**NAME**

HISTORIC

MacDougal-Sullivan Gardens Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

74-96 MacDougal Street; 170-183 Sullivan Street

CITY, TOWN

New York

STATE

New York

**CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>PRESENT USE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X: DISTRICT</td>
<td>X: PUBLIC</td>
<td>X: OCCUPIED</td>
<td>A: AGRICULTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_ BUILDINGS(S)</td>
<td>X: PRIVATE</td>
<td>X: UNOCCUPIED</td>
<td>C: COMMERCIAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRUCTURE</td>
<td>BOTH</td>
<td>WORK IN PROGRESS</td>
<td>E: EDUCATIONAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SITE</td>
<td>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</td>
<td>ACCESSIBLE</td>
<td>P: PARK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECT</td>
<td>IN PROCESS</td>
<td>X: YES ACCESSIBLE</td>
<td>M: PRIVATE RESIDENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BEING CONSIDERED</td>
<td>YES RESTRICTED</td>
<td></td>
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<td>NO</td>
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</table>

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

See Continuation Sheet.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

STATE

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, SECRETARY OF OFFICE, ETC.

New York County Hall of Records

STREET & NUMBER

31 Chambers Street

CITY, TOWN

New York

STATE

New York

10007

**REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Landmarks Preservation Commission - [LP 0225]

DATE

1967

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, 14 Vosey St.
MacDougal Street

#74                          Ann Sickels Eagle Matthews  
                            16 Sickeltown Road  
                            Orangeburg, New York 10962

#76                          George H. Smith, Jr.  
                            Colette Smith Douglas  
                            25 Charlton St.  
                            New York, New York 11214

#78                          Evelyn S. Norton  
                            c/o Henry K. Norton  
                            78 MacDougal Street  
                            New York, New York 10012

#80                          Linda M Hauser  
                            80 MacDougal Street  
                            New York, New York 10012

#82                          Eve R. Stern  
                            82 MacDougal Street  
                            New York, New York 10012

#84                          Howard Rower & ano  
                            84 MacDougal Street  
                            New York, New York 10012

#86                          Nellie Schneider  
                            c/o William H. Schneider  
                            82 MacDougal Street  
                            New York, New York 10012

#88                          Barbara Northrop  
                            c/o John B. Northrop, Jr.  
                            88 MacDougal Street  
                            New York, New York 10012

#90                          Gloria Naftali  
                            c/o Raymond Naftali  
                            90 MacDougal Street  
                            New York, New York 10012

#92-31                        Ozdali Investment Corp.  
                            c/o Charles Mager  
                            535 Fifth Ave.  
                            New York, New York 10017

(See Continuation Sheet)
United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

MacDougal-Sullivan Gardens
Continuation sheet
New York County, N.Y.
Item number 4
Page 3

MacDougal Street Cont.
#96 364
Jill Schapiro
C/o Seth Schapiro
96 MacDougal Street
New York, New York 10012

Sullivan Street
#170 386
Jay Furman & ano
170 Sullivan Street
New York, New York 10012

#172
Robert Rubin & ano
172 Sullivan Street
New York, New York 10012

#174
John A. S. Cushman et al
174 Sullivan Street
New York, New York 10012

#176 388
George A. Burton & ano
176 Sullivan Street
New York, New York 10012

#178
Constance E. Bessis, c/o Simon M. Bessis
178 Sullivan Street
New York, New York 10012

#180
Stephen E. Kaufman & ano
180 Sullivan Street
New York, New York 10012

#182
Ira Cohen & ano
182 Sullivan Street
New York, New York 10012

#184
Marion S. Kellogg & ano
184 Sullivan Street
New York, New York 10012

#186
Claudia W. McNulty, c/o Donald S. McNulty
186 Sullivan Street
New York, New York 10012

Chou Wen-Chung
188 Sullivan Street
New York, New York 10012
MACDONALD-SULLIVAN GARDENS
HISTORIC DISTRICT

MANHATTAN  New York County, New York

Photo key

DESIGNATED AUGUST 2, 1987

Numbers show buildings inside boundary of district.
On March 8, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the MacDougal-Sullivan Gardens Historic District (Item No. 49). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There was no one person in opposition to designation; two statements were filed in opposition to designation. The president of the MacDougal-Sullivan Gardens Association represented the twenty-two homes in the proposed Historic District spoke in favor of designation. Seven of the home owners were individually recorded in favor of designation, as were two other persons.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The visitor, seeing this small Historic District, a few blocks south of Washington Square, for the first time, would find that he was transported back to a mid-Nineteenth Century street scene. He would undoubtedly wonder why these continuous rows of once identical houses have survived so little changed, in contrast to nearby blocks. These blocks are now largely composed of turn-of-the-century tenements but also include a number of small, early Nineteenth Century buildings.

