

DISTRICT LINES

NEWS AND VIEWS OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL AUTUMN 2008 VOL. XXII NO. 2

NEW INITIATIVE MAKES PRESERVATION HOT ELECTION TOPIC

ELECTED OFFICIALS ARE VITAL partners for any successful preservation campaign. Without their support, projects and causes, even those with popular backing, can flounder. As representatives, their voices are intended to mirror the desires and concerns of their constituents. Whether their actions accurately reflect this is, of course, not always guaranteed. Just like everyone else, sometimes elected officials need to have complicated issues explained to them, which is why HDC has introduced a new initiative – the League of Preservation Voters.

The league's mission is to educate elected officials about the importance of community preservation and enhancement. It is an aggressive campaign aimed to engage both voters and candidates alike, to unify groups of community advocates and to mobilize influential coalitions that reach out to political candidates and newly elected officials about the importance of preserving New York

City's historic places, buildings and neighborhoods.

TWO-THIRDS OF NEW YORK CITY'S ELECTED OFFICIALS FACE TERM LIMITS IN 2009.

In November 2009, due to term limits, New Yorkers will elect a new mayor, public advocate, comptroller, four of the five borough presidents (Manhattan excluded) and two-thirds of the New York City Council.

This sweeping change in representation provides a rare chance for concerned neighborhood activists to effect tangible change in the way New York communities engage with their elected officials; to build new

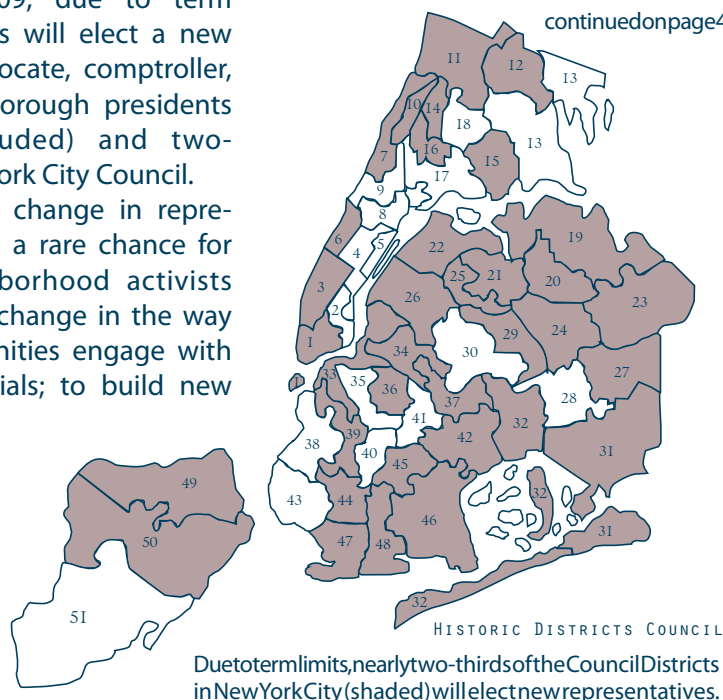
partnerships and focus campaign dialogue on the issues they consider most important.

It is essential that the preservation community

establish the preservation and enhancement of New York City's historic neighborhoods and buildings as a top priority for the incoming administration and city legislature.

Over the next year and a half, HDC will form League coalitions comprised

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WALTER B. MELVIN, HDC's 2008 LANDMARKS LION: A PORTRAIT OF PRESERVATION PATIENCE AND FORTITUDE



TOURING THE FLATIRON AREA offices of Walter B. Melvin Architects is like taking a low-flying helicopter tour of some of New York's finest parapets. Along the walls of the firm's bustling work spaces are posted huge photos and renderings of masonry spires now being reengineered—terra-cotta gargoyles crouched along 55 Liberty Street, austere reinforced-concrete planes at the Austin, Nichols & Com-

pany Warehouse, brick fins atop the Majestic Apartments.

"I have the best job in New York," said Melvin, who will receive HDC's 2008 Landmarks Lion Award on Wednesday, Oct. 29, at Bridgewater in Manhattan's South Street Seaport Historic District. "I get to spend my time climbing around amazing buildings, talking to enthusiastic owners, working with

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HDC HELPS RESOLVE AN HISTORIC CHALLENGE: WHO IS TO SAVE ADMIRAL'S ROW?

A LITTLE MORE THAN a block and a half away from the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, in an unused corner of an industrial park, are rare residential survivors of Brooklyn's 150-year hey-day as the Navy's premier shipbuilding facility – the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

By the time the Brooklyn Navy Yard closed its operations in 1966, it had supplied vessels for every major American military campaign from the Mexican-American War to the Vietnam War.

