

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

JAN 25 1977

DATE ENTERED

SEP 14 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Litchfield Villa

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Prospect Park West at 5th Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Brooklyn

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

15th

STATE

New York

CODE

36

COUNTY

Kings

CODE

047

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC
☐ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

ACCESSIBLE

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☒ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Department of Parks and Recreation

STREET & NUMBER

Prospect Park West at 5th Street

CITY, TOWN

Brooklyn

VICINITY OF

STATE

New York

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

City Registers Office, King's County

STREET & NUMBER

Municipal Building, Borough of Brooklyn

CITY, TOWN

Brooklyn

STATE

New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

N.Y. City Landmarks Preservation Commission Survey

DATE

March 15, 1966

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☒ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

N.Y. City Landmarks Preservation Commission

CITY, TOWN

305 Broadway

STATE

New York

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Litchfield Villa is sited on a small rise overlooking the Park Slope section of Brooklyn to its west and surrounded by five hundred and twenty-six acres of Prospect Park lands on its other sides.

The two-story Italianate residence has a rectangular main block broken by square, octagonal and round towers of varying heights which provide the typical irregularity of silhouette sought by designs of this type. The main entrance faces the west and is at the base of a massive, four-story, square tower. A contiguous three-story octagonal tower to the right of the main entrance provides a balcony and bay window to further dramatize the variety of surface treatments. An open, single story portico, utilizing reeded columns and unusual "corn and wheat" capitals is attached to the south elevation. The portico connects with a rectangular, two-story wing (1911) designed in the Italianate style by architect Frank J. Helmle. Typical Italianate detailing is found throughout the structure; these include round headed fenestration, classically detailed cornices, balustraded towers and bold interior moldings.

The interior plan consists of an asymmetrical arrangement of rooms, the larger one connected by anterooms entered from a large central foyer laid with decorative, square tiles. Rising from the right side of the foyer is a double staircase of cast-iron decorated with foliated scrollwork. The second floor foyer contains an open, balustraded circular well which permits light from the skylight rotunda to reach the first floor foyer.

Although the villa has been used as a park headquarters since 1892, there has been little substantial alteration to the room format and decorative detailing. The original stucco surface over the brick bearing walls has been completely removed from the main residence but was retained on the 1911 wing.

The only remaining period dependency structure is the carriage house which is now used for storage purposes.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☐ RELIGION
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE
☐ 1600-1699	☒ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER
☒ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☒ TRANSPORTATION
☐ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		☐ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1854-57 BUILDER/ARCHITECT A. J. Davis

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Litchfield Villa was constructed in 1854-57 for railroad pioneer Edwin C. Litchfield from plans provided by Alexander Jackson Davis. The architectural merit of the residence has been long recognized. The structure is said to be "Davis' finest remaining Italian style villa, one of the best in this country, for the architect was then the outstanding American designer of country and suburban houses."¹ Davis' original drawings for the project have survived and provide an important added dimension to historical documentation available to architectural historians and those concerned with the history of the picturesque ideal in America.² The Villa, sited in Prospect Park (1866), one of the most elaborate and impressive picturesque park creations of the nineteenth century, symbolizes in its quasi-rural enclave the comprehensiveness of Davis' and later, park designer Calvert Vaux's attempts to create a positive aesthetic environment in the midst of urban expansion. As such the Villa and the park which was built around it epitomize the central tenets of the picturesque, suburban ideal, the most influential and widely accepted of nineteenth century architectural and aesthetic theories.

Edwin Litchfield (1815-1885) was a very successful railroad and land developer during the great period of American expansion. Through the astute financial management of newly developing Mid-western railroads, Litchfield acquired a fortune and was honored with towns being named after him in Illinois and Minnesota. As a developer of the old Cortelyou farm in Brooklyn, still a rural area in mid-century, Litchfield's real

¹Jane B. Davies. "Architect Alexander Jackson Davis." CIVIC NEWS. April 1966, Vol. XXIX, No. 4, p. 18.

