

DISTRICT LINES

NEWS AND VIEWS OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL SPRING 2009 VOL. XXIII NO. 1

“ENDANGERED” SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MAKES SEVEN TO SAVE LIST

RECENTLY, THE SOUTH STREET SEAPORT Historic District made the annual “Seven to Save” Endangered Properties List of the Preservation League of New York

the 1939 New Market Building, which lies just outside the locally designated historic district, to make room for two high-rise towers. The new development

toric district in 1977 and its subsequent expansion in 1989, alterations and construction in the neighborhood, under the watchful eye of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, have been appropriate for the most part, some even enhancing the character of the district. Over the last few years, though, a number of projects proposed by the city to create new amenities in the increasingly residential and affluent neighborhood have been less sympathetic.

For example, a roller-coaster-looking playground with ramps almost six feet high and additional six-foot-tall fences was approved for Burling Slip. In Peck Slip, a park with trees and sculptural rib-like elements evoking a ship will fill the open space. Another park, with tidal-marsh plantings, arrangement of bluestone in a wave pattern, and a water feature, will surround the Titanic Memorial located at the main entrance to the district on Fulton Street. Most recently, a proposal to reconstruct Pier 15 included a large structure with a rooftop garden. The South Street Seaport Historic District is rich in sim-

Continued on p. 3



159-171 John Street, South Street Seaport Historic District

HDC

State, the statewide historic-preservation advocacy organization. This year’s list celebrates the maritime history of the state in honor of the quadricentennial of Henry Hudson’s and Samuel de Champlain’s explorations of the area’s waterways and also the bicentennial of Robert Fulton’s successful steamboat journey up the Hudson River. South Street Seaport was the only New York City site to make the “endangered” list.

Last year the Historic Districts Council nominated the South Street Seaport to the list after General Growth Properties and the New York City Economic Development Corporation released plans for Pier 17 that would alter the historic district by proposing over-size development and the dismantling and removal of the 1907 Tin Building – the birthplace of the Fulton Fish Market – to the far edge of the pier behind it. The plan called for the demolition of

would wall off the Seaport from the water, destroying the relationship between the district’s historic market buildings and the East River.

Since its designation as a city his-

“Bringing a lawsuit to compel repairs has shifted from being a rare occurrence to a mainstay of the LPC’s enforcement tools” PAGE 2



The Windermere

HDC

PERSUING AN OWNER FOR DEMOLITION-BY-NEGLECT: A TORTUOUS LEGAL PATH

John Weiss, Deputy Counsel, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission

AT ANY GIVEN TIME there is a small universe of landmarks, either individual landmarks or buildings in historic districts, that are in disrepair. If the disrepair is serious, but localized, such as significant damage to a cornice, a Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) violation for failure to maintain the landmark is issued. In cases of extensive deterioration of multiple building elements, or severe damage that threatens a landmark's structural stability, like a partially collapsed roof, the Commission will bring what is commonly known as a demolition-by-neglect lawsuit. The Commission brings such litigation in New York State Supreme Court to obtain a court order compelling the owner to make immediate repairs and pay monetary fines. The legal basis for these lawsuits is the city's Landmarks Law requirement that designated properties be kept in a condition of good repair.



Bedell House, Tottenville, Staten Island

HDC



KATYA PRONIN, AM NEW YORK

Former Corn Exchange Bank, 125th Street and Park Avenue, Manhattan

The Commission has become much more assertive in bringing these lawsuits. During the Commission's first 35 years, only one demolition-by-neglect lawsuit was brought. (The owner of a decrepit row house in Brooklyn's Boerum Hill Historic District was sued, and, after she put a curse on the LPC general counsel, the property was sold and the new owner promptly restored it). In the next eight years (2000 through 2007) three more lawsuits were brought to court, and in 2008 alone the Commission filed three demolition-by-neglect lawsuits. All three are currently active. One concerns the individual Manhattan landmark known as The Windermere at Ninth Avenue and West 57th Street; another, the individual landmark of the former Corn Exchange Bank at 125th Street and Park Avenue, also in Manhattan; and the third, a row house in the Stuyvesant Heights Historic District in Brooklyn. At any given time the LPC has about 30 buildings in various stages of the demolition-by-neglect process. Although very time-consuming, bringing a lawsuit to compel repairs has shifted from being a rare occurrence to a mainstay of the Commission's enforcement tools.