Throughout most of the yard's lifetime, naval officers with families stationed there lived in a row of residential townhouses along Flushing Avenue that came to be called Admiral's Row.

Constructed between 1850 and 1900, these 10 buildings are a dignified ensemble of mid-to-late 19th century residential architecture, including superb examples of Second Empire, Italianate and Queen Anne styles. Although abandoned since the mid-1970s, their elegance and presence are undeniable.

After the yard's closing the City of New York purchased most of the property and converted it into a working industrial park. A six-acre site on the southwest corner of the yard remained under the control of the federal government—the section containing Admiral's Row. When Congress voted to sell the property to New York City in 1988, the houses were still extraordinarily intact.

The city then began the long process of review and evaluation, eventually settling, in 1996, on a plan to demolish the properties and build a supermarket. The city signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office and other entities outlining the mitigation efforts for the destruction of these historic resources (which had been determined to be eligible for inclusion



Admiral's Row, also known as Officers Quarters, buildings H and C. OFFICER'S ROW PROJECT, 2004

on the State and National Registers of Historic Places). The mitigation would be photo documentation before demolition!

For reasons unknown, the project languished and the city didn't move to continue the acquisition process for another seven years. During this time the U.S. Department of Defense seemingly forgot about the property since the houses were left to molder with no efforts to mothball them so they would not become even more damaged (which runs counter to the department's mandate to properly maintain historic structures).

Years of being left open to the elements and vandals resulted in considerable damage to the houses. When the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation (which manages the industrial park for the city) started the public process to finally acquire the parcel in 2004, the condition of the properties combined with the existence of the signed MOA seemed to make their demolition a fait accompli.

Working with our neighborhood partners, including Historic Wallabout Association, Fort Greene Association,

Society for Clinton Hill and Myrtle Avenue Revitalization Project, HDC tried to rally support for the preservation of the houses, only to be rebuffed at every turn.

During this period HDC engaged a pro-bono environmental lawyer named Ted Wolff, who devoted considerable time unraveling the environmental review process necessary for the transfer of property from the federal government to the city. Mr. Wolff and his team first determined that the National Guard still had title to the land, not the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as was commonly believed. Once the appropriate agency was identified, we were able to ask targeted questions about the process, particularly about the National Historic Preservation Act and National Environmental Protection Act reviews that were necessary for the National Guard to undertake.

During this time, the New York Landmarks Conservancy brought in an engineer from Robert Silman Associates who did a pro-bono evaluation of the properties and found that the majority of the damage seemed to be cosmetic and

that the properties could be properly mothballed for a reasonable cost.

In early 2007, HDC was contacted by the National Guard, alerting us that the agency would be conducting a review of the proposed transfer under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. As part of the Section 106 review process, HDC was invited to become a consulting party, along with many of our colleagues, to discuss the proposed transfer of the property to the city and its possible impact on the historic resources.

In other words, HDC was given a seat at the table. We learned that the National Guard had commissioned a new, independent evaluation of the integrity of the historic resources. The consultants, Beardsley Design Associates working with Crawford & Stearns, not only found that eight of the 10 properties were in sound structural condition, but that the long brick shed next to the properties (originally used for drying the wood for shipbuilding) was probably the only existing 19th century naval timber shed left in America. Furthermore, Beardsley found that the entire complex merited inclusion on the National Register as a potential historic district. With this new information in hand, the New York State Historic Preservation Office ruled in December

2007 that the 1996 MOA was no longer valid and that a new analysis of the proposal had to take place in order to properly assess how best to mitigate the impact on historic resources.

The actual review process was begun in April 2008 and has involved dozens of people representing many different perspectives as consulting parties. Although the process is working and the federal government is living up to its environmental responsibility, the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation's plan of razing the properties for a parking lot remains at the center of the conversation.

This is a profound failure of imagination. There is plenty of room on the six-acre property for a supermarket and the desired industrial uses behind the Admiral's Row buildings, especially if the necessary parking is incorporated into the new buildings. In answer to the inevitable rejoinder of "Who's going to pay for this?" the site has the potential to be enormously profitable for any supermarket developer.

Home Depot, Lowe's and Target, all have their highest-earning stores in New York City. In return for what is sure to be a wildly successful venture, the developer should be required to give back something of value to the local community and the city.



MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, THE LEONARD HASSAM BOGART COLLECTION
Officers' Quarters—Flushing Avenue—Brooklyn Navy Yard, 1904.

