



A GUIDE TO HISTORIC NEW YORK CITY NEIGHBORHOODS

JACKSON HEIGHTS

QUEENS





The Historic Districts Council is New York's citywide advocate for historic buildings and neighborhoods. The Six to Celebrate program annually identifies six historic New York City neighborhoods that merit preservation as priorities for HDC's advocacy and consultation over a yearlong period.

The six, chosen from applications submitted by community organizations, are selected on the basis of the architectural and historic merit of the area, the level of threat to the neighborhood, the strength and willingness of the local advocates, and the potential for HDC's preservation support to be meaningful. HDC works with these neighborhood partners to set and reach preservation goals through strategic planning, advocacy, outreach, programs and publicity.

The core belief of the Historic Districts Council is that preservation and enhancement of New York City's historic resources—its neighborhoods, buildings, parks and public spaces—are central to the continued success of the city. The Historic Districts Council works to ensure the preservation of these resources and uphold the New York City Landmarks Law and to further the preservation ethic. This mission is accomplished through ongoing programs of assistance to more than 500 community and neighborhood groups and through public-policy initiatives, publications, educational outreach and sponsorship of community events.

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A BRIEF HISTORY

Jackson Heights is an early-20th-century neighborhood in central Queens, composed of low-rise garden apartments and houses as well as institutional and commercial buildings. It was the first and remains the largest garden-apartment community in the United States—the product of both the early 20th-century model tenement and the Garden City movements. Starting in the late 19th century, poor living conditions in city slums resulted in reform efforts to improve urban housing. As a result, light, ventilation and open green space became key pieces in the design of new developments. This is particularly evident in Jackson Heights.

Queens grew rapidly in the early 20th century, beginning with the opening of the Queensboro Bridge in 1909 and accelerated by the arrival of the elevated subway in 1917. These transportation routes established fast, direct connections between Jackson Heights and Manhattan and the thriving industrial area of Long Island City. Beginning in 1910 the Queensboro Corporation started developing former farmland into an idyllic residential alternative to crowded Manhattan. Development continued until 1950, by which time all of the vacant land in the area was built up.

The Queensboro Corporation required that builders and developers not otherwise affiliated with the corporation adhere to strict design requirements. The picturesque residences were designed in Georgian, Tudor, Gothic, Italian Renaissance and Spanish Romanesque styles. Decorative brickwork, loggias and slate roofs are quintessential design elements found in the architecture. Institutional and commercial buildings were produced to match the residential. The continuity of design throughout Jackson Heights is its most defining feature, but the community is home to many other innovations, including some of the first purpose-built cooperatives in New York City for the middle class. The first passenger-operated elevator in the world debuted here in 1922. Most importantly, Jackson Heights was the first community in the United States where green space was provided as part of the architecture—a “garden city.”

The development of Jackson Heights reversed many of the traditional architectural and planning concepts of the time. Entire city blocks were designed as a whole, as opposed to developing lots individually. Additionally, only 40% of each block was built up, leaving the remaining 60% for open green space. By contrast, it was commonplace in Manhattan to build as densely as 90% on a block, to reap as much profit as possible. In Jackson Heights, structures were typically built around the perimeter of a city block, and they enclosed landscaped gardens at the center, giving the buildings the name of “garden apartments.” Apartments had views of both the street and the interior courtyard, allowing light and breezes in and creating a sense of openness.

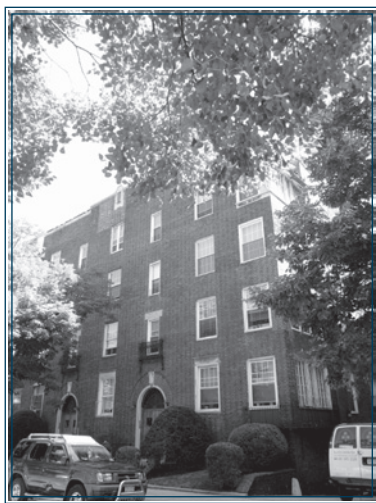
Jackson Heights was designated as a New York City historic district in 1993, and an extension of those boundaries, which would meet those of the 1998 National Register Historic District, is currently being sought. This would include buildings that, due to the restrictions placed upon them by the Queensboro Corporation, possess the same quality design, materials and scale of the earliest buildings creating historic Jackson Heights.