²Manuscript Collections. Avery Library, Columbia University, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Park Slope Civic Council Civic News, April, 1966,
Vol. XXIX, N. 4, pp. 12-26.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A | 18 | 58,672.0 | 4,510,210.0 |
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C | | | | |

B | | | | |
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Lawrence E. Gobrecht, Program Assistant

ORGANIZATION NYS Office of Parks and Recreation

Division for Historic Preservation

DATE

December 2, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

Empire State Plaza, Agency Bldg. #1

TELEPHONE

518-474-0479

CITY OR TOWN

Albany,

STATE

New York 12238

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL XX

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation

DATE

1/17/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

9-14-77

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

9-7-77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED JAN 25 1977

DATE ENTERED SEP 14 1977

Litchfield Villa, Brooklyn, Kings County

CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER #8 PAGE 2

estate transactions resulted in the development of the prestigious Park Slope section and also in the formulation of the Prospect Park tract which was developed just after the Civil War.³ Litchfield was therefore instrumental in creating the most stylish and architecturally significant section of the City of Brooklyn incorporating the area now known as Park Slope and Prospect Park itself.

The City of Brooklyn acquired the mansion and its grounds in 1869 to expand Prospect Park. Since 1892 it has housed the Brooklyn Park Headquarters.

The activities associated with the use of the property may have produced archeological remains which enhance the site's historical value.

³ Joseph K. Lane. "Edwin Clark Litchfield," CIVIC NEWS. April, 1966, Vol. XXIX, No. 4, p. 12-15.

Property

Litchfield Villa

State

New York

Working Number

1.25.77.130

77000946

Kings Co

TECHNICAL

Photos

5

Maps

1

CONTROL

OK 1.26.77

HISTORIAN

accept
P. Grover
4/21/77

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

Accept
Lebowich
4.14.77

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory

Review

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
Cole
4-25-77

BRANCH CHIEF

Accept
S-7-77

KEEPER

W
9.14/77

National Register Write-up

Send-back

Entered

SEP 14 1977

Federal Register Entry

10-4-77

Re-submit

INT:2106-74



Litchfield Villa
Brooklyn, Kings County

Photo credit: L. Gobrecht - 11/76
Neg. filed: NYS Office of Parks &
Recreation, Albany, NY

View from west.

JAN 25 1977 #165

SEP 14 1977

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Litchfield Villa
Brooklyn, Kings County

JAN 25 1977

Photo credit: L. Gobrecht - 11/76
Neg. filed: NYS Office of Parks &
Recreation, Albany, NY

View from south.

SEP 14 1977

#2

of 5

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Litchfield Villa
Brooklyn, Kings County JAN 25 1977

Photo credit: L. Gobrecht - 11/76
Neg. filed: NYS Office of Parks &
Recreation, Albany, NY

SEP 14 1977

Detail, capital & cornice.

#3

85

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Litchfield Villa
Brooklyn, Kings County

JAN 25 1977

Photo credit: L. Gobrecht - 11/76
Neg. filed: NYS Office Parks &
Recreation, Albany, NY