The task is to convince the National Guard of this and HDC is working to reframe the conversation to prove that preservation is possible.

The Section 106 process will continue through the remainder of 2008 during which the National Guard hopes to issue a new MOA. Visit HDC's Web site at <http://www.hdc.org/admiralsrow.htm> for updates on this project and to learn more. 🏠

MITIGATION: SOMETIMES THAT'S ALL THERE IS

UNDER NEW YORK CITY'S LANDMARKS LAW, the Landmarks Preservation Commission has the authority to withhold approval of any proposal that the agency deems not to be "appropriate" to a municipally designated landmark or historic district. This is a power that neither New York State nor the federal government has. Instead, when considering a publicly funded project that is judged to negatively affect recognized state or federal historic properties or resources (and there needs to be public funding involved in the project to trigger these protections), the lead agencies only granted power is to determine proper "mitigation".

Mitigation is broadly defined as the alleviation or diminution of a harmful effect, such as the demolition of state or federally recognized historic buildings, and may be accomplished through a variety of methods. Typical mitigation techniques are (1) the creation of architectural drawings and photographs to document a building before its demolition; (2) the establishment of restoration funds to allow site-related preservation projects to take place; or (3) design modifications that would incorporate into the project some elements of the site that would otherwise be destroyed. 🏠

NEW INITIATIVE...

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of concerned residents and stakeholders from local neighborhood and civic associations in City Council districts throughout the five boroughs. Coalition members will provide insight on neighborhood-specific problems that push the conversation beyond talk of standard preservation practices, incorporating into the discussion more general community and quality-of-life concerns. The league will also address significant citywide themes, such as the Landmarks Preservation Commission's ongoing need for increased funding.

The coalitions will then develop questionnaires that will be sent to candidates as they declare their bids for public office. As responses to the questionnaires are returned, they will be compiled into individual Preservation Voter Guides for each council district. HDC will work closely with its coalition members to distribute these guides and will reach out to local news media to ensure that the public is made aware of the issues addressed. The Preservation Voter Guides will

not only serve to inform constituents of candidates' positions and opinions, but will also put these perspectives on the record to encourage those elected to honor their statements.

HDC's website will feature online versions of each voter guide, interactive maps and a section for community feedback on the candidates responses.

Following the release of the voter guides, the dialogue will be pushed further via political forums hosted by HDC in selected City Council districts. HDC will identify geographic areas where preservation issues are of particular concern and invite the relevant candidates to participate. There they will have the opportunity to address priority concerns raised in the voter guides and answer impromptu questions posed by the public. These forums will provide candidates with the opportunity to clarify their positions on important issues and will educate them about New York City's land-use laws, policies and regulations.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IS KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF THE LEAGUE.

HDC already has connections with more than 500 community-based organizations throughout the city that are dedicated to their neighborhoods preservation and revitalization. While this provides a strong foundation, this network must expand to include organizations that focus on urban-development issues beyond traditional historic preservation. Such an expansive network will have a real influence on candidates' understanding of the importance of preservation to their prospective constituents.

The Historic Districts Council and all league coalitions will remain nonpartisan and refrain from endorsing any specific candidates throughout the election process. By working equally with candidates in all 51 council districts, preservation will be established as a priority, regardless of who is eventually elected.

HDC launched the League of Preservation Voters in 2006 around a special election for Brooklyn's 40th Council District seat. The district, which runs along the southern and eastern edges of Prospect Park, encompasses a number of historic neighborhoods, including Ditmas Park, Prospect-Lefferts Gardens, Beverly Square West and Prospect Park South.

Enlisting the help of 10 local community groups, the coalition produced the first version of the Preservation Voter Guide and hosted a candidate forum.

Thanks to this campaign, since taking office Councilmember Mathieu Eugene – the winning candidate – has become sensitive to and supportive of preservation efforts, testifying at the Landmarks Preservation Commission on behalf of the designation of the Fiske Terrace-Midwood Park Historic District in 2007.

Based on this successful first effort, HDC expanded the program to the 30th Council District in central Queens, a district with no designated landmarks. A League of Preservation Voters campaign was initiated around a special City Council election in the district this past spring, as HDC again partnered with local groups to identify key concerns, educate the candidates and inform local constituents. Since then, the district's new Councilmember, Anthony Como, has come out as a vocal and active supporter of a number of local preservation efforts, suggesting that the League of Preservation Voters initiative is not only effective but long overdue. 🏡

For more information on the League of Preservation Voters, see the pull out insert in this issue or visit our website at www.hdc.org/preservation-voters.htm.