I. LINDEN COURT

**37-11 to 37-59 84th Street and
37-12 to 37-60 85th Street**

Andrew J. Thomas, 1919

Linden Court, the earliest entire-block development in Jackson Heights, is made up of 10 four-story apartment buildings. The buildings are situated back-to-back and have a common interior landscaped yard. These apartments were the model for subsequent block-plan garden apartments in the neighborhood. Linden Court was also the first complex to have parking facilities, which are located in the light-court areas at the rear of the buildings. These Neo-Georgian style apartment buildings feature patterned brickwork, keystones, sun porches and loggias.



2. TWO-FAMILY

“CONVERTIBLE” HOUSES

35-16 to 35-56 87th Street

C. F. & D. E. McAvoy, 1926

These seven double-houses on the west side of 87th Street are arranged in a symmetrical pattern and are in the Neo-Tudor style. The residences possess features such as landscaped front gardens, shingled roofs, steep gables, half-timbering and

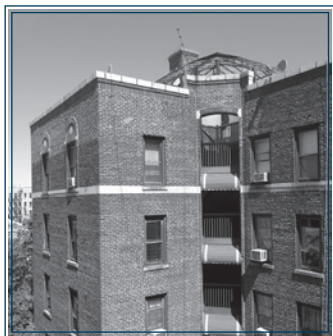
bracketed flower boxes. Each house shares a common driveway and has a paired garage that matches the house.

3. POLK ARMS

89–01 to 89–31 37th Avenue

Oscar Goldschlog, 1927

Polk Arms consists of two six-story Neo-Classical style apartment buildings. Commercial space and entrances dominate the 37th Avenue façade, while residential entries are located on the side street. These red-brick buildings feature cast-stone entries, bandcourses and panels along the roofline. Original landscaping includes courtyards and sidewalk trees. Unfortunately, some original planting areas of this non-land-marked building have been paved over.



4. LA MESA VERDE APARTMENTS

34–19, 34–33 and 33–47 90th Street

Henry Atterbury Smith, 1926

La Mesa Verde is composed of six, six-story V-shape buildings connected by narrow open-air rooftop bridges. Three front onto 90th Street and three front onto 91st Street, creating a sawtooth pattern. Rather than having interior hallways, the Neo-Classical style buildings each have three recessed exterior stairways with apartment entrances at each landing and topped with an iron-and-glass skylight. The interior courtyards and buildings remain fairly intact, save for tennis courts that were lost in the 1950s.

5. HOUSES

34–15 to 34–51 86th Street

Robert Tappan, 1927

These beautiful houses on 86th Street are actually double-houses that appear to be large single-family homes. Each house is set back from the street and has a front garden separated by brick garden walls between each property. These Neo-Georgian style homes feature red brick with white trim façades, slate roofs with prominent chimneys, and classically inspired entries.



6. THE SAYBROOK

85–10 34th Avenue

Joshua Tabatchnik, 1936

The Saybrook is a large six-story brick apartment building with a grand garden entrance courtyard visually defining the east and west wings. Interesting design details include brickwork simulated quoins and bandcourses at each floor and pediments that rise above the parapets at the roofline.

7. ONE-FAMILY HOUSES

33–23 to 33–45 84th Street

Charles J. Stidolph, 1928

Charles J. Stidolph designed eight three-story brick houses on this block. Three different features were used to visually separate the residences: peaked front-facing gable, shed dormer and cut hip gable. The residences are unified by scale, projecting entries, slate roofs and detached garages. Not located within the historic district, these houses have experienced some alterations including painted copper flashing and iron fencing, removal of shutters, and metal awnings over entries.

