



Landmarks Preservation Commission

Lydia Ann Bell and J. Williams Ahles House

39-26 213th Street, Queens
Queens Block: 06236; Lot: 0018

**Backlog Initiative: Addressing 95 Properties
Queens Items**

Queens Community Board 11
Public Hearing Date(s): 6/23/2009



Photos: (right) 2014 (left) Bayside Historical Society late 19th c.

Special Public Hearings

The Landmarks Preservation Commission will hold a public hearing on the backlog of buildings in the Borough of Queens on **October 8, 2015** and encourages interested parties to submit written testimony in advance of that hearing. Each speaker will be given three minutes total to speak, and in that time may address all of the items within the Borough, just particular items, or add comments to support written testimony. In order to conduct efficient hearings, we ask speakers to register in advance, and submit their written statements and materials that will be read at the hearing by **October 1, 2015** to backlog95@lpc.nyc.gov.

If you have any questions about this property or the hearing process, please contact backlog95@lpc.nyc.gov or call (212) 669-7817. If you would like more information about this property, please see the research file summary (over) and go to our website (<http://www.nyc.gov/html/lpc/html/backlog95>) and click on the link for this building's research file.



**Landmarks Preservation
Commission**

Lydia Ann Bell & J. Williams Ahles House Description Landmark Type: Individual

Built: 1873

Architect: Not determined

Style: Second Empire

Research Staff Hearing Statement (2009)

LYDIA ANN BELL AND J. WILLIAM AHLES HOUSE

39-24 -39-26 213TH STREET, BAYSIDE, QUEENS

BUILT: C. 1873

STYLE: SECOND EMPIRE

PREVIOUS ACTIONS: CALENDARIED MAY 12, 2009; HEARD JUNE 23, 2009

SIGNIFICANT ALTERATIONS: MOVED, WRAP-AROUND PORCH, PROJECTING TWO-STORY
ORIEL, PORTION OF REAR ELL REMOVED; CLAPBOARD FAÇADE STUCCOED OVER, SOME
DECORATIVE DETAIL REMOVED



This impressive Second Empire Style residence is a rare reminder of nineteenth-century Bayside, when it was a village of suburban villas and substantial farmhouses. This house was constructed around 1873 by farmer Robert M. Bell for his daughter Lydia (usually known as Lillie) and her husband John William Ahles, a prominent grain merchant and officer of the New York Produce Exchange and Queens County Agricultural Society. The house is located on a portion of a farm that had descended in the Lawrence family from the seventeenth century and was purchased by Robert Bell in 1836, a few years after his marriage to Catherine Lawrence. It remained in the ownership of the Ahles family until the 1940s.

Built only a few years after railroad service reached Bayside in 1866 and residential subdivisions began to replace farms, the Ahles house typifies the substantial Second Empire style suburban villas erected by wealthy businessmen during the 1870s and 1880s. It retains the cubic form and dormered mansard roof typical of the Second Empire Style as well as such details as the molded cornice and hexagonal slate shingles. The house was moved a few feet from its original site to its present location in 1924 to allow Christy Street now 213th Street to be cut through to 41st Avenue. It was then that the original wrap-around porches and a bay window were removed, the facades were stuccoed, and the original windows replaced with multipane wood sash. Possibly the one-story rear ell was also rebuilt or replaced.

When J. William Ahles died in 1915, his obituary in the *New York Times* indicated that his home was "one of the show places" of the town. Today this house is thought to be one of the oldest surviving in Bayside and is considered a significant reminder of the neighborhood's past.