow stoop and PVC wood railings, with light fixture, metal vent, and fire alarm; southwestern entrance features shallow stoop with stone steps PVC wood railings and bracketed projecting hood with light fixture and security camera; second-floor contains four windows with projecting lintels.

**Historic Northeastern wing addition:**

Roofline has been raised six feet to meet main structure's roofline; windows and lintels replaced at first and second floors; two-story, two-bay wide addition to non-street facing side clad in cement board contains secondary entrance with projecting portico hood with light fixture and security camera; four windows at second floor.

## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### City Island<sup>6</sup>

Located just south of Pelham Bay Park in Long Island Sound, City Island, then called Magnets, or Great Minnefords,<sup>7</sup> Island, was part of the 9,000-acre tract that Thomas Pell (1613-1669) purchased from the Siwanoy Indians in 1654. Pell named his estate Pelham in honor of his tutor Pelham Burton.<sup>8</sup> After Pell's death, Pelham manor passed to his nephew Sir John Pell who was the first of the Pells to live on the estate.<sup>9</sup> During this time period, it was customary for large landowners to own slaves, and many members of the Pell family were slave owners.<sup>10</sup> In 1685, Sir John Pell sold City Island to John Smith of Brooklyn. From 1700 to 1761, the island changed hands several times. In 1761, Benjamin Palmer purchased the island for a syndicate whose

intention was to transform it into a commercial center that would rival Manhattan.<sup>11</sup> The island was renamed City Island in honor of this potential development project. The project was abandoned during the Revolutionary War when the British occupied the island. It was revived in the 1790s, but ultimately failed to materialize.

In 1807, most of the island came into the possession of Nicholas Haight, who, in 1818, sold 42 acres at the island's southernmost tip to George Horton. According to censuses from 1790 to 1820, both Horton and Haight owned slaves. Horton, the Supervisor of Westchester County from the Town of Pelham, promoted the building five streets, including Pilot, Pell, and Schofield, and the public highway, Main Street (now City Island Avenue). In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century "parts of the island changed hands many times as they were subdivided and sold."<sup>12</sup>

Initially, City Island was a farming community. The island's first commercial enterprise, a solar salt works, which produced salt from evaporated seawater, was established by E.C. Cooper in the 1820s. Around 1830, Orrin Fordham, a shipbuilder from Connecticut, established an oyster planting business on the east side of City Island.<sup>13</sup> "Although it was common knowledge that oyster larvae set on almost any clean underwater object, especially oyster shells, in summertime,"<sup>14</sup> no one in the United States prior to Fordham had deliberately planted shells in order to cultivate oysters. His idea revolutionized the business. In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, oysters became the "chief fishery product of the United States" as well as the "most extensively eaten of all shellfish."<sup>15</sup> Fulton Fish Market at the South Street Seaport in Manhattan became the primary clearinghouse for oysters grown not only in the local waters off places such as City Island, Staten Island, and Raritan Bay, but for oysters from the Chesapeake Bay, Delaware Bay, and New England, which were shipped from the market across the country and overseas.

Between 1847 and 1869, numerous settlers moved to City Island to take part in the oyster business, which became "the chief industry employing the bulk of the male population at City Island."<sup>16</sup> City Islanders also profited by servicing, supplying, and building ships, which supported the island's economy throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There were many small yards serving the oyster boats throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century but the first commercial shipyard, D. Carll Shipyard, was established on City Island in 1862.<sup>17</sup> After the Civil War, the Carll yard became known for the construction and rebuilding of large luxury yachts. Capitalizing on the Carll shipyard's success, other commercial boatyards were soon established, resulting in the construction of numerous luxury and racing yachts, including a number of America's Cup winners. The federal government also commissioned vessels from the City Island boatyards during both world wars. After World War II, the leisure-boating industry rose to prominence.

For much of its history City Island was part of the Town of Pelham, Westchester County. In 1873 City Island was linked to the mainland by a toll bridge, which became a free bridge when the eastern Bronx was annexed by New York City in 1895. Limited access to the island discouraged dense development, and as a result the island has retained its small-town atmosphere. Numerous yacht clubs, marinas, and popular seafood restaurants continue to play a role in the island's economy.

### Schofield Family<sup>18</sup>

Starting in 1820s, members of the Schofield family, William, Daniel and David, were among the first to own large estates on City Island.<sup>19</sup> From 1830 to 1840 there were four main families that settled on City Island: the Schofield, who were farmers; the Hortons, who were

associated with shipping and transportation; the Fordhams, who were oystermen; and the Coopers, who owned a successful salt mining company.