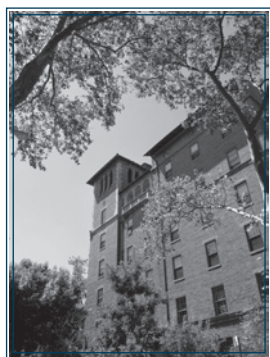
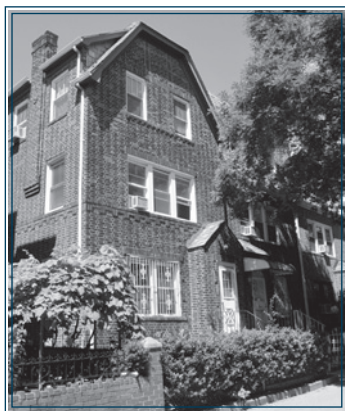


8. ENGLISH GARDEN HOMES

33-18 to 33-44 83rd Street

Alfred H. Eccles, 1928

Along 83rd Street there are 13 English Garden homes, each three stories high. The houses in the middle have slate mansard roofs, while those on the ends have front-facing gabled roofs with side-facing dormers. All of these structures have continuous brick bandcourses under the second-story windows and feature cast-stone window-boxes with brick brackets under the first-floor windows.



9. THE TOWERS

33-15 to 33-51 80th Street and
33-16 to 33-52 81st Street

Andrew J. Thomas, 1924



The Towers are composed of eight free-standing U-shape buildings, four on 80th Street and four on 81st Street. The buildings are placed back-to-back and enclose an interior garden that is accessed by gated entrances located between the buildings. The yellow-brick apartment design is inspired

by Italian Romanesque and Renaissance architecture; highlights include red-tile roofs, arcaded sixth-story loggias and tower belvederes.

10. THE CHATEAU

34-05 to 34-47 80th Street
and

34-06 to 34-48 81st Street

Andrew J. Thomas, 1924

The Chateau apartments are 12 free-standing U-shape buildings placed back-to-back just as The Towers apartments are arranged. These buildings were designed in the French Renaissance style and feature slate mansard roofs with dormer windows and finials, Flemish bond brick facing with diamond patterning, and chimneys with decorative tops.



11. THE GREYSTONES

35–15 to 35–55 80th Street

George H. Wells, 1918

Originally named “The Garden Apartments,” The Greystones was the first garden-apartment complex in Jackson Heights. These 14 T-shape buildings are each five stories. They are Neo-Tudor in style and are gray brick with stone basements and keyed stone window trims. The complex features both front and rear landscaped gardens.



12. HAMPTON COURT

35–16 to 35–56 79th Street and
35–15 to 35–55 78th Street

George H. Wells, 1921

Hampton Court is one of Jackson Heights’ earlier garden-apartment complexes. The 11 buildings occupy almost the entire block and enclose a garden at the center. Additionally, there was a garden at each end of the block originally. These buildings, like

many of George H. Wells’s designs, are Neo-Georgian in style and are red brick laid in Flemish bond with white trim. The facades and entries differ between 78th and 79th Streets.

13. THE BERKELEY APARTMENTS

35–25 77th Street

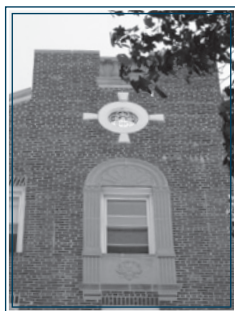
Joshua Tabatchnik, 1936

The Berkeley Apartments is an example of the later development that occurred in Jackson Heights. The single large building has two light courts that break up the massive structure. The Neo-Georgian building imposes on half of the block and features brickwork resembling quoins, brick bandcourses, pilasters capped with stone and brick pediments, and brick parapets topped with stone urns. Joshua Tabatchnik also designed Berkeley Gardens, which are similar and located around the corner on 35th Avenue.