WHAT FUTURE FOR LANDMARK'S FUNDING?

AS STORM CLOUDS CONTINUE to gather around New York City's fiscal prospects, nagging concerns for the future of the Landmarks Preservation Commission is deepening into full-fledged foreboding.

Every year the preservation community has had to battle the sitting administration to restore budget cuts to the LPC despite the agency's spiraling workload and proven track record.

This past year, preservationists rallied to maintain funding for the LPC's survey team. The team had been part of the agency throughout the 1980s but was disbanded during the first term of the Giuliani administration. This resulted in a large slowdown of designation activity, even while the agency's regulatory burden grew from about 4,000 permits issued in 1993 to more than 10,000 issued in 2007.

In 2006 the City Council, led by councilmembers Tony Avella (Queens), Jessica Lappin (Manhattan) and Diana Reyna (Brooklyn), allocated an additional \$250,000 to the agency to reestablish the survey team and brought additional resources to the overstressed Preservation Department.

In September of that same year, the five-member survey team, working under the direction of the Research Department, assayed more than 22,000 properties throughout the city as part of a preliminary assessment for landmark designation. It is no accident that since the survey team was hired, the Landmarks Commission has heard and designated a record number of landmarks: 1,592 properties and four interiors — the highest number of designations in a two-year period since 1990.

Despite the demonstrable results of the survey team, during budget negotiations in May 2008, preservationists and community groups were forced to rally to retain this needed municipal function in the face of budgetary doom-saying once again.



HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL

Councilmember Jessica Lappin (front right) and representatives from historic neighborhoods throughout the city rally on the steps of City Hall for a Landmarks Preservation Commission budget increase.

After much last-minute uncertainty the budget passed and the positions, which accounted for a full 10 percent of the LPC workforce, were secured for another year. But the future of LPC funding is precarious at best.

Even after seven years of growth, fueled in part by stratospheric real-estate prices, the city administration still obviously considers the Landmarks Preservation Commission to be a nicety, not a necessity. Why else would the administration consistently short-change an agency that oversees hundreds of millions of dollars of private development annually? Consider the recently reopened Plaza Hotel, whose Landmarks-approved renovations cost its developers, \$400 million, above and beyond the \$675 million they paid for the property in 2004. That's an enormous amount of money flowing into New York City, and to no small extent the Landmarks Preservation Commission is the gatekeeper that allowed this project to

happen. It makes no sense that community activists have to stand on City Hall steps to get the city to properly fund the agency.

This record of reluctance is even more troubling when one realizes that in 2009, during the next budget cycle, the mayor and much of the Council are on their way out the door because of term limits. In effect, they will be negotiating on a budget that they won't have to live with. This is why it's crucial for the preservation community to get organized to stop the budget cuts before they are even considered.

As part of the League of Preservation Voters initiative (see article on page 1), we will be reaching out to the next class of municipal decision-makers and making certain that a well-funded, effective Landmarks Preservation Commission is not an afterthought at budget time. Providing an integral, valuable and mandated function of city government shouldn't have to be demanded on the steps of City Hall. 🏡



CHRIS KREUSSLING (FLATBUSH GARDENER)

Attendees line up to question candidates for Brooklyn's 40th City Council seat during HDC's February 2007 candidate forum.

THE REGISTERS AND THE REQUESTS FOR EVALUATION: HDC BEGINS NEW SURVEY PROJECTS

THIS PAST SUMMER the Historic Districts Council began working on an important project to reconcile neighborhoods and buildings that are designated by the city as historic districts and individual landmarks but are not on the National Register of Historic Places.

Although much of HDC's focus is getting properties designated as landmarks by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, districts and individual buildings more than 50 years old may also be eligible for inclusion on the National and State Registers.

While LPC designation provides much protection for historic buildings and offers the technical assistance of LPC staff in planning projects, there is little municipal financial assistance or none at all available for work on designated properties. However, a listing on the National Register, while it provides very little physical protection, does qualify some buildings for tax credits and other financial assistance, including grants and easements.

The ideal situation for an historic building is to be both designated by the LPC and listed on the National Register, which together provide protection and assistance.

In prior years federal historic-preservation funds made it possible for LPC to submit requests for National Register listing as it designated new districts; but in the early 1980s the funding stopped and LPC ceased this activity. Instead, the responsibility for gaining National Register listing for local landmarks has fallen upon preservation and neighborhood groups.