A map of City Island published in 1856 shows that most of the buildings were concentrated at the middle of the island, primarily on Main Street (now City Island Avenue), with small enclaves that developed at the southern end of the island. That same map also shows that three large parcels of land were owned by several members of the Schofield family. Daniel Schofield owned the estate at the northern end of the island just above Prospect Street (now Carol Street), on the west side of Main Street. William, Sr., owned property on the west side of the main road and David owned property directly to the east.<sup>20</sup> A later map dated from 1867 shows William owning both parcels on either side of the main road. William, Sr., and Maria (Bishop) Schofield settled on City Island in 1826. The Schofield were among the first land owners on City Island and were engaged in the farming industry. They had five children, including the eldest William Henry (1828-1902), and the middle child Elizabeth (1831-1868), who married Samuel Pell of City Island and had 12 children. Upon the death of William, Sr., the family estate passed to William Henry Schofield. He married Sarah (Fritts) Schofield (1829-?) in 1867; their two children died young.<sup>21</sup> Unlike his father, William H. pursued an oyster planting business and, later, a very successful shipping business.<sup>22</sup> In addition to his commercial interest he took an active interest in the community of City Island, donating land in 1865 for a school house at Orchard Street and City Island Avenue (later the City Island Police station). William H. Schofield resided at 65 Schofield Street until his death in 1902. He was survived by his wife, Sarah who resided there until her death in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>23</sup> It is unclear why the property came under the ownership of Elizabeth Pell's heirs in 1881. George and Alice Hawkins owned the property until 1959. The Bruno family, Florio, Vito, Robert, and Mary, owned equal interest in the property until 2005. The property was then sold to Joseph M. Carano, and is now owned by William L. and Sharon Salmon George.

### The Design of the William H. Schofield House

The William H. Schofield House is an impressive intact example of a transitional Italianate style farmhouse, a style that was once prevalent on City Island. The Italianate style of architecture dominated American house design from 1850 to 1880, and is characterized here by the square plan, and tall windows, combined with Greek revival style features such as the flat roof with overhanging cornice and elaborate paired acorn drop brackets under eaves that flank octagonal shaped windows.

The Italianate style was well represented on City Island, where it coincided with the prosperity of City Island during its maritime heyday. In addition to the Schofield House, the island has several other two-story Italianate style residences, including the houses at 62 Schofield Street, 21 Carol Street and 31 Carol Street, 141 Pilot Street, 650 City Island Avenue and 529 Minneford Avenue; although most have been altered, making the Schofield house a rare reminder of a once popular style on City Island.

It seems likely that a local carpenter-builder was responsible for the design of William H. Schofield House; the building shares a number of features with other City Island houses of the same period. Most notable are its similarities with the Samuel Pell House at 586 City Island Avenue (built 1876, a designated New York City Landmark). Both share some transitional Italianate design elements, including the moldings employed over the window frames, the

entrance surrounds, and also the deep overhanging eaves, supported by paired ornately-carved brackets.

While there were once many such houses in rural towns and villages that were incorporated into New York City in the 1890s, well preserved examples are becoming increasingly rare. The generously proportioned and detailed William H. Schofield House is a significant reminder of the transitional Italianate style farmhouses and village residences that once flourished in New York City.

Report researched and written  
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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The family name of Scofield is also spelled Schofield, the family used both spellings.

<sup>2</sup> Information in this section adapted from: Randall Comfort, *History of Bronx Borough, City of New York: compiled by the North Side News* (Bronx, NY: North Side Press, 1906); New York City Directories, 1882/83, 1891/92, 1893/94, 1897/98, 1900/01-1906/07; tombstone inscriptions for the Pell and Schofield family members at the Pelham Cemetery, City Island; transcribed articles from the *City Island Drift* in the City Island Historical Society.

<sup>3</sup> A structure was shown to exist on this property on a map dating from 1856, *Map of the Real Estate of Gilbert W. Bowne, Dec'd on City Island, Town of Pelham*, County of Westchester, NY, August 20, 1856, Andrew Findley Surveyor, The New York-Historical Society collection.

<sup>4</sup> The original lot size for 65 Schofield was 119 feet 17 inches in length by 114 feet in width. On October 7, 1959, the lot was reduced to 69 feet 17 inches in length by 114 feet in width.

