

**PUBLIC SCHOOL 72**, 1674 Lexington Avenue, aka 1674-1686 Lexington Avenue and 129-131 East 105th Street, Borough of Manhattan. Built 1879-82; Architect David I. Stagg, Superintendent of Public School Buildings, New York City Board of Education

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1633, Lot 13.

On July 15, 1991, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Public School 72 and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 3). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A total of eleven speakers testified in favor of the proposed designation; eight of those speakers were in favor of this as well as other items on the calendar at the hearing, but urged the Commission to continue its work in Harlem. Three speakers declined to take a position regarding this proposed designation until such time as that work continues.

#### Summary

Built in 1879-82, Public School 72 was the work of David I. Stagg, whose career in public school architecture spanned more than half a century and who was Superintendent of Public School Buildings for the New York City Board of Education from 1872 to 1886. A rare and almost completely intact example of a late nineteenth-century public school building in Manhattan, it was



designed to meet the needs of a once-densely populated immigrant neighborhood in East Harlem. The school, which displays the range of sharply articulated detailing and angular ornament characteristic of the neo-Grec style, is an excellent example of that style as it was used in New York public school design during the late 1870s and 1880s. P.S. 72 is one of a few extant school buildings that represent a departure from the design vocabulary of the Italianate style which dominated school design from the late 1840s through the early 1870s. The building continued in use as a public school until 1975, when it was closed by the Board of Education. The building later housed classrooms for Touro College and offices for the East Harlem Council for Community Improvement. A recent complete renovation and restoration under the direction of the New York City Economic Development Corporation has insured the long term future of this building for community use.

## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### Development of East Harlem

That part of New York known as East Harlem encompasses the area of Manhattan east of Fifth Avenue, and north of 96th Street to East 142nd Street and the Harlem River. The first major wave of real estate development in the area began in 1825 after the Commissioners' Plan of 1811 inspired enormous interest in uptown Manhattan real estate. Another major spur to the development of the area occurred in 1832, when a group of businessmen constructed a double track for horse-drawn streetcars from downtown Manhattan to the Harlem River along Fourth Avenue. The line became the New York and Harlem Railroad and included five train stops in East Harlem. In 1835, steam locomotives were introduced on the rail line, increasing accessibility, and enabling the area to become a town of resort hotels situated on the fringe of New York.<sup>1</sup>

By the 1850s, East Harlem had a population of 1,500 and, in addition to hotels for city visitors, the community included a number of large residential estates located on the East and Harlem Rivers. Third Avenue developed as the area's major retail and commercial street, and rowhouses were built along avenues and side streets from the 1850s through the late 1870s. The status of East Harlem as a somewhat remote, sparsely populated semi-rural community ended with the extension of the Second and Third Avenue elevated railroads to 125th Street, in 1879 and 1880 respectively. These new rapid transit lines greatly reduced travel time between East Harlem and City Hall, and made the area readily accessible to the city's downtown business, commercial, and industrial centers.<sup>2</sup>

An unparalleled wave of residential construction, beginning in East Harlem around 1880, continued until about 1910. By 1885 nearly 50 percent of East Harlem below 125th Street was developed into a densely-populated urban area with tenements, rowhouses and other private homes. Along with the physical development of the area came the pressing need for new facilities for social, cultural, and religious institutions, including new public schools. By the time Grammar School (later Public School) No. 72 was built in 1879-81, occupying the entire blockfront of Lexington Avenue between East 105th and 106th Streets, the surrounding blocks in this part of East Harlem were largely built up with rows of houses and four-story

flats constructed in the 1870s. The school is located near the Romanesque Revival Saint Cecilia's Roman Catholic Church which was built in 1883-87 on the same block.<sup>3</sup>

From the late 1870s until the consolidation of Greater New York in 1898, school buildings were constructed in response to severely overcrowded conditions in existing public schools, especially those located in upper Manhattan. In January 1879, the Board of Education appointed a committee to prepare and present to the New York State legislature an act authorizing the New York City Controller to borrow \$1 million for new school buildings and sites in 1879-80. In July 1879, the Board of Education appropriated \$373,000 to build four new schools on the east side of Manhattan, including Grammar School No. 72, and to enlarge three existing schools, all under the supervision of David I. Stagg.<sup>4</sup>