To begin to remedy this, HDC compared maps of each city-designated district's boundaries with those of the National Register and discovered

there are roughly two dozen local districts that have been omitted from the list of federal designations. HDC's Designation Committee will review these neighborhoods to determine which would benefit most from National Register listing.

Significant restoration and rehabilitation projects on income-producing properties (including commercial, industrial and residential rental buildings) are eligible for federal tax credits. Similar work done on owner-occupied houses in areas deemed economically "distressed" in the 2000 census also may qualify for New York



HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL
Clay Avenue Historic District, a neighborhood in The Bronx would benefit from the New York State rehabilitative tax-credit program.

State tax credits. Once the analysis is complete, HDC will work with community groups, property owners and the State Historic Preservation Office in priority areas to help gain the added protection and assistance that being on the Registers affords.

HDC will also launch a public education campaign to better explain the benefits and responsibilities of Register listings. This project is funded in part by a grant from the Trust for Architectural Easements.

IS YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE QUEUE?

According to HDC's files, there are there are roughly 400 individual sites and districts that, at one point or another, someone felt should be landmarked.

In an attempt to consolidate that information, HDC has been working to compile pertinent information on each nomination, including descriptions of the sites, community contacts, and how far along each is in the designation process. For example, if there has been a formal request on file at the Landmarks Preservation Commission - a document called an Request for Evaluation (RFE) - and whether has it been answered. This organized information will help set HDC's future priorities and also allow HDC to more easily connect different individuals and groups that are interested in specific sites or locations.

HDC is also seeking to include "wish lists" from preservation-minded groups and individuals. Is there anything you feel is worthy of landmarking? Please E-mail survey@hdc.org or call HDC at (212) 614-9107 to let us know about an RFE you or your organization has submitted, as well as your favorite buildings and the efforts

WALTER B. MELVIN...

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DOUGLAS SCHNEIDER
Walter B. Melvin, Historic Districts Council's 2008 Landmarks Lion.

expert contractors who are willing to go the extra mile, in an office full of brilliant, dedicated people."

Age 66, he is tall, courtly, jovial and infectiously enthusiastic. Modest, too, even while discussing a career total of 1,200 buildings saved so far, mainly in New York but also scattered from Pittsburgh to Princeton. They span chronologically from 18th-century farmhouses to I. M. Pei's Kips Bay Towers, completed in 1965. Along with institutional and civic landmarks — the Cloisters, the Jewish Museum, the Queensborough Bridge arches, the main New York Public Library's Fifth Avenue Lion statues, dubbed Patience and Fortitude — Melvin's projects include scores of works by prolific apartment-house architects such as Emery Roth, James Carpenter, Rosario Candela and Schwartz & Gross. "I practically feel like I know how their minds worked," he said.

Melvin's devotion to shoring up historic architecture is deeply rooted in a childhood spent on Maine farms, where his Scottish-American ancestors settled in the 1700's.

His father, Walter B. Melvin Sr., a builder, specialized in residences and paper mills, and his mother, Winifred, studied art education at Pratt Institute.

"By age 8 or 9, I could read blueprints, and by junior high school I was taking on carpentry jobs," Melvin recalled.

While studying architecture at Pratt in the 1960's, he served part-time as a site engineer for his father's paper mills. During his first decade out of Pratt, he helped design new buildings for a variety of firms, including a JFK Airport hangar and schools on Long Island and the Upper East Side; he then set up a solo practice in 1975.

"There was no work for any architect in New York in 1975, so it seemed like a good time to go out on my own," he said wryly. His first major commission was an emergency: "10-foot-tall parapets on a Washington Square co-op that were leaning out over the street, 16 inches out of plumb."

No other architecture firm had yet studied prewar construction materials reaching the ends of their lifespan, and no schools taught architectural preservation or restoration. "We quickly became the go-to experts, inventing solutions as we went along."

When not running his 32-person office, Melvin takes time off for his main hobby: restoring buildings. He has also accumulated massive collections of such varied items as vintage skis, flashlights, boats, canoes and Edsels over the many years and estimates that his collections now number in the thousands. He and his wife, Sarah, have worked on houses

at their family farm in Maine and, near their home in New Jersey, have restored a circa 1800 stagecoach inn that state historians have certified was an Underground Railroad stop.

He has been amazed, he said, at how preservation has shifted into the mainstream during his decades in the field. Although the current mayoral administration, he cautions, "isn't as supportive with funding as it should be of the Landmarks Commission," overall he's buoyed.