<sup>5</sup> New York City Department of Buildings Alteration No: 220041540 (12/16/2009); Alteration No: 220178830 (11/13/2015); Alteration No: 220347337 (02/20/2014).

<sup>6</sup> This section on the early history of City Island is based on Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Samuel Pell House Report*, prepared by Gale Harris (LP-2115) (New York: City of New York, 2002); Landmarks Preservation Commission, *21 Tier Street House Report*, prepared by Loretta Lorraine (LP-2063) (New York: City of New York, 2000); LPC, Bronx Survey (New York: City of New York, 1978), 148-149; Department of City Planning, Waterfront & Open Space Division, "There is an Island...: City Island's Growth and Development", prepared by Jolanta M. Grajski (New York: City of New York, 1999); Department of City Planning, Waterfront & Open Space Division, "A Maritime History of City Island," draft report prepared by Jolanta M. Grajski, 1999 (copy available at the LPC in the "City Island," Bronx current research file); Lloyd Ultan, "City Island," *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, Kenneth T. Jackson, ed (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1995), 231; Stephen Jenkins, *The Story of the Bronx* (New York: G.B. Putnam's, 1912), 39, 48-49, 51-56, 427-432; Lockwood Barr, *Ancient Town of Pelham* (Richmond, VA: The Dietz Press, Inc., 1946), 12-44, 80-87; Alice Payne, *Tales of the Clamdiggers* (Floral Park, NY: Graphicopy, Inc., 1969).

<sup>7</sup> Information in this section adapted from: Joan H. Geismar, Draft 1A Archaeological Assessment, *Replacement of City Island Road Bridge Over Eastchester Bay, Bronx, New York*, January 2005: the Dutch related that it had several names for the island, a reference to Minnewits or Manuring Island (now City Island) in 1654, was considered a good place to intercept English Pirates.

<sup>8</sup> "Town of Pelham – Official Website" @ <http://www.townofpelham.com>.

<sup>9</sup> The Robert and Marie Lorillard Bartow House (1836-42), now the Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, a designated New York City Landmark was built for Robert Bartow, a descendant of the Pells, on a site not far from Sir John Pell's original manor house. The original manor house was occupied from 1675 to 1790 by four generations of

the Pell family and aside from the period between 1813-1836 (when it was owned by the LeRoy family) its site remained in the Pell family for 234 years until it was acquired by the City of New York as part of Pelham Bay Park.

<sup>10</sup> According to the 1790-1820 census Thomas Pell was the only member of the Pell family who did not own slaves. 1790; Census Place: Pelham, Westchester, New York; Roll: M637\_6; Page: 142; Image: 589; Family History Library Film: 0568146; 1810; Census Place: Pelham, Westchester, New York; Roll 37; Page: 1160; Family History Number: 0181391; Image: 00270.

<sup>11</sup> Barr, 82; LPC, Bronx Survey, 148. See also the Benjamin Palmer Papers, manuscripts collection, The New-York Historical Society.

<sup>12</sup> Payne, 10.

<sup>13</sup> This information on oystering on City Island is based on “A Maritime History of City Island,” 2-5; James Richardson, “American Oyster Culture,” *Scribner’s Monthly* (December 15, 1877), 225-237; Alfred Fordham, “City Island: Its History and Growth,” *City Island News*, Oct. 1, 1953; John M. Kochiss, *Oystering from New York to Boston* (Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport, Inc., 1974).

<sup>14</sup> Kochiss, 17.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, ixx.

<sup>16</sup> Fordham.

<sup>17</sup> Richard F. Welch, *An Island’s Trade: Nineteenth-Century Shipbuilding on Long Island* (Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport Museum, Inc., 1993), 35.

<sup>18</sup> Information in this section adapted from: Marion A.M., Scofield Family Miscellany, clippings and miscellaneous material (Milstein Division, New York Public Library); Steven Walling Barrett, *A Scofield Family Portrait* (University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2001) 125-140; Harriet Scofield, Henry Burdette Whipple, *A Scofield Survey: Daniel Scofield (d. ca. 1669) and Richard Scofield (1613-1670) and their descendants for about six generations, Rufus Scofield (1773-1854) and his descendants*, (High Point, N.C.: 1972), 106-110, 245-247; Robert L. Scofield, *Dictionary of the Scofield Family of North America* (manuscript, c. 1950) (Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1964), Microfilm, Milstein Division, New York Public Library.

