

DISTRICT LINES

NEWS AND VIEWS OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL

SPRING 2003 VOLUME XVII NUMBER 1

p1 - Robert B. Tierney Takes the Chair at Landmarks **p2** - President's Column **p3** - Olympics—Preservation Opportunity?
p4 - Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1927–2003), Preservationist **p5** - “Preserving the Suburban Metropolis”
p7 - Conference Summary **p8** - HDC Hosts Panels In Neighborhoods **p8** - State Legislation Proposes New Rehab Tax Credits
p9 - New Books about Old New York **p10** - Mott Haven Historic District, the Bronx **p11** - Recent Gifts And Grants

ROBERT B. TIERNEY TAKES THE CHAIR AT LANDMARKS

In January the New York City Council unanimously approved Mayor Michael Bloomberg's appointment of Robert B. Tierney to the chairmanship of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Rumor had long preceded confirmation, and as early as last summer The New York Times began reporting that Tierney was a strong candidate for the job. Immediately before his appointment he had been a visiting scholar at New York University's Taub Urban Research Center, but for much of his career he had been a lawyer working as AT&T's director of public affairs. He was virtually unknown in the preservation community. But his record of government service and civic activism, as counsel to mayoral and gubernatorial administrations and board member of numerous public-policy foundations, was already impressive. And, it turns out, he has been intrigued by historic architecture since he was a child.

When asked to describe his childhood home, he chuckles and says, “It's funny, this is the first time anyone's asked me that since I took this job. I grew up in an 1860 sea captain's house in West Haven, Connecticut, that my grandparents had bought in the 1930s. My parents always took good care of it—my mother still lives there.” Tierney spent his undergraduate years at Yale, earning a degree in English in 1965; and he also studied 20th-century architecture with historian Vincent Scully. “The lectures were totally inspiring and completely riveting,” recalls Tierney. (Since graduation, he adds, he's been attending as many of Scully's public lectures as possible.)

While studying law at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, he admired the city's architectural landmarks, includ-

ing the 1890s Ryman Auditorium (original home of the Grand Ole Opry) and the 1890s replica of the Parthenon. In 1968, he moved to New York and into a one-bedroom apartment in a 1914 building in the Greenwich Village Historic District. He still lives there, partly because of the well-preserved neighborhood. “I don't like



photo: Virginia Parkhouse

Robert B. Tierney, newly appointed chair of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. He replaces Sherida E. Paulsen, who remains as a commissioner.

change, so I guess I'm in the right job,” he says, laughing. “Of course,” he added, “I like constructive change.”

He served as assistant counsel to former Governor Hugh Carey in the mid-1970s and then became counsel to former Mayor Edward I. Koch, handling everything from budget policy to mayoral staffing appointments. (The former mayor praises Tierney's “superb judgment, wonderful sense of humor, and ability to meet with and talk to and persuade people—and he's lived much of his life in Greenwich Vil-

lage, which is, of course, [one of the places] where landmarking started.”) During Tierney's AT&T tenure, from 1983 to 2001, he specialized in relations with the city and state governments and also served on the boards of good-government groups such as the Citizens Union, Association for a Better New York, and the 14th Street/Union Square Local Development Corporation. He has since resigned from almost all of his board affiliations, “to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest.”

His background in law, government, and civic-minded nonprofits, he explains, is proving invaluable now. “There's so much interaction here with other city agencies, not to mention elected officials. And a lot of what we do is challenged, or challenge-able. Transparency will be my goal. I'll talk to anybody who wants to talk to me. There's nothing behind closed doors here, which suits me fine.”

Within weeks of his appointment as chair, he impressed observers with his enthusiasm, accessibility, and diligent efforts to meet with community groups, activists, and past Landmarks Commission chairs. Boyish, lanky, and affable, he's become a regular presence at preservation events far into the evening. “I'm trying to be as open as I can, to listen and learn,” he says. “It's an uphill learning curve—like

continued on page 2

Publication of this issue of District Lines has been made possible in part by the generous support of Alan M. Ades.