"There's been an incredible rise in awareness that preservation, landmarking, historic districts, all play a huge part in keeping up the real-estate values and drawing visitors here," he said. "We need new development, of course. But the historic streetscapes—those are the strength, the drawing card, of New York." ■

DISTRICT LINES

NEWS AND VIEWS OF THE
HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL

EDITOR - KATRINA MILES
ART AND PRODUCTION - KRISTEN MORITH
EDITORIAL CONSULTANT - JACK TAYLOR
CONTRIBUTORS - SIMEON BANKOFF, LAUREN BELFER,
EVE KAHN, FRAMPTON TOLBERT, NADEZHDA WILLIAMS
STAFF - SIMEON BANKOFF, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FRAMPTON TOLBERT, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
LAUREN BELFER, COMMUNITY COORDINATOR
KRISTEN MORITH, NADEZHDA WILLIAMS,
PRESERVATION ASSOCIATES

NO PART OF THIS PERIODICAL MAY BE
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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.

Editors Note:
A picture caption in the Spring 2007, Vol. 21, No.1, issue of District Lines erroneously stated the founding date of the 1794 Bridge Cafe located at 279 Water Street.

EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS: NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERS TALK ABOUT HOW THEY GOT THEIR COMMUNITIES DESIGNATED



HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL
Fred Baer of the Fiske Terrace Association in front of his 1911 house, designated March 2008.

COMMUNITY ADVOCACY STARTS FROM the ground up. Motivated individuals volunteer their time, energy and resources, often for many years, as they struggle to garner the support and attention necessary to make their goals reality. Kitchen tables become de facto offices. Regular citizens become experts on obscure building codes, zoning regulations and landmarks evaluations. As they work, these diligent men and women often exude such enthusiasm for their chosen causes that their successes seem inevitable.

In August, the Historic Districts Council spoke with two of these inspiring movers and shakers about their experiences fighting to protect their communities. Here, Neighborhood Partners Fred Baer of the Fiske Terrace Association, and Denise Brown of the Crown Heights North Association, both in Brooklyn, tackle almost everything you might want to

know about launching a preservation campaign - from debunking common myths about landmarking to enlisting the support of elected officials.

HDC What was the initial impetus for your neighborhood campaign?

BAER Fiske Terrace and Midwood Park pursued landmark status for well over a decade. We were concerned that there were significant changes going on in other areas of Victorian Flatbush that most of us did not want to see in our area, like bricking up front porches; the installation of cinderblock walls, turning homes into virtual compounds; adding driveways to front lawns.

BROWN The thing that got us started was the fact that the Landmarks Preservation Commission took the initiative in 1978 to conduct a survey of the historic buildings located in North Crown Heights. The impetus to move this effort forward after 20 years occurred when I was given a copy of their report and began to question why this had not moved forward. After all, other areas which were surveyed during that same period had already become historic districts, including Fort Greene and Clinton Hill, while Crown Heights fell into obscurity.

HDC Was landmarking an end to a means, or was it always the ultimate goal?

BAER We saw that the zoning code allowed for the wholesale demolition of old homes and their replacement with McMansions, destroying the original character of neighborhoods like Gravesend, Manhattan Beach and Midwood. Although that was not happening here, we knew it could, as new

owners might not share the sense of history and the importance to the environment of the neighborhood that each historic house be preserved.

BROWN The Crown Heights North Association's main objective was to obtain historic district status for all of Crown Heights North as a way to protect the diverse architectural jewels that lie within its boundaries. We were aware of the ongoing changes in other downtown Brooklyn neighborhoods and wanted to protect our area from potential overdevelopment.

HDC What obstacles did you face getting neighborhood support?

BAER What we realized was that there was a great deal of misinformation out there. Once we explained that landmark status did not prevent you from making any changes to your house, many neighbors who were on the fence became supporters. Over time there was a great deal of discussion about landmarking at neighborhood dinners, book clubs and association meetings, etc. I even got to "chat up" a few neighbors at a bar mitzvah!

The eventual support was overwhelming, and whatever rumblings took place never rose to the level of real opposition. In fact, at our Landmarks Preservation Commission public hearing, out of 56 testifiers, 54 spoke in passionate support, leading to the description of the hearing as a "love fest."

The issues we did have were internal: it was very difficult to mobilize neighbors into action to support this effort. Not because of opposition, but because many have high-stress/long-hour jobs, young children or both. Coming to meetings, ringing doorbells, making phone calls took time that many supportive neighbors did



HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL
Buildings along St. Marks Avenue in the Crown Heights North Historic District, designated in April 2007.

not have. We were able to cobble together a small group that had or could make the time, and we relied heavily on the good advice and guidance given to us by HDC to be able to use our limited people resources to maximum effect.

