

DVOŘÁK'S NEW YORK: A WALKING TOUR

Presented by the Dvořák American Heritage Association

Architectural Notes Prepared by Majda Kallab Whitaker, 2021

130 East 17th Street

Just west of this Italianate-style, mid-19th-century building, and part of the same row of houses, was the site of the National Conservatory of Music of America (126-128 East 17th Street), founded in 1885 by philanthropist Jeanette Meyer Thurber. Dvořák took up directorship of the Conservatory on Oct. 1, 1892. Washington Irving High School, built in 1911, replaced the Conservatory.

129 East 17th Street

Directly across the street from the former site of the National Conservatory is one of New York's oldest apartment buildings, a French Gothic-style structure built by the firm of Napoleon LeBrun in 1879. LeBrun designed many New York firehouses starting in the 1880s.

Sheffel Hall, 190 Third Avenue

Built in the German Renaissance Revival style in 1894-95 by the architects Weber & Drosser, this building was one of the many German beer halls and restaurants in the area at the turn of the century. The unglazed white terra cotta façade is modeled on an early 17th century building at Heidelberg Castle. The curved roof gable would have been visible from the 3rd Avenue El (established in 1878).

211 – 219 East 17th Street

These five narrow buildings, the longest remaining row of houses in the Stuyvesant Square Historic District, are modified Anglo-Italianate in style, built in 1852-55.

223 – 225 East 17th Street

Seven-story "Hotel 17", built in 1883, offers a striking contrast to neighboring three and four-story dwellings in size, style and exuberant Renaissance ornamentation. It was built as an apartment house called the St. George Residence, with a passenger elevator.

245 East 17th Street

This French Renaissance-style town house was designed by noted architect Richard Morris Hunt in 1883, the only architect-designed, single-family residence in the District. The owner was Sidney Webster, a prominent lawyer married to the daughter of U.S. Senator Hamilton Fish.

Stuyvesant Square/Stuyvesant Square Historic District

Stuyvesant Square was laid out in 1846 on land donated in 1836 to the city by Peter Gerard Stuyvesant, the great-great grandson of Governor Peter

Stuyvesant. The area was originally part of the farm or *bowerie* owned by Peter Stuyvesant. The 4-acre square is divided by Second Avenue, and each of its two parts is surrounded by an original cast-iron fence. Stuyvesant Square Historic District, established in 1975, includes parts of East 15th through East 18th Streets between Second and Third Avenues, and is endowed with many 19th-century rowhouses that were developed during the 1850s. The western park section contains a statue of Peter Stuyvesant designed by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, unveiled in 1941, and the eastern section has a statue of Antonín Dvořák, designed by Croatian sculptor Ivan Mestrovic and installed by the Dvořák American Heritage Association in 1997.

327 East 17th Street (Dvořák Way), former site of Dvořák House

The brick-front Italianate rowhouse, built in 1852, was typical in form and plan of the 19th-century New York urban rowhouse. When Dvořák moved there, it was no longer a single family home; it had been divided into two flats. According to Dvořák, they had five rooms – a sitting room with the piano provided by Steinway, three other rooms, and a small furnished room, all for 80 dollars a month. The house was occupied by the Dvořák family from 1892-95.

St. George's Church (Episcopal)

Rutherford Place at 16th Street. Built by Blesch & Eidlitz in 1846-56, this massive brownstone building with symmetrical towers dominates Stuyvesant Square and is one of the earliest and most significant examples of early Romanesque Revival church architecture in America. The exterior, attributed to Bavarian-born architect Otto Blesch, reflects the influence of the German round-arched style known as *Rundbogenstil*. The interiors are attributed to Bohemian-born Leopold Eidlitz, who came to New York in 1843, and who also restored the church after it was damaged by fire in 1865. Two spires, originally rising 245 feet, were removed in 1889. The African American composer and baritone Harry T. Burleigh, whom Dvořák befriended, was a soloist and choir member at St. George's for 52 years.

Friends Meeting House and Seminary

15 Rutherford Place and 226 East 16th Street

Attributed to Charles T. Bunting, this austere brick meetinghouse and the adjoining seminary were built in 1861, just five years after St. George's Church, by a group of orthodox Quakers. Its form is Greek Revival, with fine proportions and original multi-paned windows. Within the St. George's complex, Eidlitz also designed the Rectory in 1850, and his son, Cyrus Eidlitz, designed the St. George Mission House (203-207 East 16th Street, now apartments) in 1886-88.