This block owes its very existence today to two factors: the policies of the Low family, which owned it for 125 years, and the far-sighted philosophy of a real estate developer in the period after World War I. Both ran counter to the prevailing real estate practices of their times.

The estate of Nicholas Low in 1845 built the rows of three-story and basement houses, In the then fashionable Greek Revival style, on MacDougal and Houston Streets. A similar row was completed on Sullivan Street in 1850. The last of the four block fronts built on Bleecker Street (1850) had four stories and dormer roofs. (It is interesting to note that the use of dormers had gone out of style about 20 years before). An early photograph shows a handsome cast iron balcony outside the first floor full length windows, running the entire length of the row. Sufficient evidence is available from the Building Department records of the 1850's to indicate that the original plan probably included steps at the ground floor.

Architecture of the District

A real estate corporation, "North and Home", purchased the entire block in 1925 from the estate of Nicholas Low, Inc. However, only the rows on Sullivan and MacDougal Streets were remodelled. Their architects, Francis Y. James and Maxwell Hyde, wisely retained, on the MacDougal Street side, the original handsome continuous cornice ornamented with modillions and the original wall proportions. Six over six paneled windows with plain lintels. These houses, taken together, give a strong rhythm and unity to the entire block front.

The stoops were removed, and the basement entrances and former doorways were remodelled in the new-Federal style so popular after World War I. The new entrances have six-panelled doors and side lights. The original paired doorways at the former first floor level were changed to windows and treated in alternating styles. One pair has a simple lintel with cornice; another more elaborate one is surmounted by a large wooden fan-shaped panel framed by brick arch with keystones and round at ends. Former boxes have been placed under these windows, and small fan lights have been introduced under the windows with simple lintels.

The houses on Sullivan Street were remodelled in a similar neo-Federal style, which is ideally suited to the old row. Here again, the original fan-lighted cornice and windows have been retained, the stoops removed, and the former first floor doorways have been replaced by windows. In the houses here the built-in stair, rather than paired, the wooden fan-shaped panels have been used in the individual doorways - the lintel is similar to that on MacDougal Street. Symmetrical arches have been added to the entrance and doorways proportions of a modernization. To the block's modernization essentially involved
Early History of the Block

The block which now occupies the houses on Sullivan and Broome Streets was acquired by Nicholas Law in 1652, as part of a tract which extended to what is now the west side of the Avenue of the Fourths. The history of the land itself goes back to the early New Amsterdam. It was part of the estate of Van Leuven's governors (found). Van Cortland, Governor of New Netherland (1633-39), took this land by consent of the Governor and Council in 1633. This action was ratified by his successor, Governor Kieft, in 1639. After the recall of the unpropael Van Cortland to Holland in 1641, Kieft, acting for Van Cortland, began purloining the Leuven property in 1641. The parcel containing the Macrugal-Sullivan block was conveyed on December 15, 1641 to Peter Stuyvesant, a free negro. Stuyvesant had originally worked for the Dutch West India Company and was later freed.

The block passed through several owners until it was acquired by Nicholas Bayard in 1755 as an addition to his "West Farms." (His grandmother was a sister of Peter Stuyvesant.) His son, Nicholas the younger, conveyed it to Daniel Lucission and Brick. Lucission in trust for the benefit of creditors. The trustees began conveying it in lot form on February 17, 1790.

Law's 1776 purchase was retained by his heirs for almost 100 years.

Nicholas Law (1679-1826) was one of New York's leading merchants and a notable financial figure in the period after the Revolution. He was a director of the Bank of New York, the Bank of the United States, a member of the State Assembly, and a member of the New York State Convention, which ratified the United States Constitution. Upon his death in 1826, he left his estate to his son, Nicholas and Cornelius.

This neighborhood was undeveloped during the lifetime of the first Nicholas Law, Tusculum, the country seat of Richard Varick, the second Mayor of New York after the Revolution, was on the block bounded on the east by Sullivan Street. The correspondence between Varick and Law regarding the paving of Sullivan Street still exists in the Law papers. However, the early 1830's, as speculators began to build the row houses on Washington Square, Union Street and St. Mark's Place for wealthy merchants moving uptown and as the residential neighborhood around the Battery and Lower Greenlawn Street area was expanding for a comewell use, nearby Bleeker Street was also developed. De Peau Row, which stood on the south side of Bleeker Street between Sullivan and Thompson Streets replaced Tusculum. One of the drawsways from this noted row has been moved a block east and is now the driveway at the Bleeker Street Cinery.