While the number of landmarks in disrepair is small in light of the agency's regulation of more than 25,000

buildings, deteriorating properties are understandably disturbing to neighbors and others and take on a heightened local significance because of not only the disrepair but also associated problems, such as the presence of rodents, accumulation of garbage and other blight conditions. Consequently, these buildings can become priorities for communities who want quick action. While the LPC also wants quick action, the Commission has discovered that it is the rare case where demolition-by-neglect is intentional or venal. More often than not, the cause for the neglect is due to benign reasons – elderly or ill property owners, estate disputes, foreclosures, and other problems.

The act of filing a demolition-by-neglect lawsuit is similar to seeing only the tip of an iceberg. Because the Commission is more concerned about the landmark itself and would rather see an owner spend funds on repairs than on legal fees, extensive efforts are made to have an owner voluntarily repair the property at issue. Additionally, giving owners repeated notice of the need to make repairs, and then an opportunity to do so, is not only fair but are key components of the cases that end up in court.

Unfortunately, demolition-by-neglect cases are frequently hard to

prosecute. For instance, it is often difficult even to contact the owner of a landmark in disrepair. In one case, after letters to the owner of a row house were returned as undeliverable, unsuccessful efforts to locate him included contacting a hospital where he was once a patient to learn who had checked him out, speaking with a contractor who had worked on his house, hiring a private investigator who visited his prior addresses and interviewed neighbors, and a search of death certificates to see if he had died. Eventually the owner contacted the LPC when he received a letter that the Social Security Administration delivered for the Commission after it realized that he might be receiving Social Security benefits. It turned out that the owner was living in a homeless shelter in midtown Manhattan. The property is now on the market with the expectation that a new owner will quickly make repairs.

Even after a lawsuit is filed, absentee ownership often creates problems. In the lawsuit against the owner of The Windermere complex, because the owner is a Japanese corporation, service issues arose when the Landmarks Commission wanted to file a motion that may have required the personal service to the owner in Tokyo of lengthy legal documents that would have had to be translated into Japanese pursuant to the Hague Convention. The current Brooklyn case involves a landmark that is controlled by an estate and was also foreclosed on, with one of the defendants a Texas-based financial institution.

These matters often take surprising turns before, or during, the course of litigation. For instance, in the Corn Exchange litigation the owner recently filed for bankruptcy. In another case every time the derelict landmark was about to be sold, a prior owner sued to stop the sale. Eventually the property was sold, and a new owner is now making extensive repairs. There have been staff people from multiple city agencies involved in an effort to have a landmark repaired, including attorneys from the Office of the Corporation Counsel, engineers from the Department

of Buildings and contractors from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

Many of the owners of deteriorated landmarks contacted by the Commission have their own, often sad, story that led them to the point of not being able, or willing, to maintain their historic buildings, often for many years.

Editor's Note - On May 21, 2009, the Windermere lawsuit was settled with the owner paying a record \$1.1 million financial penalty for violating the Landmarks Law, the largest financial penalty ever received under the Landmarks Law. In addition, the owner sold the Windermere and the new owner has entered into a legal stipulation requiring it to comply with the Landmarks Law and various orders issued by the judge in the lawsuit which mandate very extensive repairs to the Windermere. The new owner has already filed plans with Landmarks for shoring and bracing the Windermere and that work should be completed by mid-September. 🏠

SOUTH ST. SEAPORT

Continued from p. 1

ple architecture and large open spaces evocative of a working district. Rather than allowing the buildings to speak for themselves of the history and character of the neighborhood, these projects will hit the visitor and resident over the head with faux history and recreation.

Upon listing South Street Seaport as one of the "Seven to Save," the Preservation League cautioned that the Seaport "illustrates the need for careful planning and stewardship of New York State's waterfront, especially within waterfront historic districts." It is a dubious honor to be included on the "Seven to Save." We would much prefer that the district was safe from inappropriate development and additions, leaving no reason to place it on the list. Nonetheless, it is HDC's hope that the listing will draw attention to one of the city's oldest, most notable historic districts and encourage thoughtful, careful planning. 🏠

HDC Tackles Big Topics at 2009 Conference

THE HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL'S 2009 CONFERENCE, "**Communities & Cornices: Preservation in a Political World,**" brought together preservation professionals and elected officials to examine how preservation ideology interfaces with the realities of politics and government. Conclusions drawn throughout the day's panel discussions made one thing incredibly clear: for better or worse, politics will directly affect the outcome of community-based campaigns.