HDC What role, if any, did your local elected officials play in moving your designations forward?

BAER Our elected officials were all supportive, particularly our then Councilmember Yvette Clarke who strongly advocated for us with the LPC and helped move our application along. Marty Markowitz, Jim Brennan, Rhoda Jacobs, Mathieu Eugene, Kendall Stewart, et al. were all on board.

BROWN From the start our elected officials were supportive. Our strategy was to be proactive regarding our elected officials. We proceeded to first obtain unanimous support from our community board. Secondly, we obtained support from our assemblyman and the city councilmembers for our area (Al Vann and Letitia James). We met with each elected official personally, sent

them information packages and invited them to speak at our monthly meetings.

Through Councilmember Vann's office an initial meeting was set up between himself, LPC Chairman Bob Tierney and our organization. Our main question there was, "What can we do to get this process moving along?" As a result of this meeting, we walked away with a mission to obtain photos of every house in the proposed area based on the 1978 LPC survey. This we accomplished within a matter of a few months with the help of many volunteers.

HDC Were the elected officials willing to help from the get-go, or did you struggle to convince them of your campaign's importance?

BAER Our concern was that it would not be high on their agendas. Our neighborhood

is part of two Council districts comprised of other neighborhoods, most of which are more heavily populated and very different from ours. Often, issues important to Fiske Terrace/Midwood Park do not rise to the same level of concern for some of our elected officials. This fact was clearly illustrated by the 2007 HDC forum on neighborhood preservation held for the multiple candidates for the 40th Council District. While all candidates spoke of their concern about neighborhood preservation, few showed any real understanding of the issues facing neighborhoods like ours.

BROWN To date, all of our elected officials have been supportive from the very beginning and still remain supportive as we embark on the second phase of landmark designation for Crown Heights North. One of the things we conceded was to have the designation process broken up into four phases due to the large size of the area. We wanted to move forward to have the entire area designated simultaneously, especially after waiting over 20 years to be recognized. But we felt that something was better than being



SHAWN JAMES
Denise Brown of the Crown Heights North Association, second from left, with some of the elected officials who helped make her neighborhood's designation possible. From left: Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, Congresswoman Yvette Clarke, Assemblyman Karim Camara, and Deborah Young, Crown Heights North Association president.

RECENT GIFTS
AND GRANTS

ALL CONTRIBUTIONS BY GOVERNMENT, foundations, organizations, companies and Friends of the Historic Districts Council are very much appreciated. All efforts have been made to list contributions properly. Many thanks to those who gave in the period from March 2008 through July 2008:

GOVERNMENT: New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick, New York State Senator Thomas K. Duane, New York State Senator Liz Krueger, New York State Senator Andrew J. Lanza.

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ORGANIZATIONS: Bayside-Auburndale Improvement Association, The Beaux Arts Alliance, Bedford Barrow Commerce Block Association, Boerum Hill Association, Broadway-Flushing Homeowners Association, Bronx Shepherds Restoration Corporation, Brooklyn Heights Association, Carnegie Hill Neighbors, Committee for Environmentally Sound Development, Concerned Citizens of Laurelton, Defenders of the Historic Upper East Side, Douglaston/Little Neck Historical Society, The Drive to Protect the Ladies’ Mile District, East 83rd/84th Street Block Association, East 12th Street Block Association, Fort Greene Association, 4Borough Neighborhood Preservation Alliance Foundation, Friends of Terra Cotta, Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, Fulton Ferry Landing Association, Gramercy Park Block Association, Historic House Trust of New York City,

Landmark West!, Mount Morris Park Community Improvement Association, National Trust Community Investment Corporation, New York Preservation Archive Project, 122 Block Association, Parkway Village Historical Society, Parkway Village Landmark Committee, Preserve and Protect, Queens Civic Congress Foundation, Queens County Farm Museum, Queens Historical Society, Richmond Hill Historical Society, Roebling Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archaeology, Roosevelt Island Historical Society, Society for Clinton Hill, SoHo Alliance, State



HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL
Guests at HDC’s 2008 Summer Friends Party enjoying the view from the Alice Austen House Museum’s garden on Staten Island.

Street Block Association, Stuyvesant Park Neighborhood Association, Sunnyside Gardens Preservation Alliance, 10th and Stuyvesant Streets Block Association, Tottenville Historical Society, Union Square Community Coalition, Westerleigh Improvement Society.