### David I. Stagg and Schools in New York City

The Board of Education's Superintendent of Public School Buildings, David I. Stagg (1816-1886) supervised new school construction and designed many of the new school buildings completed during his tenure. Stagg was born in New Jersey and as a youth was trained in carpentry. He received no formal training in architecture, instead beginning work in 1834 as a carpenter in the shops of the Public School Society of New York, the predecessor of the city's Board of Education, which ran the city's school system until the New York City Board of Education was established in 1842. The construction and repair of school buildings was under the direction of Superintendent of School Buildings, Amnon Macvey.<sup>5</sup>

Stagg became an assistant to Macvey, supervising the construction of the Free Academy, later known as the College of the City of New York (1850-51, demolished), designed by James Renwick and located at Lexington Avenue and East 23rd Street. By 1870 he was employed as the Board of Education's Architect for Public Instruction. The original Board of Education offices (no longer extant), located at Elm and Grand Streets in downtown Manhattan, were built from plans produced by Stagg.

Stagg was also responsible for the design of the large Gothic Revival classroom building of the

Normal College of New York, later known as Hunter College (demolished), built in 1870-73 and located on Park Avenue at East 68th Street.<sup>6</sup> In 1872, upon the death of Macvey, Stagg became the Board of Education's Superintendent of Buildings and Repairs, a position he would hold until his death in 1886.<sup>7</sup>

Public school buildings designed by D.I. Stagg were different from earlier school designs. From the late 1850s, when Stagg worked as Macvey's assistant, until the mid-1870s, during Stagg's first years as Architect of Public Instruction, most of the city's public schools were designed in the Italianate style with a flat and symmetrical unified facade, tall narrow proportions of massing and fenestration, mansard roofs, and classical design features such as rusticated bases, elaborate curved-profile pedimented window lintels, curved bracketed cornices, and facade pilasters and pediments.<sup>8</sup>

Beginning in the mid-1870s, public schools in New York City were designed in an eclectic manner that incorporated elements of Italianate, Romanesque Revival, and neo-Grec design. These three- and four-story school buildings were often compact, yet monumental in their appearance, with symmetrical volumetric massing. The schools designed by David I. Stagg featured wider windows, angular and flattened geometric detailing and sharply delineated ornament, including angled brick stringcourses, window lintels with sharp geometric forms, brick corbelling, and stone bands. These buildings also had prominent stair towers that rose above the roof and contributed to the visibility of the schools in their neighborhoods.<sup>9</sup>

Single and paired tall double-hung windows, clerestory hallway windows, and interior doorway transoms provided abundant light and adequate ventilation for classrooms. Unlike earlier school buildings, the new schools had interior plumbing with indoor sanitary bathrooms/lavatories providing "Croton water" and brass plumbing fixtures.<sup>10</sup>

#### Public School 72

Public School 72, originally Grammar School No. 72 (1879-81), one of the first public schools to be constructed in East Harlem, is a remarkably intact example of later nineteenth century urban school building design. The school was built to accommodate the great increase in East Harlem's student population resulting from the settlement of large numbers of immigrants in the area. The New

York City Board of Education Committee on Sites and New Schools described the situation in an 1878 report:

*As is well-known, there is but one School located between 87th and 115th street in this section of the [12th] Ward, that being Primary School No. 19, corner 105th Street and Third Avenue . . .*

*There is a pressing demand for School accommodation in this section of the Twelfth Ward, many pupils applying for admission to P.S. No. 19 as well as to the Schools in 87th Street [G.S. No. 37], and 115th Street [G.S. No. 57] having to be refused admission.*

*The committee did not lose sight of the fact, that in consequence of the facilities for rapid transit, which will soon be completed as far as Harlem, a great many houses are being erected in this section of the city, which will in the course of time become occupied by people removing from the lower portion of the city and elsewhere as fast as they shall become ready for occupancy . . . a great demand will, in all likelihood, be made for school accommodation which it will be impossible to supply, unless action be taken speedily.<sup>11</sup>*

In November 1878, the Board of Education recommended the allocation of \$20,000 to purchase eight lots located on Lexington Avenue between 105th and 106th Streets from Samson Benson McGown whose family had owned the property since 1791.<sup>12</sup> In February 1879, the property was acquired by the city, and in September 1879 construction began on the south wing of the new school building. This was followed in 1881 by the north wing that extended the length of the building along the entire Lexington Avenue frontage from 105th to 106th Streets.