As an instance of the fine residential architecture of the neighborhood, Carroll Place between Thompson and West Broadway (now Bleeker Street) was lined with a row of handsome Greek Revival houses on both sides, comparable to those on Washington Square, and on the north side by a fine late Federal Row similar to that in St. Mark's Place. The Law's built 170 Bleeker Street (1835-40) for their sister, Henrietta, who had married Charles King. The association between the two families was a long one, dating back to the early eighteenth century. Nicholas Law was the agent for Rufus King's financial affairs, when King was the United States Minister to London.

Charles King, the son of Rufus, was proprietor and editor of the New York American. He was a notable figure in that society recorded in the diaries of Philip Hone and George Templeton Strong. He was not particularly successful financially, and undoubtedly the Law property was of help to him. A few years after his partner married the Quayle and Prentiss, he retired. The following year, 1819, he became the president of Columbia College.

Neither Caroline Law who died in 1819 nor Nicholas who died in 1829 left any direct heirs, and upon Nicholas' death the name of Law disappeared, but the Law line survived. For Nicholas' will provided that the estate be held in trust during the lifetime of his sister, Henrietta Law King, and upon her death the proceeds to her children. These heirs, in 1842, erected a new after Charles King's death, a property their holdings the corporation known as the estate of Nicholas Law Inc.
In 1927, the estate of Nicholas Low, Inc. sold this section of its properties to a corporation known as "Hearth and Home." William Sloane Coffin, its president, felt that an alternative solution to the "apartment house problem" for the middle class was the renovation of some old buildings adjacent to downtown areas. Current practice, then as now, was to build on land on the periphery of the city or to demolish existing structures to provide sites for larger buildings. He felt that the remodelling of some of these charming existing structures could have a two-fold result: it would conserve neighborhoods whose only future would otherwise be as a semi-slum consisting of roaming and boarding houses, and it would provide attractive, moderately priced housing for artists, actors, and musicians. The renovation costs were to be kept minimal by changing the exteriors and interiors as little as possible, while providing new wiring, plumbing and kitchen facilities.

Coffin was the grandson of a founder of M. & J. Sloane & Co. He was a director and later a vice-president of the firm. In 1921, he was elected a trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and in 1931 became its president. He continued interest in his business with service to the Museum. Coffin already had experience in redeveloping properties purchased from Trinity Church in what is now the Chelsea-King-Vanstaen Historic District. Certainly his philosophy was responsible for the survival of many of these fine houses, as well as the ones included in this District. The Sullivan and MacDougal Streets development was the largest of this type to be undertaken. The interiors of the houses were all designed to include a five-room flat, a four-room apartment in the second floor, and two non-housekeeping apartments on the third floor.

A very important feature of the plan was the use of the open area in the interior of the block. Each house has a small private garden, but the large central area was set aside for common use, parts of which were specifically developed for children's playground areas. The number of residents using the communal garden limited the remodelling of the houses to the Sullivan and MacDougal Street rows. The buildings on Houston and Bleecker Streets included in the original plan were a-14.

A New York Times article of January 30, 1921 said that "his development made a real contribution to the solution of the housing problem and is an excellent example of what can be done to other properties in the city, and the rehabilitation of old housing." The plan of Hearth and Home has become a prototype for many other developments. Turtle Bay Gardens, Bleecker Gardens, and Miss Anne Hoxon's plan for Sutton Place all involved the rehabilitation of houses around a common garden.

Today, almost fifty years later, the principal ideas laid down by William Sloane Coffin serve as models for urban city housing. The original experiment in city planning on Sullivan and MacDougal Streets has been highly successful. In 1921, the houses were sold to individual owners, who, throughout the years, have maintained Sullivan and MacDougal Gardens Association, have lovingly maintained the property, and have designed the fronts of the houses and the landscaping of the inner garden concept providing an oasis in the heart of Manhattan.
The commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the two rows of houses, facing on Sullivan and MacDougal Streets and sharing a common garden, are exceptionally noteworthy for the uniformity and attractive quality of their architecture; that the pioneering efforts of William S. Gifford, in preserving and rehabilitating these old buildings and his idea of creating communal gardens, were the first initiated revolutionary in concepts; and that they were destined to have far-reaching, beneficial effects on the development of our City.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 8-A of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as an Historic District the MacDougal-Sullivan Gardens Historic District, Borough of Manhattan, consisting of the property bounded by MacDougal Street, the northern property line of 96 MacDougal Street, the eastern property line of 96 MacDougal Street, the northern property line of 188 Sullivan Street, Sullivan Street, the southern property line of 178 Sullivan Street and the southern property line of 74 MacDougal Street.