On Friday, March 6, over 150 preservationists attended the Opening Night Reception to toast recent successes and strategize for future endeavors. Held at the Puffin Room, an art gallery within the SoHo Cast-Iron Historic District, the reception featured interactive science fair-style presentations by Neighborhood Partners from every borough. Partners were able to collect petition signatures and circulate their literature throughout the evening, while guests admired displays and feted recent preservation accomplishments.

The Museum of the City of New York co-hosted the full Conference on Saturday, March 7. **Dick Dadey**, executive director of the Citizens Union, delivered the keynote address, "Civic Engagement in New York: What Makes for Effective Issue Advocacy." Drawing on his experience as a longtime activist in the environmental and LGBT rights movements, Mr. Dadey presented five key steps for successful advocacy, called the "5 P's": Principles (one must remain true to one's principles), Purpose (one must seek a specific action), Pragmatism (one's goals should be realistic), Politics (an understanding of the political landscape is necessary) and People (issues

Continued on p. 6

10 STEPS TO MULL: VISIONS OF THE FUTURE



Participants in Preservation Vision's January workshop, held at the Park Avenue Armory in Manhattan

MINERVA PARTNERS

"PRESERVATION VISION: NYC" was a recent yearlong project that invited interested citizens and preservation practitioners to think about the whole subject of preservation in relation to the city's future. By creating a temporary forum to consider its long-term goals, this project asked members of the city's preservation community to submit, discuss and develop their most compelling ideas about historic preservation in order to help solve the most pressing issues facing New York City's threatened historic resources.

The project was launched in January 2008—you might remember the survey at last year's HDC Preservation Conference – and at the end of February 2009 it concluded with the publication of the final report, which may be downloaded at www.preservationvision-nyc.org.

As a strategy, the Preservation Vision project sought to create a forum for professionals and interested individuals to discuss the future of the preservation movement. Once this was established, the primary goal of the project was to harvest the ideas that arose. An inclusive process, Preservation Vision asked only two requirements of its volunteer participants. First, they were reminded to think beyond the pressing issues, realities and limitations of today to consider the broad goals and possibilities of tomorrow. Second, they were encouraged to contribute as

individuals, not as institutional representatives answering for or advocating on behalf of their organization or group.

To best maximize inclusion, glean "big picture" insights and encourage candor, many conduits for exchange were created and often professionally facilitated – an anonymous survey, a series of roundtables, a weekend retreat, a one-day workshop. Between January 2008 and January 2009, nearly 500 participants (including many HDC directors, advisers and staff) contributed their thoughts. In the end, no effort was made by the project coordinators to predict, edit or improve what emerged.

Across all phases of this project, 10 key categories emerged as areas in need of action by the preservation field in New York City over the next 25 years. Those categories, in order of priority, are:

1. *Address environmental sustainability*
2. *Undertake serious research*
3. *Expand incentives*
4. *Implement more land-use regulations*
5. *Strengthen the Landmarks Law*
6. *Contribute to community livability*
7. *Focus messaging and branding*
8. *Expand alliances and diversity*
9. *Identify new sources of funding*
10. *Enhance preservation education*

In the findings section of the final report, recommended action items are summarized under these major categories to comprise a Preservation Vision

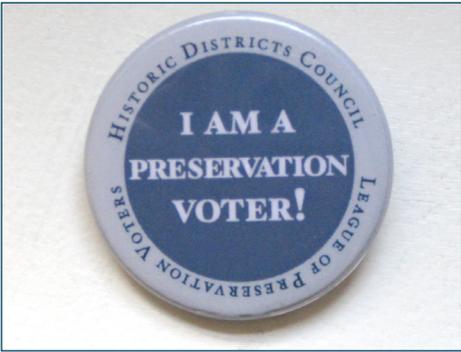
"idea bank" of 102 items. These ideas – some new, some updated versions of familiar ideas, some already embraced by existing groups or individuals – were gathered directly from participants as recommendations to generate forward momentum.