The architect, Superintendent of Public School Buildings David I. Stagg, described the new school:

*The building is to be four stories in height . . . On the first floor there will be two play rooms, and two class rooms, on the second floor five rooms, to be used as class rooms. The class rooms average 530 square feet of floor surface, and the Assembly room, when doors [of the classrooms] are all moved back, will measure 57 by 72 feet. The fourth floor*

*will be arranged precisely the same as the second; the third floor will be divided into six class rooms, each 23 by 23 feet, with a hall 8 feet wide between.*

*There will be in all 18 class rooms, of large size, which will be equal to a register of 1,100 pupils.*

*This building not being hemmed in by adjoining buildings, as is almost invariably the case in the lower sections of the City, it is confidently expected that there will be no cause of complaint in regard to ventilation -- or perhaps rather the want of it -- in the rooms when completed.*

*The contracts require the work to be completed, so that the house may be occupied by September next, but from present appearances, it will not be ready before January, 1881.*<sup>13</sup>

In July 1880, the new school was designated Grammar School No. 72, and in September 1880 the trustees of the Twelfth Ward recommended that a north wing be added to the building, which was already under construction, in order to accommodate a larger than expected increase in the student population of the Ward; construction of the north wing began in April 1881.<sup>14</sup> The final design for the new school was described in August 1880 as a five-story structure with doorsills and copings of millstone, and exterior walls of North River brick faced with Collabar brick and Nova Scotia stone trim.<sup>15</sup>

In November 1880, authorization was granted to the trustees of the Twelfth Ward for a Girls' Grammar Department in the new school in addition to the boys' and girls' Primary Department. Authorization was also given for as many students as possible to be transferred from Primary School No. 19, with the existing P.S. No. 19 building to serve as a branch of the Primary Department of G.S. No. 72.

Because Grammar School No. 72 was located on a through-block corner site with no adjacent buildings, the building was visible from all sides with all facades designed accordingly. The interior plan of the school consisted of 38 square classrooms with 14-foot high ceilings flanking a wide north-south corridor. A total of 1,800 to

2,000 pupils were accommodated in 18 classrooms in the south wing and 20 in the northern portion.<sup>16</sup> The partially completed school building was initially opened in May 1881 and was entirely finished in February 1882.

#### Subsequent History

Grammar School No. 72 was overcrowded the year it was completed. In the Board of Education's *Annual Report* (1882), Superintendent Stagg stated that even with the completion of the north wing of Grammar School 72 and its 20 additional classrooms, "there is not room enough to accommodate all the pupils who desire to join this school."<sup>17</sup> By 1894, the school had a total of 2,549 students attending classes in a building designed for no more than 2,000 pupils.<sup>18</sup>

By 1902, the part of East Harlem that included the area around Grammar School No. 72 was almost completely developed with new buildings.<sup>19</sup> A second major wave of real estate development began in 1903 when "Old Law" tenements were remodeled and small three-story rowhouses north of 100th Street were demolished for six-story "New Law" tenements. By 1905, the area of East Harlem bounded by 99th and 104th Streets and First and Third Avenues, was the most densely populated district in uptown Manhattan.<sup>20</sup>

From 1910 through the 1920s, the demographics of East Harlem were transformed with the arrival of various ethnic groups, including Jewish and Italian immigrants, who moved into tenements vacated by earlier European immigrants.<sup>21</sup> In order to accommodate the unexpected increase in student enrollment at Grammar School No. 72, the city's Board of Education approved the construction of a three-story annex in December 1911. Completed in 1913, the freestanding rectangular red brick building was designed by C.B.J. Snyder and was situated to the west of the main school building, facing East 105th Street. The building contained a total of six classrooms in addition to a playroom located on the first floor.<sup>22</sup> The annex is located on the landmark site.