COMPANIES: AM&G Waterproofing, Baxt Ingui Architects, Beyhan Karahan & Associates Architecture, Brownstone 93, Coburn Architecture, Cutsogeorge Tooman & Allen Architects, DBA Historic Design Associates/Hershner, The Durst Organization, Essex Works Limited, Extell Development Company, Françoise Bollack Architects, Fredenburgh Architects, Gerard Santora PE, Kathryn Scott Design Studio, Laura Heim

Architect, Nicholson & Galloway, Page Ayres Cowley Architects, Park Avenue Building Supplies, Raphael & Marks, Robert A. M. Stern Architects, Rustin Levenson Art Conservation, Samuel J. DeSanto & Associates, The Shubert Organization, Thomas Fenniman Architect, Thornton Tomasetti, Walter B. Melvin Architects, Wank Adams Slavin Associates, Winter Hill Associates, Zubatkin Owner Representation.

FRIENDS: Lisa Ackerman, Brian Agnew, Renate & Hugh B. Aller, An-nice M. Alt, Edward D. Andrews, Jean Arrington, Elizabeth Ashby, John M. Bacon, Joyce A. Baldassarri, Michael Bamberger, Penelope Bareau, Douglas Baxter, Peggy Belanoff, Albert Bennett, Isabel & William Berley, Ann Bernstein, Bronson Binger, Susan Binger, Leo J. Blackman & Kenneth T. Monteiro, Françoise Bollack & Tom Killian, Nancy B. & Anthony C. Bowe, Julia Bradford, James Henry Burke, Richard Burlage & Fritz Duteau, Albert K. Butzel, Roger Byrom, George Calderaro, Andree Campanale, Bruce Campbell, Adrienne Caplan, Maximo Capule, Rosario Capule, Diana Carulli-Dunlap & Bryan R. Dunlap, Sandra Casanova, Connie Chin, Rita C. & John D. Chu, Mary Clarke, Harold Cohen, Lawrence J. Cohn, Margaret

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HDC Friends Jane Marx and Joe Svehlake enjoying the party at the Alice Austen House Museum.

agher, Sarah Woodside Gallagher, Gloria & Barry Garfinkel, Joan H. Geismar, Lee Gelber, Anne & Michael Gershon, Jill Gill, Michele Golden, dorris gaines golomb, Vera Julia Gordon, Christabel Gough, Tammy Granowsky, Paul Graziano, Janet Wells Greene, Janet Grommet, Tiziana Hardy, Arlene S. Harrison, Jeb Hart, Linda Hartinian, Laura Heim & Jeffrey Kroessler, Olga Karlova Heisler, Joseph Hellmann, Stephen J. Hendrickson, Judith Hernstadt, Richard Hershner, Sylvia R. Hoisington, Virginia Holloway, Michael

Hoyt, William Hudson, William Huxley, Phyllis Cynthia Huyler, Sandra & Robert Immoor, Matt Jenkins, Shirley Johns, Mary Kay Judy, Emily Mason Kahn & Wolf Kahn, Audrey Sisson Kasha, Katherine Keating & Larry Schroeder, Betty L. Keim, Irma & William Kennedy, Laura & Henry Kennedy, Joy Keiras, Antoinette King, Timothy James Kintzel, Ruth M. Kivette, Mr. & Mrs. Robert J. Kornfeld Sr., Holly Kowitt, Ynes Leon, Lynne Christine Lerner, Brenda Levin, Richard Levin, Margo Levine, Mimi Levitt, Barry S. Lewis, Batya Lewton, Edith Loening, Christopher W. London, Valerie & David Loo, Vincent M. Love, David Garrard Lowe, Catharine Lynch, Eleanor Lupino, Jean MacLean, Herbert Maletz, Elizabeth & Peter Manos, Michael Manzolillo, Cora B. Marcus, Ellen & Stephen Marks, Rachel C. McBeth, Gerard McFeely, Patricia McHugh, Deborah & Jason McManus, Jessie McNab, George McNeely, Ronald L. Melichar, Abigail Mellen, Amy Mellen, Joyce A. Mendelsohn, Deborah Menikoff, Pauline Metcalf, Katrina Miles, Richard D. Moses, Elizabeth Moss, Katharine Flanders Mukherji & Rajat Mukherji, Kenneth P. Murphy, David Myrick, Carol Neuls-Bates & William Bates Jr., Louis Newman, Gene Norman, Vanessa Norton, Charles Ober, Catherine O’Callaghan,

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NEWS AND VIEWS OF THE



THE ADVOCATE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S
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232 East 11th Street

New York NY 10003

tel 212-614-9107 fax 212-614-9127

e-mail hdc@hdc.org

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