SAVE THE DATE

HDC'S SPRING EVENT

Antiques and Wine Tasting
at Sailors' Snug Harbor

Staten Island

June 12, 2003

Call HDC at 212-614-9107 for details

ROBERT B. TIERNEY TAKES THE CHAIR AT LANDMARKS

continued from page 1

anything interesting. This is a wonderful place to learn, with so many knowledgeable people on staff." He welcomes all manner of "constructive criticism," he adds, especially from the Historic Districts Council. "The group is incredibly valuable to us, particularly as city resources get tighter."

He's aware of the many challenges facing the Commission, he goes on. The research staff has been drastically reduced, boroughs outside Manhattan are relatively under-represented in the landmarks rolls, changes are sometimes made to approved applications without public review, and most commissioners are serving past their terms' expiration dates.

"We have to be vigilant, to hold the lines as best we can, without being anti-development," he explains. "We need to strike an appropriate, intelligent balance. As more buildings are designated, there's more to regulate and oversee—it's a naturally expanding jurisdictional environment. A lot of people here are already doing an enormously impressive job with strained resources. There's an incredible esprit de corps at this agency."

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The Historic Districts Council will welcome a new president this summer when David Goldfarb assumes the office. David's dedication to preservation is legendary on Staten Island, his home turf. He is also well known to Greenwich Village advocates who witnessed his extraordinary legal skill in HDC's lawsuit against New York University in an attempt to save Poe House and Judson House during the planning of NYU's new law-school building. While the final outcome was disappointing and the project is inappropriately scaled relative to both the block and the neighborhood, it would have been far worse had HDC not brought legal action against NYU.

It was an honor to work with David and to know his commitment to preservation firsthand. An NYU Law School alum himself, David was unbowed by John Sexton, then dean of the school and now president of the university. In David's new role he will watch carefully to see whether Mr. Sexton really is listening to the community's voice.

In retrospect, it's gratifying to have led HDC into a new decade and to have worked with dedicated board members. Roger Byrom and his staff at Addison helped redefine our image and gave us a new organization identity. George Calderaro has also helped enhance our public persona, improving HDC's printed communications with real style. Penelope Bareau has brought this newsletter to a new level and earned us high praise. Julia Schoeck, Teri Slater, and Jack Taylor have been reaching out to City Councilmembers who often had little idea of what great work we did right in their own backyards.

Our conferences have become annual beacons for up-and-coming preservationists as well as seasoned pros, and our theatre parties have raised funds while giving us all an evening away from

preservation's demands. "Creating an Historic District," the definitive how-to manual by Eric Wm. Allison, former HDC president, is being reprinted by popular demand, and "The New Boundaries Initiative," a study examining the chronic under-designation of historic districts, is nearing completion.

In the midst of several exciting years came the horrible tragedy of September 11th. In the weeks following, somber meetings were quickly convened when many of us became involved in the effort to redefine what had been lost. In a November 10, 2001, letter published in *The New York Times*, I wrote that "whatever is done at the site must reweave the damaged threads of fabric that terrorism sought to tear apart, and create a sense of place that fills the void and honors the losses of September 11th." The rebuilding process has been kept on an even keel by New York's dedicated citizenry, and many features deemed crucial by HDC to the



photo: Virginia Parkhouse

Hal Bromm, outgoing president of the Historic Districts Council, with Elizabeth Goldfarb, wife of incoming president David Goldfarb, at HDC's opening-night reception (see Conference Summary, page 7).

new site—the restoration of the former street grid among them—have been embraced in new proposals.

HDC has many to thank for its growth and influence on making New York a better place through preservation of our cultural and architectural resources, not least all our Friends who lend important financial support. It's a pleasure to give them public credit by name in this issue of *District Lines*.

—Hal Bromm

DISTRICT LINES

NEWS AND VIEWS OF THE
HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL

editor - Penelope Bareau

layout and production - Ross Horowitz

editorial consultant - Jack Taylor

contributors - Simeon Bankoff, Penelope Bareau,
Hal Bromm, Eve Kahn, Edward S. Kirkland

THE HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL IS THE
CITYWIDE NONPROFIT ADVOCATE FOR NEW
YORK'S DESIGNATED HISTORIC DISTRICTS,
AND FOR NEIGHBORHOODS MERITING
PRESERVATION. THE COUNCIL IS DEDICATED
TO PRESERVING THE INTEGRITY OF NEW
YORK CITY'S LANDMARKS LAW AND TO
FURTHERING THE PRESERVATION ETHIC.