With a continuing surge in the number of children living in the neighborhood around G.S. No. 72, the Board of Education in April 1921 approved the construction of yet another annex for G.S. No. 72 across East 105th Street on the block immediately to the south. The large five-story

building was planned to contain an auditorium with a capacity of 400-500 and 40 classrooms. The new annex would accommodate girls in grades Kindergarten through 6B and boys in grades Kindergarten through 3B, and both boys and girls in grades 7A through 8B. In its final built form, the 1921 annex, designed by C.B.J. Snyder in the neo-Gothic style, housed a 468-seat auditorium, a 8,500 sq. ft. playground on the roof, and classroom accommodations for 1,807 pupils. This school annex opened on September 8, 1924.<sup>23</sup> It is not included in this landmark designation.

Puerto Ricans began moving into the area in the early 1930s, followed by a second influx of Puerto Ricans into East Harlem that occurred after World War II. East Harlem became a predominantly Hispanic area known as "El Barrio" since the late 1940s.<sup>24</sup> In 1941, with the number of classes at G.S. No. 72 increased to 101, reflecting this population increase, the Board of Education formed two separate elementary schools accommodating students from kindergarten through sixth grade. The original G.S. No. 72 on Lexington Avenue together with its first annex was renamed Public School 107, while the 1924 annex at 131 East 104th Street was designated as the new Public School 72.<sup>25</sup> In February 1967, the Board of Education adopted a resolution calling for the replacement of Public School 107 with a new public school, designated as Public School 74, that was constructed on the entire block bounded by Lexington and Park Avenues and East 107th and East 108th Streets. By March 1975, with a major decline in neighborhood school enrollment, the local community school district, Community School District 4, approved a resolution to close Public School 107, which was later adopted by the Board of Education. The building ceased to function as a public school on June 30, 1975, and was transferred to the New York City Board of Estimate.<sup>26</sup>

The former P.S. 72 building continued to be used for community purposes, and by 1980 it was leased by the Board of Estimate to Touro College, a private liberal arts institution, for classrooms, and the East Harlem Council for Community Improvement for offices and a job training center. In 1987, the building was vacated to make way for a proposed 48-family transitional shelter, but that plan was defeated by the Board of Estimate.<sup>27</sup> The building was renovated and restored in 1994-95 under the direction of the New York City

Economic Development Corporation for community use.

#### Description

The former Public School 72 is an imposing four-and-five-story neo-Grec style red brick building highlighted by dramatic entrance and stair towers, and characteristic angular, classically-inspired brick and stone ornament. The symmetrically-massed structure, fully articulated on all sides, is basically rectangular in plan. The main body of the building has a flat roof, but the stair and entrance towers are crowned by pyramidal roofs, now clad with standing-seam sheet metal.

The Lexington Avenue facade has a projecting five-story, five-bay central entrance pavilion flanked by two six-bay, four-story wings. The formidable entrance is marked by a two-story arched doorway set in a projecting center tower which rises to six stories, terminating in a corbelled brick cornice. Paired wood-paneled entrance doors are set below a paneled lintel and a paired six-light steel-framed transom. The form of the arched entrance is repeated in a two-story arched window at the fourth and fifth stories. Unlike the identical arched upper-story windows of the wings, the entrance fenestration is accentuated by the use of double-width alternating rectangular and arched windows.

The East 105th and East 106th Street facades are composed of rectangular two-bay-wide projecting stair towers flanked by one-bay sections which match the front facade. These projecting stair towers, which are framed by paired brick pilasters separated by recessed brick panels, balance the large center entrance and create a dramatic profile. The composition of the simpler rear (west) facade is a reflection of the center entrance, with a very slightly projecting center section with a modest center tower.

The vibrant neo-Grec ornament articulates the architectural components while unifying the four facades. These details include angled and corbelled brick, stone lintels, sills, stringcourses, and quoins. The stone ornament accentuates the windows, separates the floors, and caps the pilasters. The lavishly varied ornamental brickwork defines the divisions of the facades. Brick pilasters frame the bays, brick dentils define the recessed panels in the entrance bays, and the corbelled cornice with brick brackets and molded sheetmetal crowns the facade.

In accordance with the architect's concern for

light and air, windows are a major and defining part of the overall design with the building elevations featuring an ordered and regular arrangement of fenestration. The upper floor windows, apart from the entrance and stair bays, are set in arched openings with segmental-arched lintels of alternating brick and stone voussoirs. The ground floor window openings have flat neo-Grec style drip-molded lintels. The fenestration in the main entrance bay and the stair towers is treated differently. The alternating arched and rectangular paired entrance bay windows have solid bluestone stone lintels. The flat lintels in the stair towers have characteristic incised neo-Grec style ornament.