Having synthesized all the discussions and contributions generated throughout this project, the authors of the report made several general observations about the preservation field and its prospects. Issues such as capacity, leadership, prioritization of ideas and goals are among the other topics discussed in the report.

One final major finding of the project is that the preservation field stands at an important juncture. There may be a window of opportunity over the next three to five years with the convergence of economic realities, federal stimulus investments in social and environmental sectors and growing public concern for issues related to sustainability. This opportunity should be used to lay the foundation on which the preservation movement will meet its new challenges.

As originally conceived, the Preservation Vision project provided a temporary dialogue. The results of this conversation are submitted to the preservation community with the hope that they constitute a first step, at best, toward identifying issues for further debate and action. ■

MOVING FORWARD: HDC'S LEAGUE OF PRESERVATION VOTERS



HDC
HDC has designed a small lapel button to help League members declare themselves proud preservationists. Contact HDC to get yours.

NOVEMBER'S MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS are fast approaching, and the Historic Districts Council will be launching its League of Preservation Voters on a citywide scale. From The Bronx to Staten Island, the next few months will be spent rallying neighborhood activists and empowering the preservation movement all across the five boroughs.

The Preservation Voters initiative educates communities and elected officials alike on important preservation issues, facilitating partnerships between both groups to help them better preserve the historic resources that make

their neighborhoods significant. All League efforts are nonpartisan and specifically target City Council elections.

Following a successful string of LPV campaigns this past February, HDC is now recruiting new and diverse community groups throughout the city to participate in local League coalitions and help shape the discussion. Issues and focuses vary from district to district and reflect the individual interests of the local groups involved.

By reaching out to candidates and constituents in all 51 City Council Districts, HDC hopes this initiative will help establish neighborhood preservation as a key issue throughout the campaign season. As with past efforts, each Preservation Voters coalition will develop a Voter Guide addressing top local concerns, and some will host a candidate forum prior to the September primaries. Please visit www.hdc.org/preservationvoters.htm for an updated calendar of events.

To join the League of Preservation Voters initiative in your council district, please contact Lauren Belfer, HDC's community coordinator: lbelfer@hdc.org or 212-614-9107. 📞



HDC
Charlotte Rothblatt, the youngest preservationist, sporting HDC's LPV button



HDC
Guests at HDC's Auction for Advocacy mingle in the former banking hall of the Canadian Imperial Bank in Manhattan's financial district. Over 100 guests were in attendance and the event raised over \$7,000 for the League of Preservation Voters initiative.

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NEWS AND VIEWS OF THE
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THE HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL WORKS
TO ENSURE THE PRESERVATION OF
SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS,
BUILDINGS AND PUBLIC SPACES IN
NEW YORK CITY, UPHOLD THE INTEGRITY OF
THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS LAW AND
FURTHER THE PRESERVATION ETHIC.

2009 Conference

Continued from page 3



JESSE WARD

Partnerships and Preservation: Working with Elected Representatives panel. From left to right: Katrina Miles, John Sabini, James F. Brennan and Nellie Longworth.

require human faces).

Mr. Dadey concluded by challenging the audience to make historic preservation a broader public interest. Why should New Yorkers outside of the landmarks community care, and moreover, why should elected officials care? These are essential questions that must be addressed for the preservation movement to be successful. Mr. Dadey advised that the secret to success is finding common ideological ground upon which the city's diverse interests and parties can unite.

Similar themes were carried throughout the day's panels, as guest speakers drew upon their unique experiences and perspectives to discuss how preservation activists could best succeed.

The first panel, moderated by HDC Director Katrina Miles, examined the interplay between elected officials and activists. Panelists included former New York City Council Member and State Senator **John Sabini** of Queens, New York State Assemblymember **James Brennan** of Brooklyn, and **Nellie Longworth**, past president of the national advocacy organization Preservation Action.

Both Brennan and Sabini spoke candidly about the economic role of development in preservation campaigns. Rep. Brennan highlighted the polarization which happens when development

battles pit residents against construction workers; since union jobs depend on large-scale development projects, he suggested that "government needs to promote public works and development in a balanced, stabilizing manner, so construction unions are less dependent on the private sector." Mr. Sabini agreed that development money affects community preservation efforts, archly adding, "Real estate is to New York what oil is to Texas."