OLYMPICS—PRESERVATION OPPORTUNITY?

The Olympics are coming! The Olympics are coming!

Well, maybe. In 2005 the decision will be made whether to award the 2012 Games to the United States. But even now, as part of the effort to demonstrate that New York has a realistic and winning bid, surprisingly detailed plans have been drawn up for locations to host these events.

There are more than 30 locations involved in all boroughs of the city, and many of them are in existing sports facilities in parks. Some of the locations are landmarks in need of restoration, others are some of the best works of Robert Moses, and still others are remnants of the 1939 and 1964 World's Fairs and therefore historic sites worthy of preservation. NYC2012, the advocacy group for bringing the Olympics to New York, suggests in its brochure "The Plan for a New York Olympic Games" that it will restore and even improve the sites they use when possible. If preservationists wish to take advantage of that suggestion and have any influence on the use of New York's historic buildings, the time to move is now.

The changes required to adapt these locations for Olympics use are proclaimed to be a "legacy for generations." Caution as well as hope are in order here, but through the Olympics a real opportunity exists to upgrade facilities that have long needed it, and the chance should not be lost. In addition, it is important to keep in mind the need for appropriate design in the alterations proposed. Together, restoring and upgrading with appropriate

design can ensure that the United States Olympic Committee's legacy is fulfilled.

Most locations for the Olympic Games are in Queens, some of them close to the Olympic Village planned for the south end of Long Island City. One of the most significant of these is the Astoria Pool, a handsome structure built by Robert Moses in Astoria Park just north of the Triborough Bridge. Created, interestingly enough, for the 1936 Olympic Trials and used again for American teams in later Olympics, "the aging pool," as it was described by NYC2012, would be demolished and replaced with three new pools along the water edge of the park, "one for swimming and synchronized swimming, one for diving, and one for training." The process would, the brochure promises, leave "a premier aquatics center for New York City" in addition to a new and improved "traditional park space" on the old site.

The push for replacement seems driven by the need for three separate pools, but it might be feasible and even cheaper to keep the fine existing pool, rehabilitate it, and shift some of the venues around. One event could take place at the restored Astoria Pool; another at a site such as Orchard Beach in Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx; while the training could be diverted to McCarren Park, another Moses creation, not far from the Olympic Village. The Olympics brochure has already listed the glorious McCarren Pool as one of the "training facilities" that might undergo "significant upgrading," and it has become a cause for the adjacent communities of Greenpoint and Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

Of the three venues, Orchard Beach has been explicitly slated for restoration. But in addition, major alterations would be called for, concentrating on the grand gateway of the Orchard Beach Pavilion. Its flanking wings are to be redesigned to accommodate the fencing and swimming portions of the modern pentathlon as well as water polo, and since this is another of Moses's finer works, care should be taken to keep the alterations in the spirit of the original.

Drastic changes may be expected in Flushing Meadows/Corona Park, Queens. Canoeing and rowing will force major changes in important landscape elements of

the historic plans of both the 1939 and 1964 World's Fairs. Whitewater/slalom canoeing will occupy a new structure where the defunct 1964 Fountain of the Planets now sits. Rowing and flatwater canoeing will take place in a new "Regatta Center" south of the Long Island Expressway. Meadow and Willow Lakes there will be dredged into a racecourse with mostly straight edges, and viewing stands will rise where, ironically, the Aquacade stadium from the 1939 Fair stood before it was torn down a few years ago.

Dredging the lakes seems necessary to keep these polluted, artificial bodies of water in useful existence, but straight shores? To provide more natural shorelines and real wetlands combined with observation walkways might be preferable in a proposal that has already aroused community concern. The lost Aquacade could be recalled in the design of the viewing stands.

When a location is officially designated a landmark, the outlook for it may be hopeful if it is deemed a suitable space for the planned games. The 369th Regiment Armory in Harlem, Manhattan, seems suitable. Plans to use it as a venue for boxing and rhythmic gymnastics promise that "careful renovations for the Olympic Games will give the landmarked Armory the flexibility to host a wide range of activities." The undesignated interior of the drill shed is all that seems to be affected by changes.

