

A Christmas Gift for St. Nick

By **ROBERTA GRATZ**

In keeping with the holiday spirit, the Landmarks Preservation Commission has announced designation of the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of St. Nicholas at 15 E. 97th St.

Commission Chairman Harmon H. Goldstone noted: "It is particularly timely in the week before Christmas to designate the Cathedral of St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas is better known in the West as Santa Claus."

Noting the church's Russian baroque style, Goldstone said: "It's five cupolas crowned by onion-shaped domes and the rich ornamentation of the facade are unexpected on a New York City side street but were familiar traditions to the parishioners for whom the church was built."

The 1902 structure built under auspices of Czar Nicholas II is headquarters of the Russian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America. The Russian Holy Synod elevated St. Nicholas Church to cathedral status in 1903 and the diocesan seat of North America was transferred to it from San Francisco in 1905.

Bought by Couple

The Landmarks Commission also announced designation of two private houses at 364 and 390 Van Duzer St. in the Stapleton section of Staten Island. The two houses, a commission report notes, "combine a Greek Re-

vival portico with a curved projecting eave which is characteristic of the Dutch colonial style. This combination appears to be unique to Staten Island."

One house was the subject of a Post article last month. That house, at 390 Van Duzer St., was bought two years ago by Joseph and Randi Sinisi. Since the purchase, the Sinisis have devoted a great deal of time and energy restoring it to its original 1835 condition.

The Sinisis had lived in a Brooklyn Heights apartment and had been bitten by the brownstone revival bug. Brownstone prices, however, were already beyond their means as they looked to Staten Island.

The Van Duzer St. houses are somewhat on the periphery of the more fashionable area of expensive Stapleton homes but many families are apparently looking at the area with renewed interest. The Sinisis paid \$30,000 for their long-neglected 16-room wood-frame house.

Included in some 40 proposals considered by the commission in three hearings since July have been seven churches, three federal military properties, a bridge, a postoffice, a subway kiosk and a memorial arch. Of them, the Queensborough Bridge, the Soldiers and Sailors Monument and the Bowling Green subway kiosk have been designated.



St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Cathedral at 15 East 97th St.