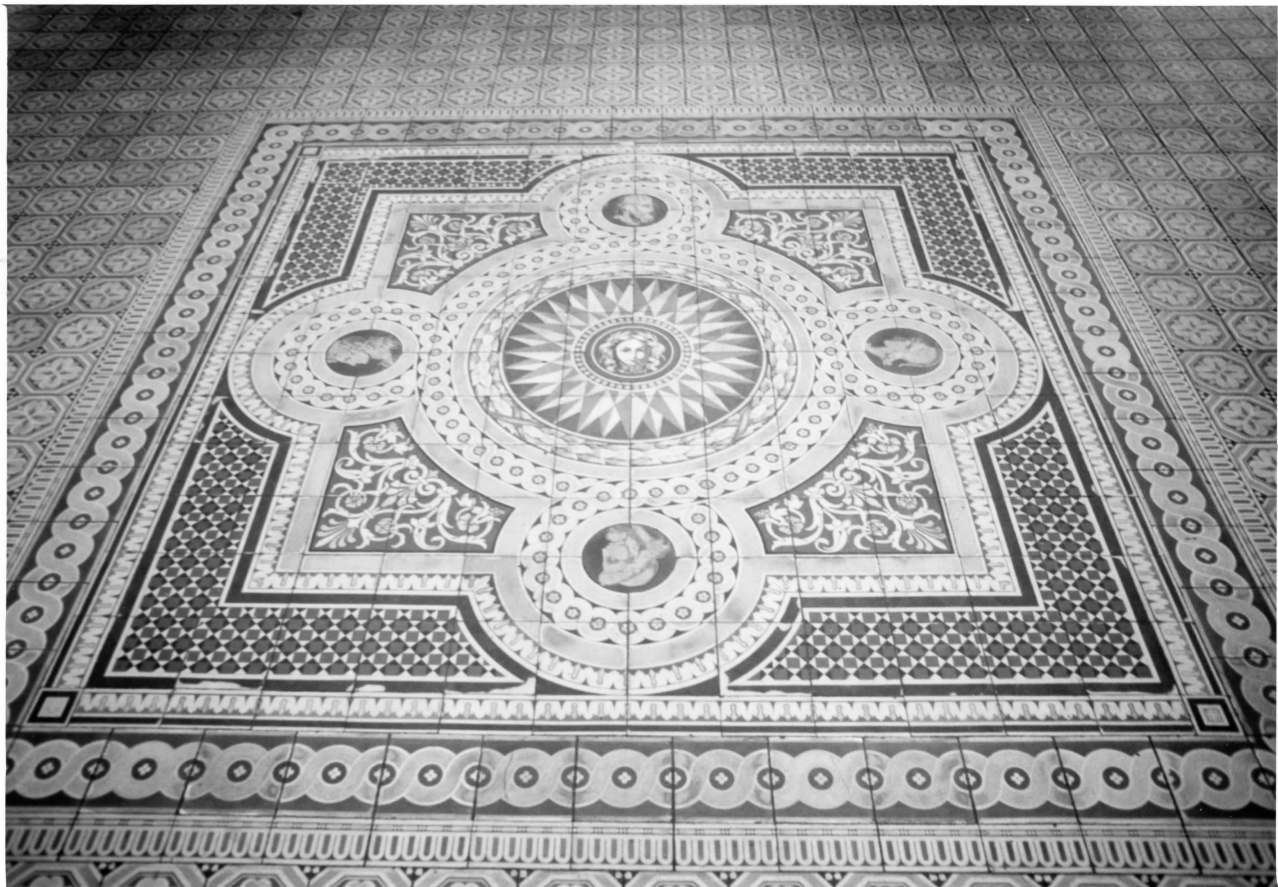
West wing, 20th c. addition.

#4

of 5

SEP 14 1977

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Litchfield Villa

Brooklyn, Kings County JAN 25 1977

Photo credit: L. Gobrecht - 11/76

Neg. filed: NYS Office Parks &
Recreation, Albany, NY

Tile floor, first floor foyer.