The respect for landmarks shown by NYC2012 suggests that the surroundings of the venues should be made worthy of

continued on page 4



The Astoria Pool, site of the 1936, 1952, and 1964 swimming trials. Rehabilitated, it could be the site of swimming trials for the Olympics once again.



McCarren Pool, opened in 1936, was built by the Works Progress Administration and designed by Aymar Embury II. Closed since 1984, this magnificent structure could be brought back to life with the help of the U.S. Olympics Committee. The onion-dome seen through the arch is the nearby Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Transfiguration.

THE OLYMPICS — PRESERVATION OPPORTUNITY?

continued from page 3

the Olympics as well and should leave a legacy that will respect the history of the sites. NYC2012 already has plans for the public park across the street from the 369th Armory, to make it “an Olympic festival ground” that will be “fully renovated following the Games.”

If, however, a landmark not suitable for games is right next to where a new building is planned, its future is less certain. Near Queens Plaza, for instance, just south of the Queensboro Bridge, stands that poster child of demolition by neglect, the New York Architectural Terra Cotta Building. A totally new building is to be constructed adjacent to it for badminton and track cycling, the Queensbridge Athletic Center. Parties unrelated to NYC2012 have proposed plans to restore the Architectural Terra Cotta Building, but these plans could fail just as others have. In that case, the Olympics would find itself with an abandoned landmark next to a sports center—not a pretty thought. Worse, construction of the athletic center could compromise the already precarious condition of the Architectural Terra Cotta Building, leaving an even more endangered building behind. Backup plans should be made now for the Olympics to improve the Terra Cotta Building if other interests are unable to do so.

A similar opportunity exists on Staten Island. On the hilly moraine of the Staten Island Greenbelt two connected eight-kilometer courses for mountain bik-



The official postcard from the 1964 World's Fair shows Philip Johnson's "tent of tomorrow." Tomorrow was unkind, however, and the structure now stands derelict.

ing will be built. One loop is to pass through the eastern part of the New York City Farm Colony-Seaview Hospital Historic District close to the main hospital building and to the lower group of open-air former pavilions for tuberculosis patients. The pavilions are just one of many cases of demolition by neglect in this ill-fated district and are in a state of near collapse. Because some of them would be visible by viewers of the races, it would seem justifiable to repair them, and it would dovetail with NYC2012's respect for landmarks. Restoration would also be a cultural bonus, enhancing the experience of bikers over the years to come.

The 2012 Olympiad should leave a historical legacy here that ties the New York Games into the tradition of public entertainment. Philip Johnson's great New York State Pavilion, the best thing that came out of the 1964 World's Fair, could fit into such a program if it were restored. Besides, it is near many of the planned sports locations. So could resuscitation of the landmarked but shabby Parachute Jump on Coney Island, Brooklyn, cited in the Olympic brochure as “an enduring icon of the amusement parks.” It clearly needs work if it is to endure much longer. Fixing the structure up could recover some of the famous past of Coney Island and at the same time enhance the environment in which a new Sportsplex would be built.

As of now the designers are working to finish detailed plans that would be ready for construction the moment the Games are awarded—if indeed New York gets the nod. If preservationists wish to have any influence on what the Olympics may bring to these sites, this is the moment.

DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN (1927-2003), PRESERVATIONIST

When Daniel Patrick Moynihan died on March 26th, he was remembered by most as a four-term United States Senator, an ambassador to both India and the United Nations, a Harvard professor, and the author of seminal books dealing with social issues. But he was also an energetic urban planner and inexhaustible preservationist. Lucky for us, he was a New Yorker.

Of course, he did a lot for Washington, D.C., where he lived off and on for about 40 years. When he was assistant secretary of labor under John F. Kennedy he was at work on development plans for Pennsylvania Avenue, which connects the White House and the Capitol. As a result of his work, the avenue was transformed from a drab street into a lively boulevard with restored buildings on one side of the street, spanking new apartment buildings on the other, and plazas and cafes sprinkled around. There were other projects as well, among them the Hotel Monaco, an 1842 building he rescued from drug users.

But for New York he pulled his most stunning coups, most famously Governors Island and the Farley General Post Office. Governors Island, which was planned in the 18th century as an educational center, was ceded to the federal government in 1800 and converted to military use. First the Army, then the Coast Guard used it, the Coast Guard leaving in 1995.