Speaking from his own experience, Mr. Sabini said, "as an Italian-American kid from Queens, [historical figures like] Peter Stuyvesant and John Jacob Astor had little relevance to my life," and it was through his work on the Landmarks Subcommittee of City Council that he grew to better appreciate preservation concerns.

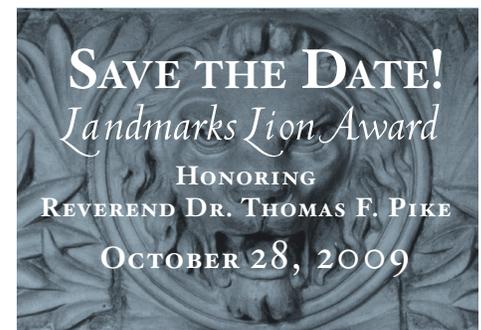
As legislative change is often the goal of activism, the next panel focused on specific legal means to pursue preservation goals. **Elizabeth Merritt**, Deputy General Counsel, National Trust for Historic Preservation; **James Tripp**, General Counsel, Environmental Defense Fund; and **Mark Silberman**, Chief Counsel, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, joined moderator David Goldfarb, attorney and former HDC president, for a spirited conversation.

Ms. Merritt discussed the recently-adopted stimulus package. Although it

featured no specific preservation initiatives, preservation and environmental groups defeated an amendment which would have weakened review under the National Environmental Protection Act. This illustrated the need for legislative advocacy to not only seek to reform, but to protect. On a national level, this is especially important as most of the environmental protection and preservation laws were passed during a very progressive era in government, which is not the case today.

On a local level, Mr. Silberman noted the trade-offs which were necessary to amend and strengthen the New York City Landmarks Law. As an example, when passing the Civil Fines Enforcement legislation during the Guiliani administration, the Landmarks Commission had to discontinue its policy of withholding permission for new permits until violations were corrected.

Mr. Silberman added the difficulty of negotiating legislative change with a City Council which doesn't necessarily understand or appreciate historic preservation. He highlighted the important role that advocates play in educating elected officials. With regard to proposals to make the consideration of potential landmarks more transparent, Mr. Silberman spoke at length about internal LPC deliberations when considering potential landmarks. He stated that before they are brought before the commissioners for consideration, several steps of research and outreach must take place. Mr. Silberman wryly added that when people nominate buildings for designation, they usually look for approval; and warned that putting a stricter timeline on agency decision-making would likely result in more outright rejections of proposals. 🗣️



The Mayoral Candidates

Since the priorities of the mayor most directly dictate the agendas of the city's agencies and authorities, HDC invited all five main mayoral candidates to present to Conference attendees their thoughts on preservation in New York City. Three accepted and attended the March 7 event: City Councilmember **Tony Avella** (D), **Bill "Reverend Billy" Talen** (Green) and **Congressman Anthony Weiner** (D). **Comptroller William Thompson** (D) declined to attend, though his campaign office has since contacted HDC to discuss the city's preservation issues. Mayor Michael Bloomberg (R) did not respond to HDC's invitation.

HDC Executive Director Simeon Bankoff posed the same questions to each candidate in attendance. Portions of their responses are quoted below. To listen to their appearances in full, please visit www.hdc.org/Conference2009.htm#audio

As mayor, what will you do to stem the inappropriate development which is ruining our city's historic neighborhoods?

Avella: "Reforming the public review process, reforming the Board of Standards & Appeals, but actually I'm going to eliminate the Board of Standards & Appeals, the agency will be gone. The legitimate functions that the Board of Standards & Appeals has can easily be handled by two other agencies, the Department of City Planning and the Department of Buildings. That old boys' network for developers has to absolutely go."



That government must no longer be a partner of the real estate speculators and developers, the big mega-corporations financed by Wall Street. That neighborhoods are an underexploited market that they move in and colonize, that basic economic, political equation must end."

Weiner: "We have to do that

balance better, but I also think we have to do it not one building at a time. I really do think that we need to have a conversation about what kind of a city we want to have. Part of the challenge that we have is we have this binary conversation: Should this go here at this time, yes or no? When I think we'd have a much more healthy conversation to say, What type of a community do we want to construct?"