The painted wooden double-hung window sash is multi-paned, in keeping with the intricate angular ornament of the facade. The windows on the main facade wings and side facade corner bays have twelve-over-twelve sash, while the rear facade has mainly six-over-six sash. The entrance bay and stair tower windows have varied types of multi-paned sash, including nine-over-nine sash with three-light transoms, four-over-four, six-over-six, and quarter-circle eight-pane window sash.

#### Subsequent Changes<sup>28</sup>

Relatively minor alterations have been made to the exterior of Public School 72 over time. In 1889, the exterior brick walls of the building were re-pointed, sealed, and painted with coats of light cream-colored paint (a condition which survived until the recent restoration). In 1916, two exterior ground-floor slate-and-iron stairways were added to

the south stair tower, and various alterations were made to the interior of the school building, including the creation of a second-floor auditorium and a third-floor gymnasium and library. In 1941, the school was renovated by the federal Work Projects Administration (WPA), resulting in the re-pointing of exterior brick walls, and the removal of original polygonal-shaped metal lanterns from the north and south stairway towers.

In 1994-95, Public School 72 underwent an extensive interior and exterior restoration that included the removal of the building's exterior paint, and the redesign of the rear building entrance with the replacement of several original windows and portions of the original red-brick rear elevation wall with a large, arched metal and glass grid curtain wall above a new rear doorway. New standing-seam sheet metal roofs were installed on the north and south stair towers along with freestanding ornamental metal cresting and finials. New metal window grilles were added to ground-floor windows on all elevations, four new flagpoles were installed on the upper floors of the main facade, and new high-intensity exterior lighting with curved metal covers was added along the ground floor of the north, south, and rear elevations. Plaques have been placed by the entrance commemorating the original architect, date, and use of the building and its restoration by architects Lee Barrero and Raymond Plumey.

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#### NOTES

1. Donald Stewart, *A Short History of East Harlem* (New York: Museum of the City of New York, 1972), 32-34.
2. Ibid., 34. For a history of early businessmen and commercial enterprises in East Harlem, see *History and Commerce of New York*, 2nd Ed. (New York: American Publishing and Engraving Co., 1891) and *Harlem of To-Day* (New York: The Businessmen of Harlem, 1893). Jeffrey S. Gurock, *When Harlem Was Jewish, 1870-1930* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 7, 14-15.
3. Ibid., 14. For a graphic illustration of East Harlem's physical development in the late nineteenth century, see *Atlas of the City of New York, Manhattan Island for the years 1879, 1882, and 1891* (Philadelphia, PA: G.W. Bromley & Co.). For information on early religious institutions in East Harlem, see LPC, *Saint Cecilia's Church Designation Report*, LP-0933 (New York: City of New York, 1976).
4. "Overcrowded City Schools, Erecting New Buildings and Enlarging Old--Small Appropriations," *New York Times*, July 31, 1879,

8.