In an Op-Ed piece for The New York Times, Moynihan recalled the time in 1995 when he and President Clinton were flying to New York for the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. They landed at JFK Airport and took a helicopter across the harbor when, he writes, “Of a sudden we were over the island... ‘What’s that?’ asked the president. ‘Governors Island, sir,’ I said. The federal government had occupied it free of charge for on to two centuries...

continued on page 12



photo: Catherine McNeur

The New York Architectural Terra Cotta Building in Long Island City: Will the Olympics help save this neglected landmark?

“PRESERVING THE SUBURBAN METROPOLIS” — REPORT ON 9TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

One of the first hurdles to overcome when seeking to protect historic suburbs is the public's failure to recognize that the neighborhoods are worth protecting. Once they do realize it, further education is needed to demonstrate how to recognize and care for the fragile components that make up these distinctive, vital areas. These comments were recurring themes expressed in several of the presentations on March 8th at the Historic Districts Council's 9th Annual Preservation Conference, “Preserving the Suburban Metropolis: New York City & Beyond.” A conference summary is in the box on page 7.

Historians Kenneth T. Jackson and Barry Lewis talked about how suburbs came to be and flourished. Mr. Jackson drew a distinction between suburbs that grew up along and between the fingers of trolley lines, developing closer to the

city center and ranging themselves more or less evenly between the closely spaced lines; and the suburbs that grew up farther from the city center, clustering around stations on the long string of the railroad lines and leaving undeveloped land between towns. Barry Lewis discussed the technology and ideals that drove suburban evolution, also citing the role of rapid-transit lines. Most of the historic suburbs of New York City, he said, were envisioned as “villages within the city”: they were planned around community centers and provided shopping and entertainment facilities within walking distance of the residential clusters. The principle was to have the pleasure and healthful lifestyle of country living without sacrificing the amenities of city life. Different developers expressed this idea in different ways, using an array of Colonial Revival styles to create new neighborhoods of bungalows, detached houses, and garden apartments throughout the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island.

To maintain scale and character, some neighborhoods were carefully regulated through easements and restrictive covenants, many of which are still in force today. Paul Graziano, an urban planner and neighborhood advocate, spoke about his campaigns to enforce



photo: Virginia Parkhouse

Kenneth T. Jackson, president of The New-York Historical Society, giving the keynote address Saturday morning at the Annual Preservation Conference.

these regulations, an especially difficult job because of a lack of awareness that they exist and the chaotic state of Buildings Department records. Mr. Graziano is pursuing a massive rezoning of many historic neighborhoods within and around Flushing, Queens, in order to lay the groundwork for new development compatible with the old.

John Collins, of the Roslyn [Long Island] Preservation Corporation and the Roslyn Landmarks Society, discussed his town's success in preserving its 19th-century suburban center. Through an interlocking net of preservation easements, restrictive covenants, facade-improvement programs, municipal legislation, and outright interventions—where historic houses were picked up and moved out of the path of indiscriminate development—Roslyn has successfully maintained and enhanced its historic character.

Other towns on Long Island are not so fortunate. Charla Bolton, Preservation Advocate from the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, led a harrowing visual tour of suburban landscapes destroyed by overscaled development and of sweeping vistas originally intended for open space but instead cut into tiny parcels of look-alike houses, each with a two-car garage and tormented topiaries in the front yard. In all her examples, either no land-use regulations existed that took into account the historic resources of the communi-

continued on page 6



photo: Virginia Parkhouse

Landmarks Preservation Commissioners Jan Hird Pokorny and Roberta Brandes Gratz flank Scott Heyl, president of the Preservation League of New York State, at the opening reception Friday evening. Ms. Gratz was appointed to the LPC in February this year.

"PRESERVING THE SUBURBAN METROPOLIS"

continued from page 5

ties, or what restrictions existed were not enforced.