<sup>19</sup> 1820 census lists only Daniel, while the 1830 lists both Daniel and William living in the town of Pelham in Westchester County, New York; 1810; Census Place: Orwell, Rutland, Vermont; Roll 65; Page: 172; Family History Number: 0218669; Image: 00119; Images reproduced by Family Search. Original data: Third Census of the United States, 1810; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M252, 71 rolls); Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; All census information adapted from : Ancestry.com. 1790, 1800, 1810, 1820, 1830, 1910, 1920, United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Information in this section adapted from: *Map of the Real Estate of Gilbert W. Bowne, Dec’d on City Island, Town of Pelham*, County of Westchester, NY, August 20, 1856, Andrew Findley Surveyor, The New York-Historical Society collection.

<sup>21</sup> Adapted from: William S. Pelletreau, *Historic Homes and Institutions and Family History of New York* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1907) IV, 242-243.

<sup>22</sup> In an 1870 census William’s occupation is listed as oysterman.

<sup>23</sup> 1910 census lists Sarah Schofield as 80 years of age, head of household and a widow residing on City Island, however, she is not listed in the 1920 census.

## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that William H. Schofield House has a special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, that this transitional Italianate style farmhouse was constructed around 1860, as a part of the estate of William Schofield, a member one of the first families to settle City Island in 1826; that the residence is a fine example of the Italianate style of architecture that dominated American house design from 1850 to 1880, and is characterized here by a square plan and tall windows, combined with Greek Revival style features such as a flat roof with overhanging cornice and elaborate paired brackets under the eaves that flank the octagonal shaped windows; that the house's most striking feature is the one-story veranda that runs the width of the ground floor main facade and set-back addition; that the turned posts rise from a baluster railing to support the projecting porch roof; and that each is flanked by wooden jig-sawed brackets; that directly above are pairs of smaller brackets ornamented with acorn drop pendants; that City Island was first established as an English settlement in 1654, when the English crown granted Thomas Pell ownership of the island and parts of Westchester County; that City Island was privately owned, first by the Pell family and then by the Palmer family; that it became a part of the town of Pelham, in Westchester County, in 1819 and was then sectioned off into large parcels of land as ownership passed to other individuals; that Schofield Street takes its name from the estate of one the first families to acquire land on City Island after it became part of Westchester County; that William Schofield acquired the land in 1826; that the residence at 65 Schofield is attributed to his son William Henry Schofield, who resided there until his death in 1902; and that the property was later passed to his sister, Elizabeth Schofield, who married Captain Samuel Pell (1821-1894), son of Thomas and Maria Pell, who was a descendant of the Pell family of Pelham Manor; that Samuel Pell was one of the island's leading oystermen, the principal industry of City Island in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; that the William H. Schofield House at 65 Schofield Street is significant as a rare surviving transitional Italianate farmhouse on City Island, and for its association with the Pells and Schofield, two prominent City Island families, and for Samuel Pell's association with City Island's oyster industry.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a landmark the William H. Schofield House Borough of the Bronx, and designates Bronx Tax Map Block 5628, Lot 146 as its Landmark Site.

Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair

Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin, Wellington Chen, Michael Devonshire, Michael Goldblum,  
John Gustaffson, Kim Vauss, Commissioners





William H. Schofield House  
65 Schofield Street (South elevation)  
Borough of the Bronx  
Tax Map Block 5628 Lot 146  
*Photo: Marianne Percival, 2016*



William H. Schofield House  
65 Schofield Street (Addition)  
*Photo: Theresa C. Noonan, 2016*



William H. Schofield House  
65 Schofield Street (West elevation)  
*Photo: Theresa C. Noonan, 2016*



William H. Schofield House  
65 Schofield Street (North West elevation)  
*Photo: Theresa C. Noonan, 2016*



William H. Schofield House  
65 Schofield Street (South East elevation)  
*Photo: Marianne Percival, 2016*



William H. Schofield House  
New York City Dept. of Taxes Photo c.1939  
*Photo Source: NYC, Dept. of Records and Information Services, Municipal Archive*



William H. Schofield House  
New Garage 65 Schofield Street (South East elevation)  
*Photo: Theresa C. Noonan, 2016*



William H. Schofield House  
65 Schofield Street (South elevation)  
*Photo: Theresa C. Noonan, 2010*





William H. Schofield House  
65 Schofield Street (South elevation)  
*Photo: Sarah Moses, 2016*

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Graphic Source: MapPLUTO, Edition 15v1, Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, DHW, Date: 4.12.2016