5. David I. Staggs obituary, *New York Tribune*, May 13, 1886, 5.
6. Ibid. Samuel White Patterson, *Hunter College, Eighty-five Years of Service* (New York: Lantern Press, 1955), 36-37, 39-44. For information on the construction of the Free Academy building, see S. Willis Rudy, *The College of the City of New York: A History, 1847-1947* (New York: City College Press, 1949), 24-28. Staggs' obituary stated that the architect was responsible for either the designs or plans of "more than 300 buildings."
7. "Report of the Special Committee on Matters Affecting School Buildings," *New York Times* (December 11, 1879), 2. The Superintendent of Public School Buildings oversaw the construction of all new schools as well as alterations and additions to existing school buildings.
8. Extant examples of such school buildings in Manhattan include the former Public School 17 (later the Food Trades Vocational High School), 208 West 13th Street in the Greenwich Village Historic District, dating from 1844 but featuring an 1858-59 Italianate style facade designed under the supervision of Amnon Macvey, and the Italianate style Public School 47, built in 1856 and designed by Thomas R. Jackson, located at 34 1/2 East 12th Street.  
For a survey of New York City public school architecture in the mid- to late nineteenth century, see *New York City School Buildings, 1806-1956* (New York: City of New York Board of Education, 1956), 8-17. For an in-depth study of early to mid-nineteenth century New York City public school buildings, see Mary B. Dierickx, "Architectural Preservation Report" in Francoise Bollack Architects, "Project Report for the Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center Renovation," 1986, unpublished report. See Elliot Willensky and Norval White, *AIA Guide to New York City Architecture*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988) for examples of extant mid-nineteenth century public schools in Manhattan, pp. 122, 126.
9. Extant examples of these schools designed by Staggs include Primary School No. 6 (ca. 1875), combining elements of the Italianate and neo-Grec style, located at 15 East 3rd Street, the neo-Grec style Public School 107 (1885), incorporating Classical Revival design elements, located at 272 West 10th Street, and the neo-Grec style Public School 79 (ca. 1886) located at 38 East First Street. These buildings are representative of typical late nineteenth-century urban public schools designed for densely populated neighborhoods. None are in use as public schools.  
For brief descriptions of extant late nineteenth-century public schools in Manhattan designed by David I. Staggs, see Willensky and White, 135, 161-162.
10. See section entitled "New School Buildings and Sites" in "Annual Report of the Superintendent of School Buildings," *Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City and County of New York* (New York: Hall of the Board of Education) for the years 1872-1890.
11. *Journal of the Board of Education of the City of New York* (Nov. 11, 1878), 913-914. The report from the Committee on Sites and New Schools

- stated that Primary School No. 19 was housed in leased space in a building located at the corner of East 105th Street and Third Avenue with the lease set to expire on November 1, 1879.
12. See conveyance records regarding the McGown family ownership of the land parcels located at 1674-82 Lexington Avenue, beginning with Liber 46, p. 558 (Section 6; Block 1633, Lot 13) located in the Office of the Register, New York County, and included in the "General Statement of Early Title" for 1674 Lexington Avenue. The desirability of the property owned by the McGown family was stated by the Committee on Sites and New Schools: "This is the cheapest, and most favorably located site in that section where the demand is most pressing at present . . . By purchasing these lots and erecting a building thereon, it will not only answer the present requirements but will enable the Board to be prepared to meet the demand which may be made hereafter." Ibid., 913-914. The Board of Education Finance Committee, to whom the report of the Committee on Sites and New Schools was referred, recommended that \$20,000 be appropriated for the purchase of the eight lots. The Finance Committee report stated that the Board of Education has the "financial ability" to appropriate the sum of \$20,000. Ibid. (Nov. 20, 1878), 964.
  13. The school building was constructed under New York City Department of Buildings, New Building application 609-1879 with construction commencing on September 4, 1879. David I. Stagg's description of the new school appeared in "Annual Report of the Superintendent of School Buildings," *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City and County of New York for the Year Ending December 31, 1879* (New York: Hall of the Board of Education, 1880), 286-287. "For the School Children, Four New School Houses Now Being Built," *New York Times*, August 14, 1880, 8, provided the overall building dimensions and floor heights of the new school building, while adding that "all of the floors in the building are deafened with mortar...ventilating flues extend from the floor in the second story to the ceiling of the 4th story."
  14. *Fortieth Annual Report . . . for the Year Ending December 31, 1881* (New York: Hall of the Board of Education, 1882), 278-279. With the approval of the northern addition, the total cost of the new school building was expected to be \$145,000.
  15. "For the School Children."
  16. *New York Times*, September 6, 1881, 8, stated that "about half of the building" was completed in May 1881 with space for 1,000 students. "Report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction of New York State," *Forty-First Annual Report . . . for the Year Ending December 31, 1882* (New York: Hall of the Board of Education, 1883), 28. The report mentions that even after completion of the school building in February 1882, the school did not have "room enough to accommodate the wants of the neighborhood."
  17. *Forty-First Annual Report . . . for the Year Ending December 31, 1882* (New York: Hall of the Board of Education, 1883), 175.