As mayor, how will you balance the economic and housing needs of New York City without sacrificing the social and spiritual necessities of maintaining the character of our neighborhoods?



Avella: "I think the first thing you do is making sure that neighborhoods are properly zoned, so that where a neighborhood needs to be contextually zoned or downzoned to protect the quality of the neighborhood, we do that [...] The second thing is telling the developers and working with them, saying listen, here's where we're doing preservation, but we'll give you opportunities in conjunction and consultation with neighborhoods as to where to do development."

Talen: "The way we measure housing units and the way that we measure dollars exchanged, these indices are suspect. Prosperity comes from a healthy neighborhood. In a healthy neighborhood, we take care of each other [...] People are making their economies right now out of successful neighborhoods that have that human stamp."

Weiner: "I think that we have the opportunity to make more fuller use of public housing resources. I think that we have to do a much better job in cataloguing and making use of the brownfields in existence in the city that just sit as sores in our communities for no better reason than just we can't untie the legal thicket of who is responsible to deal with it [...] New York City is what it is because of the nature of its neighborhoods."

As mayor, how will you make the agencies responsible for the city's physical fabric— the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the Department of City Planning, the Department of Buildings and the Parks Department — more transparent in their decisions and more responsive to ordinary New Yorkers?

Avella: "If [a developer with known building permit infractions] goes and buys another piece of property, and submits a permit request, the city will give him another permit. How stupid is this, as a city, that we don't say to these unscrupulous developers, 'That's it, you're done. You so proved yourself to be incapable of following the law, that we now are prohibiting you from doing construction in the city of New York.'"

Talen: "It seems to me that the preservation movement in this city, where the movement began in this city, has always been at odds with the fact that year in and year out our biggest donors to the major candidates are real estate speculators. Not just the top donor, but the top ten donors. That must end [...] The government's job is to defend neighborhoods; the government's job is to defend the memory of our city."



Weiner: "I think that these infrastructures are intentionally forbidding to normal citizens [...] I would livestream all of the meetings. I would let people participate.

I would make sure that the records are not only put online, but digitized. Which means not just making a .pdf that you can scroll through and read, but you digitize it so people can insert comments and insert commentary, and you can aggregate people's thoughts in a way that makes it more of a community square."

Editor's Note: After his appearance at the HDC Conference in March, Congressman Weiner issued a statement announcing that he will not run for mayor in the November 2009 election. 🗳️

ALL PHOTOS: JESSE WARD

2009 GRASSROOTS AWARDS WINNERS

ON THURSDAY, MAY 7, the Historic Districts Council hosted its 2009 Grassroots Awards Ceremony and 19th Annual Preservation Party. Despite the threat of rain, over 200 preservationists and neighborhood advocates came out for what turned out to be a beautiful and warm spring evening. The garden of St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery once again proved the perfect venue.

Honorees hailed from all five boroughs, and their work represented a diverse range of preservation efforts in New York City. From individual restoration projects to decades-long campaigns for landmarking, the 2009 Grassroots awardees represent exemplary ingenuity and dedication in community-based advocacy. Congratulations to this year's winners, and thanks to everyone who came out to celebrate with us!

David Carnivale has been a practicing architect and a voice for historic preservation on Staten Island for more than 20 years. His love of historic buildings was nurtured by a childhood spent at Historic Richmond Town, learning the principles of restoration from the late Loring McMillen, founder of Richmondtown, and his son, master carpenter William McMillen. Over the years, Mr. Carnivale's passion for older houses has been translated into several preservation successes for some of Staten Island's oldest structures, such as the 1678 Lakeman-Cortelyou-Taylor House in New Dorp, as well as the later c. 1836 Seaman Cottage, which was saved from demolition and relocated to Historic Richmond Town. Mr. Carnivale is also the author of "The Affordable House," an online and print publication that offers architectural plans in historical styles.



AYUMI TAMAKI

Architect David Carnivale and Jim Ferreri, HDC advisor and president of the Preservation League of Staten Island.