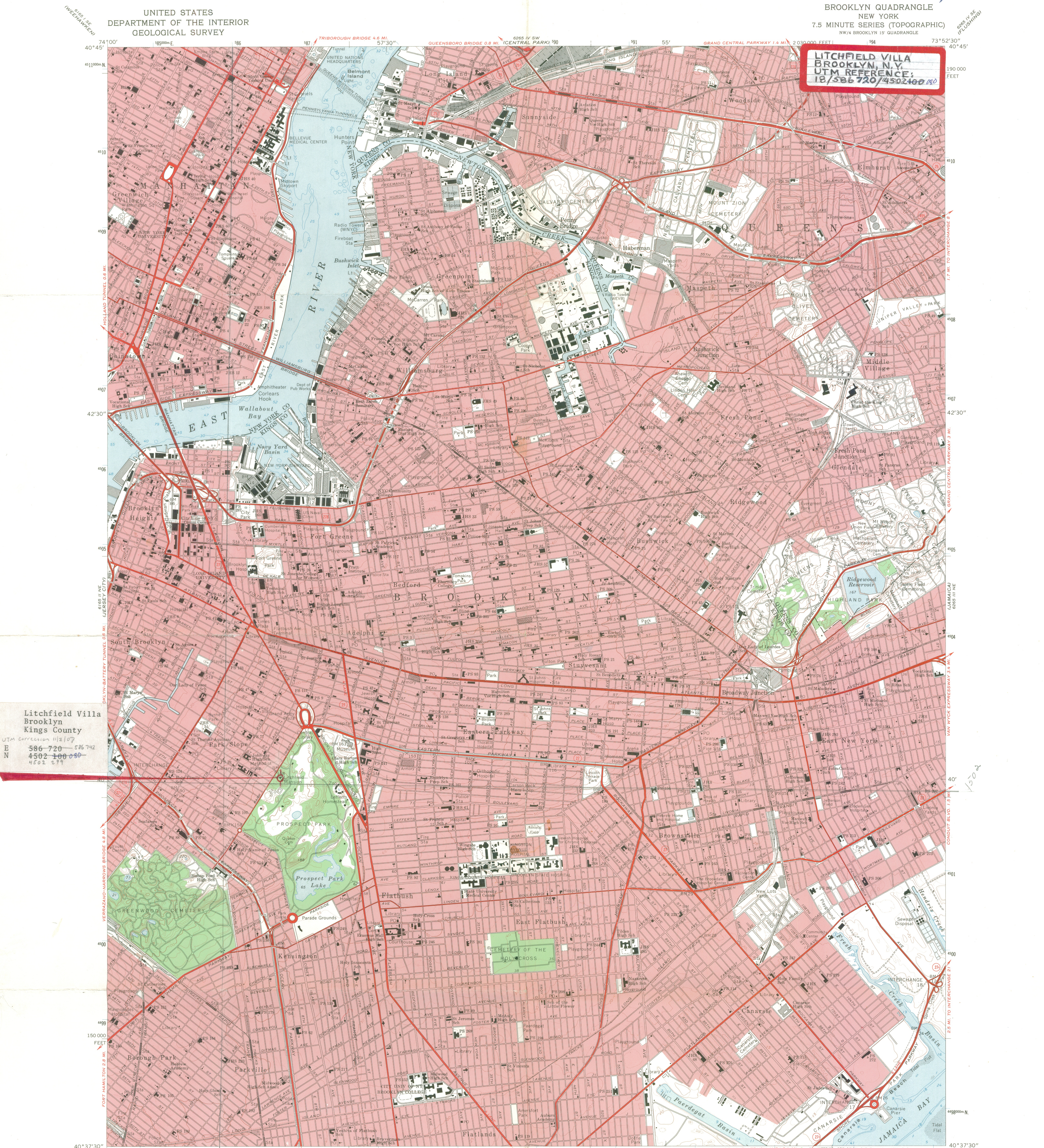
#505

SEP 14 1977

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

LITCHFIELD VILLA
BROOKLYN, N.Y.
UTM REFERENCE:
18/586 720/4502400

Litchfield Villa
Brooklyn
Kings County
UTM Correction 11/2/07
E N 586 720 586 742
4502 100 030
4502 219



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Revised in cooperation with New York Department of Transportation
Control by USGS, USCGS, USACE, and City of New York Board of
Estimate and Apportionment
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1954, and from USCGS Charts T-5094, T-5335, T-5454
T-5459, T-5460, and T-8449
Topography by planetimeter surveys 1955-1956. Revised from
aerial photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1967
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USCGS Charts
275 (1964), 542 (1967), and 745 (1966). This information
is not intended for navigational purposes
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on New York coordinate system, Long Island zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Entire area lies within New York City

SCALE 1:24,000
1 1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 METERS
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 4.2 FEET IN THE EAST RIVER
AND 5.2 FEET IN JAMAICA BAY

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Unimproved dirt ———
Interstate Route ——— State Route ———

BROOKLYN, N.Y.
NW/4 BROOKLYN 15 QUADRANGLE
N4037.5—W7352.5
1967
AMS 6265 III NW—SERIES V8

RECEIVED
JAN 25 1977
NATIONAL
REGISTERED
SEP 14 1977

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

Date Entered SEP 14 1977

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Dansville Library	Dansville Livingston County
Litchfield Villa	Brooklyn Kings County
Davinne Press Building	New York New York County
Reformed Dutch Church of Stone Arabia	Nelliston vicinity Montgomery County