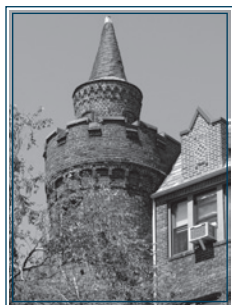
14. HAWTHORNE COURT
35–13 to 35–55 76th Street
and
35–14 to 35–56 77th Street
George H. Wells, 1922

Hawthorne Court is an extensive complex made up of 14 five-story buildings set back-to-back. The buildings have red-brick façades set in Flemish bond with white stone trim and lintels with keystones. The architect George H. Wells incorporated projecting entrances in the design of these apartments, a hallmark of his work. The entries have short stoops and alternate between Doric column details or flat pilasters with wooden doors surrounded by leaded-glass transoms and sidelights. Each entry is topped with an iron balustrade.



15. FAIRWAY HALL
APARTMENTS
76–09 34th Avenue
Joshua Tabatchnik, 1936

Named for the former golf course on which it stands, this six-story apartment building has a distinct roof line featuring battlements and ramparts. Semicircular towers flank the main entrance on 34th Avenue. Garden areas that were designed as part of Fairway Hall include the front and side courtyards, sidewalk tree plantings, and a grass-covered curb median.

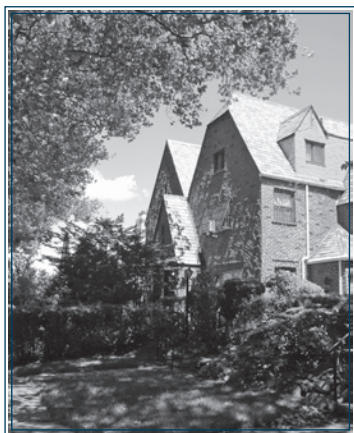


16. SPANISH TOWER HOMES

34–30 to 34–52 75th Street

J. Case & Peter Schreiner, 1927

The Spanish Tower Homes include 10 three- and four-story detached tan brick houses. The first floors of these dwellings have no windows and instead feature French doors that open on to wrought-iron balconettes. Some windows on upper floors have original wood shutters, and the corner houses feature fourth-floor loggias. These houses have shared driveways with detached garages in the rear.



17. HOMESTEAD HALL

33–11 to 33–46 and

33–12 to 33–48 70th Street

Arthur E. Allen, 1928

Homestead Hall consists of 19 two- and three-story attached brick garden residences. These Neo-Tudor dwellings feature multi-story slate roofs, half-timbering, stucco with brick and stone insets, and chimneys topped with pots. These houses along 70th Street evoke an intimate garden feel with the most closely spaced sidewalk trees in the area. Each residence has a patio tucked behind a deep front garden and possesses a rear garden as well.

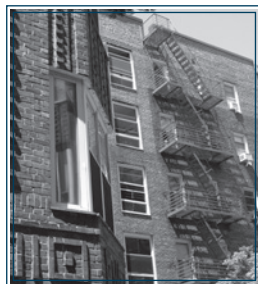


18. WASHINGTON PLAZA

73–12 35th Avenue

Sylvan Breine, 1940

Washington Plaza consists of seven buildings: six, six-story apartment buildings and a single-story gatehouse. These Art Deco buildings are red brick and feature decorative geometric banding and round-cornered fire escapes. The most intriguing part of this apartment complex is Washington Plaza Park, designed by the architect in 1941. The .54-acre park begins behind the gatehouse, where a path divides to surround a cascading pool before leading to a separate pool at the top of the complex. Stepped paths surround each pool and are accompanied by many gardens. Some of the plantings found in the park include silver birch, flowering crabapple and white dogwood trees, rhododendrons, red and pink azalea, roses, forsythia, pink mountain laurel and hydrangea. There is also an herb garden of basil, parsley, chive, dill and rosemary.



19. HILLCREST COURT

70–35 Broadway

S. L. Malkind, 1926

This six story apartment building has its primary entrance on Broadway, making it the only structure in the historic area located on that thoroughfare. Hillcrest Court is on an unusual triangular lot and features five towers, each connected by a recessed wing located in the middle of the building. Highlights include brickwork that simulates quoins and colonnaded loggias that top the Broadway towers.



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