FERN LUSKIN

Fern Luskin & Julie Finch

Friends of Gibbons U.G.R.R. Site and Lamartine Place, a volunteer group led by Fern Luskin and Julie Finch, was formed to advocate for the protection and preservation of Lamartine Place, a collection of historic houses on West 29th Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues in Manhattan. These lots, developed in 1847, were the site of remarkable occurrences in American history. The group also strongly pushed for the individual landmarking of 339 West 29th Street, the former home of the crusading abolitionist/activist Hopper-Gibbons family. The Friends researched and documented the street's connection to the Underground Railroad and its significance to abolitionist and New York history. In 2008 they submitted this research to the Landmarks Preservation Commission, which promptly calendared 12 buildings on West 29th Street for official consideration as an historic district.

The Ridgewood Property Owners & Civic Association has served the Ridgewood community for the last 78 years. It addresses neighborhood issues dealing with the community's overall quality of life, and in particular Ridgewood's parks, street trees, housing, zoning, security, transit and local retail. Today there are nearly 700 member families. The association has long fought to preserve the historic character of the neighborhood, which consists largely of early-20th-century brick row houses with a variety of architectural detailing. In 1983, after several years of staff work by its sister organization the Greater Ridgewood Restoration Corporation, Ridgewood became the largest residential district in New York State on the National Register of Historic Places, with 2,892 properties listed. More recently, through the association's efforts, the Landmarks Preservation Commission calendared 96 of these six-family buildings, known as the Matthews Flats, as part of the proposed Ridgewood North Historic District, and 210 buildings as the proposed Ridgewood South Historic District. The community looks forward to additional designations of this worthy area in the near future.



AYUMI TAMAKI

The Ridgewood Property Owners & Civic Association with HDC's Simeon Bankoff and Paul Graziano



AYUMI TAMAKI

Denham Wolf Real Estate Services accepting the Award



BEYER BLINDER BELLE ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS

The BankNote

The American Bank Note Company Printing Plant, a prominent industrial complex located in the Hunts Point neighborhood of The Bronx, was originally constructed as a printing facility for foreign currencies and government bonds. In January 2008, Taconic Investment Partners and Denham Wolf Real Estate Services purchased the property, now known as The BankNote, with the intent to renovate and restore the buildings into a mixed-use commercial and retail facility. Since purchasing the buildings, the owners have been consistent advocates for the preservation of The BankNote's significant history and architecture. Last year the Landmarks Preservation Commission designated the complex as a New York City individual landmark.

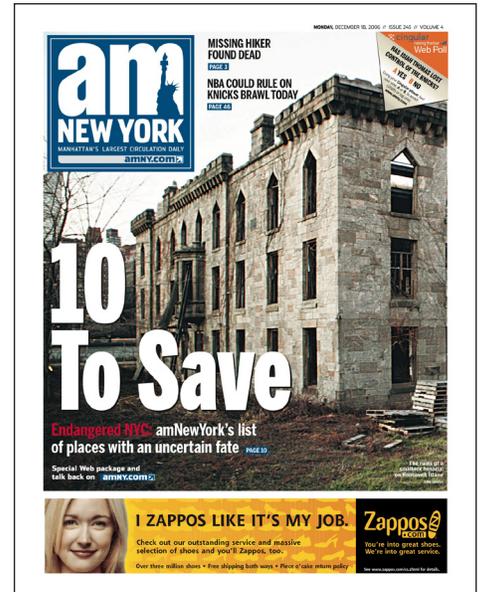
City Councilmember Vincent J. Gentile received the Friend in High Places Award for his longtime preservation efforts throughout the 43rd Council District. Councilman Gentile was elected to the City Council in 2003 and represents the south Brooklyn neighborhoods of Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Bath Beach and part of Bensonhurst. Shortly after taking office, he formed Councilmember Gentile's Preservation Committee, a group of advocates who help him make community preservation a top priority in his district. Through the committee he achieved a successful contextual rezoning of more than 400 blocks of Bay Ridge in 2005 and Dyker Heights in 2007. Working with the Historic Districts Council in 2007, he spearheaded a zoning survey of the Bath Beach neighborhood to protect the low-rise character of the area. The Councilmember has also campaigned for the preservation of numerous individual buildings, among them the Bennett-Farrell-Feldman House, the former Bay Ridge High School, Bay Ridge United Methodist Church and the Senator Street National Register District, and he continues to press for the reuse, restoration and preservation of historic structures.