Also Notified

Hon. Jacob K. Javits	State Historic Preservation Officer
Hon. Daniel P. Moynihan	Mr. Orin Lehman
Hon. Barber B. Conable, Jr.	Commissioner, Parks and Recreation
Hon. Leo C. Zeferetti	Agency Building #1
Hon. Edward I. Koch	Empire State Plaza
Hon. Donald J. Mitchell	Albany, New York 12238

Regional Director, North Atlantic Region

880 Mott 9/16/77

NR Data Sheet

DATE: 4/14/77
Reviewer: INITIALS: *DOE*
NR *DOE*
SEP 14 1977

NAME AS IT APPEARS IN FEDERAL REGISTER:

Litchfield Villa

OTHER NAMES:

LOCATION:

STREET & NUMBER

Prospect Park West at 5th St.

CITY, TOWN

Brooklyn

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

15th

STATE

New York

36

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

code

Kings

47

OWNER OF PROPERTY: (Circle)

PRIVATE

STATE

LOCAL GOV'T

MUNICIPAL

COUNTY

OTHER

ADMINISTRATOR (underline)

FEDERAL (AGENCY NAME):

NPS REGION: (CIRCLE)

N. ATLANTIC

MID ATLANTIC

SOUTHEAST

MIDWEST

SOUTHWEST

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

WEST

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

FEATURES:

INTERIOR

Substantially intact-1

unknown - 4

not applicable - 7

EXTERIOR

Substantially intact-2

unknown - 5

not applicable - 8

ENVIRONS

Substantially intact-3

unknown - 6

Not applicable-9

Interior, exterior, environs not intact-0

CONDITION -

EXCELLENT

GOOD

FAIR

DETERIORATED

RUINS

UNEXPOSED

Unexcavated

UNALTERED

ALTERED

Reconstructed

Excavated

ORIGINAL SITE

MOVED

Unknown

ACCESS -

Yes-restricted

Yes-unrestricted

No access

Unknown

historic district?

YES

NO

WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT?

YES

NO

IF YES, NAME:

WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK?

YES

NO

IF YES, NAME:

ADAPTIVE USE:

YES

NO

Saved?

YES

NO

FUNCTION(S): (use vocabulary words)

then- *Residential*

now- *Govt*

SIGNIFICANCE:

ARCHAEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC

ARCHAEOLOGY-HISTORIC

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

ART

COMMERCE

COMMUNICATIONS

CONSERVATION

ECONOMICS

EDUCATION

ENGINEERING

EXPLORATION

INDUSTRY

INVENTION

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

LAW/Gov't/politics

LITERATURE

MILITARY

MUSIC

PHILOSOPHY

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

RELIGION

SCIENCE

SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER (SPECIFY)

entertainment

health

recreation

settlement

socio/cultural

urban & commun

planning

Claims

"first"

YES

NO

"oldest"

YES

NO

"only"

YES

NO

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: *Italianate villa*

architect/m.builder: *A. J. Davis*

engineer:

landscape/garden designer:

artist/artisan:

interior decorator:

builder/contractor:

ETHNIC GROUP:

NAMES:

(label role
&
appropriate date)

personal

Edwin Litchfield - railroad pioneer

events

institutional

DATES:

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (Specific date or 1/4 of century) *1854-57*

DATE(S) OF "MAJOR" ALTERATIONS:

1911 2 story wing (Frank T. Helmke)

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT DATE(S):

SOURCE:

(OF NOMINATION)

PRIVATE

STATE

LOCAL GOV'T

MUNICIPAL

COUNTY

OTHER

FEDERAL AGENCY:

ACREAGE:

(to nearest tenth of an acre)

.1-.9

COMMENTS: (include architectural information here)

*BRICK, IRREGULAR MASSING, 2 STORIES WITH THREE + FOUR
STORY TOWERS, GABLE + HIPPED SECTIONS, COMBINATION
PORETT*

1911 addition in same keeping with style.

SIGNIFICANCE: (maximum two sentences)

*considered one of Davis's finest residences, built
for railroad pioneer Edwin Litchfield*