18. Charles C. Wehrum, "Description of Grammar and Primary Schools," *The Common Schools of the City of New York* (New York: The New York City Board of Education, March 1894), 52-55.
19. For information on the history of East Harlem in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see LPC, *St. Cecilia's Church* and the entry on Harlem written by Jeffrey S. Gurock and Calvin B. Holder in *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, Kenneth T. Jackson, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 523-524.
20. Gurock, 27-19, 37, and 54. A number of social and cultural institutions emerged in East Harlem during this period, most notably the Union Settlement Association founded in 1895. The Aguilar Free Library was built in 1898-99 on East 110th Street, then enlarged as the Aguilar Branch of the New York Public Library which opened in 1905. See exhibition brochure, "Union Settlement Association, 100 Years of Leadership, 1895-1995" (New York: Museum of the City of New York, 1995), and Harry Miller Lydenberg, *History of the New York Public Library* (New York: New York Public Library, 1923), 245, 544-545.
21. Gurock, 28, 50-54, 141-143.
22. *New York City Department of Education Journal* (September 13, 1911), 1311, 1335. A description of the new annex is provided on December 13, 1911, 1873, 1883.
23. *New York City Department of Education Journal* (April 27, 1921), 577; (Jan. 25, 1922), 105; (July 26, 1922), 1554-1555. "New School Buildings and Sites," *Report of the Superintendent of Schools, 1923-1926* (New York: Board of Education, 1927), 10.
24. An annual number of 52,000 Puerto Ricans moved to New York during the late 1940s, with most families settling in East Harlem which by this time also became known as "Spanish Harlem." For a general discussion of life in Spanish Harlem, see Dan Wakefield, *Island in the City: The World of Spanish Harlem* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959).
25. *NYC Board of Education Journal* (May 9, 1967), 555. *NYC Board of Education Journal* (May 19, 1971), 548. The latter states that the new P.S. 74, which will occupy an entire block in East Harlem, "will be a replacement for the obsolete, 89-year old structure of P.S. 107."
26. *NYC Board of Education Journal* (June 25, 1975), 913.
27. "Public School 72, A Big, Solid Centenarian That Still Exudes Potential," *New York Times*, May 29, 1988, X:7.
28. *Forty-Eighth Annual Report...for the Year Ending December 31, 1889* (New York: Hall of the Board of Education, 1890), 243. *Journal of the Board of Education of the City of New York* (July 26, 1916), 1073-1074. *New York City Department of Education Journal* (May 13, 1941), 833; (Nov. 12, 1941), 2032; (Dec. 10, 1941), 2156.

## 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 Public School 72 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, Public School 72 was the work of David I. Stagg, whose career in public school architecture spanned more than half a century and who was Superintendent of Public School Buildings for the New York City Board of Education from 1872 to 1886; that, built in 1879-82, it is a rare and almost completely intact example of a late nineteenth-century public school building in Manhattan; that the school, which displays the range of sharply articulated detailing and angular ornament characteristic of the neo-Grec style, is an excellent example of that style as it was used in New York public school design during the late 1870s and 1880s; that P.S. 72 is one of a few extant school buildings that represent a departure from the design vocabulary of the Italianate style which dominated school design from the late 1840s through the early 1870s; that it was designed to meet the needs of a once-densely populated immigrant neighborhood in East Harlem; that the building continued in use as a public school until 1975; and that a recent complete renovation and restoration under the direction of the New York City Economic Development Corporation has insured the long term future of this building for community use.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 21, Section 534, 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 Public School 72, 1674 Lexington Avenue, aka 1674-1686 Lexington Avenue, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1633, Lot 13, as its Landmark Site.



Public School 72, 1674 Lexington Avenue, aka 1674 Lexington Avenue and 129-121 East 105th Street, Manhattan  
View of East 105th Street and Lexington Avenue facades.