AYUMI TAMAKI

Councilmember Vincent J. Gentile

Historic Districts Council



AMNEWYORK

AmNewYork's "10 to Save" Issue



AYUMI TAMAKI

Rolando Pujol of amNY & HDC's Simeon Bankoff

amNewYork, a free daily print publication and online blog, received this year's Friend from the Media Award. Managing editor Rolando Pujol has made community preservation a top priority for amNew York, launching a separate feature entitled "Endangered NYC." Recent articles have addressed such important campaigns as the efforts to save Saint Saviour's Church in Queens, 1520 Sedgewick Avenue in The Bronx (also known as the birthplace of hip-hop) and the Con Ed Powerhouse in Brooklyn. In 2006, amNewYork initiated an annual "Ten to Save" list, which highlights significant threatened buildings across New York City. 🏠

RECENT GIFTS AND GRANTS

ALL CONTRIBUTIONS by government, foundations, organizations, companies and Friends of the Historic Districts Council are very much appreciated. Every effort has been made to list donors accurately. Many thanks to those who gave in the period from December 2008 through March 2009:

Government: New York City Councilmembers Vincent J. Gentile, Jessica S. Lappin, Rosie Mendez and the Manhattan Delegation; New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; New York State Assemblymembers Deborah J. Glick and Richard N. Gottfried; New York State Senators Thomas K. Duane, Liz Krueger, Andrew J. Lanza and Diane J. Savino.

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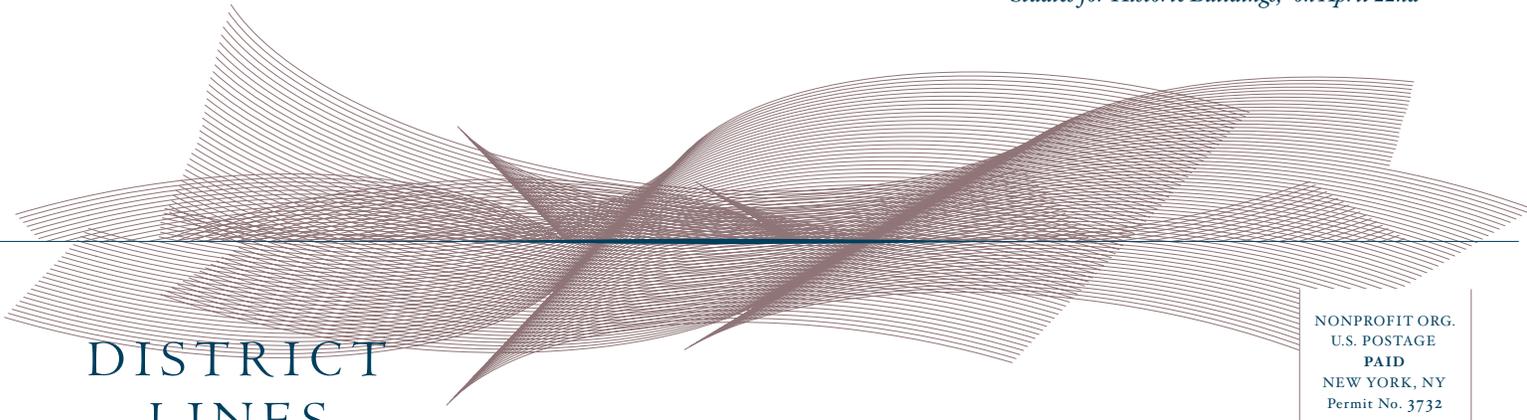
In this issue

- p. 1 “Endangered” South Street Seaport Makes Seven to Save List
- p. 2 Pursuing an Owner for Demolition-by-Neglect: A Torturous Legal Path
- p. 3 HDC Tackles Big Topics at 2009 Conference
- p. 4 10 Steps to Mull: Visions of the Future
- p. 5 Moving Forward: HDC’s League of Preservation Voters
- p. 7 The Mayoral Candidates • p. 8 2009 Grassroots Awards
- p. 10 Recent Gifts and Grants



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Claudia Kavenagh speaking at HDC’s continuing education program, “Conservation Methods and Case Studies for Historic Buildings,” on April 22nd



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