



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, MARCH 13, 2007
No. 07-10

CONTACT: Lisi de Bourbon, LPC: 212-669-7938
Leeann Lavin, BBG: 718-623-7289

BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN'S LABORATORY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING DESIGNATED A NEW YORK CITY LANDMARK

*McKim, Mead & White Masterpiece, Modeled after Small Churches in Italy's Lombardy Region,
Considered a Significant Example of the Firm's Late Work*

Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Laboratory Administration Building today won landmark status by a unanimous vote of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. Built between 1912 and 1917, and constructed of concrete and brick with a stucco finish and terra-cotta detailing, the Tuscan Revival-style building is capped by a striking cupola with slender rounded-arch windows.

"With its simple ornament, extraordinary cupola and octagonal roofs, this picturesque building complements its breathtaking surroundings," said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. "It's also considered one of McKim, Mead & White's most significant later commissions, and until today, was one of the few buildings designed by the firm without landmark protection."

"It is fitting that this magnificent building receive landmark status," said Scot Medbury, the Botanic Garden's president. It is both an extraordinary work of architecture and a living testament to early accomplishments in botany. Inscribed along a frieze on the building's exterior are the names of 68 renowned plant scientists, including Darwin and Linnaeus."

"The Garden's first director, Charles Stuart Gager, was a man of vision who was committed to balancing education, science and horticulture, all of which still form the essence of the Garden's mission today," Medbury said. "At the center of the building is the Library, which today houses the the Gardener's Resource Center, which provides information for horticulturists and educators and the greater plant-science community."

"Visitors often comment on how the Tuscan Revival style of the building visually transports them—it is such a welcome surprise in our urban landscape," he added.

Founded in 1910, Brooklyn Botanic Garden is located in the Prospect Heights section of Brooklyn. The Garden features more than 10,000 different kinds of plants from around the world on its 52 acres of specialty gardens. BBG serves communities in New York City and

More

internationally through horticultural display, extensive research projects, and numerous educational and community programs.

William Kendall designed the Garden's Laboratory Administration Building, which was constructed in stages between 1912 and 1917. Kendall is known for other outstanding New York City landmarks, including the Municipal Building, Casa Italiana and the United States General Post office. In 1929, he was appointed to be on a U.S. Commission to design cemeteries in France and Italy for American soldiers who lost their lives there.

Some of McKim, Mead & White's other buildings with landmark status in New York City include the Bowery Savings Bank, the Brooklyn Museum, the University Club and Low Memorial Library.

Located within the boundaries of Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the Laboratory Administration Building originally housed a physiological laboratory, elementary laboratory, a photographic operating room and dark room, in addition to research rooms. It is now used for a botanical and horticultural library, administrative offices, a visitors' center and an auditorium used for frequent community-based programs including lectures, cultural performances, and celebrations.

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission is the largest municipal preservation agency in the United States. Created in 1965, the Commission is dedicated to preserving New York City's architectural, historical and cultural treasures and protects more than 23,000 buildings in all five boroughs, including 1,158 individual landmarks, 107 interior landmarks, nine scenic landmarks and 85 historic districts.



2007 Photo by Kate Blumm,
Courtesy Brooklyn Botanic Garden



Photo circa 1924 by Louis Buhle,
Courtesy Brooklyn Botanic Garden Historic
Image Collection