Photo: Carl Forster



Public School 72, 1674 Lexington Avenue, aka 1674 Lexington Avenue and 129-121 East 105th Street, Manhattan  
View of East 106th Street façade and west elevation

Photo: Carl Forster



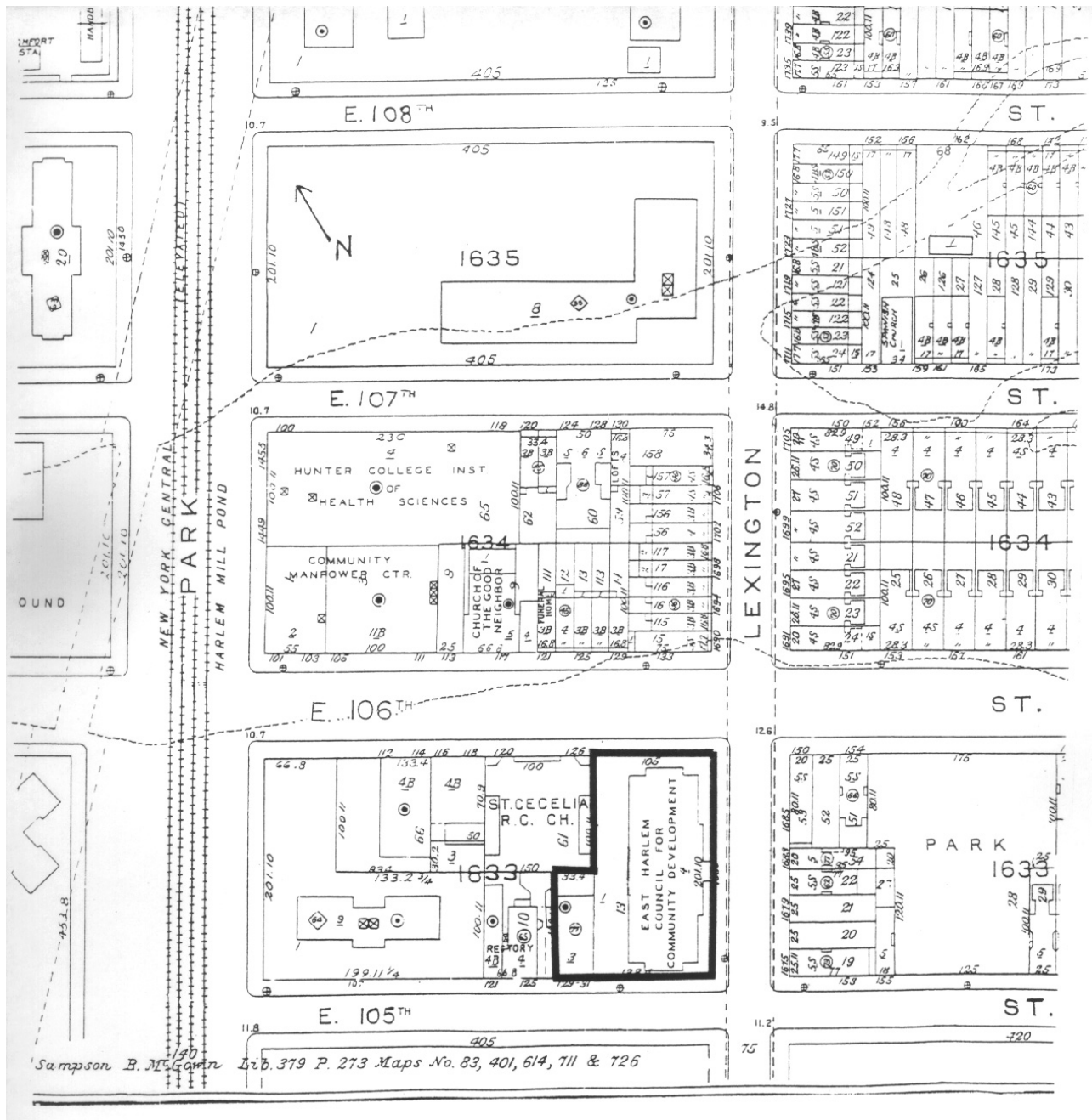
Public School 72, 1674 Lexington Avenue, aka 1674 Lexington Avenue and 129-121 East 105th Street, Manhattan  
View of East 105th Street façade and west elevation

Photo: Carl Forster



Public School 72, 1674 Lexington Avenue, aka 1674 Lexington Avenue and 129-121 East 105th Street, Manhattan  
View of East 105th Street façade and east elevation

Photo: Carl Forster



Public School 72, 1674 Lexington Avenue, aka 1674-1686 Lexington Avenue and 129-121 East 105th Street, Manhattan  
 Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1633, Lot 13  
 Source: Sanborn, *Manhattan Land Book* (1995-96), pl. 124