Within the boundaries of New York City's five boroughs, the best means to protect historic character is the New York City Landmarks Law. Architect and preservationist Kevin Wolfe graphically proved this point with a compelling portrait of two neighboring Queens villages: Bayside and Douglas Manor. Most of Douglas Manor lies within the designated Douglaston Historic District; none of Bayside does. The damage wreaked by inappropriate alterations, bizarre face-lifts, attenuated columns, and gratuitous vinyl siding is in striking contrast with Douglaston. In the six years since the approximately 640 properties in Douglaston were designated, more than 400 permits for work have been issued. New buildings have been constructed, and buildings have had sizable additions added. With the guidance of the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the careful vigilance of the Douglaston-Little Neck Historical Society and HDC, the area's historic character has not only been preserved but gradually enhanced as the

historic character of individual buildings is revealed and restored.

Unfortunately, designated properties within historic suburban neighborhoods are few and far between—a point many audience members felt keenly. One possible reason for the paucity of landmarks outside the city center was suggested by Anthony M. Tung, an architect and urban theorist, former LPC commissioner, and last year's conference keynote speaker. Mr. Tung explored how the city is perceived both within its administrative center and by the general populace, namely as a distinct collection of iconic points. The Statue of Liberty plus the Brooklyn Bridge plus the Empire State Building equals New York City in the generalized image of the city most people have, particularly nonresidents. But most people fail to make the connection between the vernacular residential districts where New Yorkers live and the historic city to be protected.

Retaining existing historic fabric within communities is widely acknowledged to be preservation's immediate goal. However, when entirely new neighborhoods are created (more often than not on the ashes of old ones), new development must still be compatible with the human pedestrian scale in order to



photo: Virginia Parkhouse

Paul Graziano, urban planner and Queens preservationist, spoke on Saturday about his campaigns to enforce easements and restrictive covenants.

become a success. Renee Kahn, the founder and director of the Historic Neighborhood Preservation Program in Stamford, Connecticut, spoke at length about this problem. During the redevelopment of Stamford in the 1960s and 1970s, a conscious effort was made to reconfigure the city to better accommodate the needs of a car-dependent commuter population. The result is a downtown with Modern office towers placed atop vast parking garages separated by windswept, desolate public plazas. There is no pedestrian life, and the few walkers in the city are viewed with suspicion. Equally damaging, lively mixed-use neighborhoods in the inner



photo: George Calderaro

Kevin Wolfe, architect and conference panelist, led a Sunday-morning tour of the Douglaston and Fort Totten Historic Districts in Queens. Mr. Wolfe, who is on HDC's board of advisers, was instrumental in Douglaston's designation as an historic district in 1997.



photo: Virginia Parkhouse

City Councilmember Gale Brewer is greeted by David and Elizabeth Goldfarb at the opening reception for the conference, Friday evening.

city were torn down for roadways and malls, and thousands of acres of backwoods were subsumed under a tidal wave of what Ms. Kahn called "Builder's Colonials and cookie-cutter McMansions," the only difference being whether a two-car or four-car garage is attached.

Configuring new construction on a human scale was Pablo Vengoechea's presentation. Mr. Vengoechea, an architect, urban designer, and current vice-chair of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, has been working for a number of years on a comprehensive, high-quality, medium-density housing plan to deal with development pressures on Staten Island, which is the fastest-growing county in New York State (17.1% population growth in Richmond County between 1990 and 2000, more than three times the state average). This population increase has led to a massive demand for housing and a surge in building, which endangers the character of Staten Island's built environment. Mr. Vengoechea's proposal examines classic elements of Staten Island residences—porches, varied rooflines, generous side

continued on page 8



photo: Virginia Parkhouse

Anthony M. Tung, former LPC commissioner, author, and urban theorist, addressing the conference participants on Saturday.

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

The Historic District Council's 9th Annual Preservation Conference was held the weekend of March 7-9 in all five boroughs, and it drew a record crowd of more than 350 preservationists.

At the Friday-night opening reception, more than 110 guests had the opportunity to meet and speak with commissioners from the Landmarks Preservation Commission in the remarkable Fourth Universalist Society building on Manhattan's Central Park West at 76th Street. Newly appointed Landmarks Chair Robert B. Tierney was there and read the following greetings from Mayor Michael Bloomberg:

On behalf of the residents of New York City, I commend the Historic Districts Council and all those whose efforts made this conference possible. From Queens to Riverdale, our city's suburban areas are home to some of our greatest neighborhoods, and your commitment and significant contributions to improve the quality of life within these communities and preserve their rich history is commendable. You have assembled an amazing group of authors, architects, and preservationists and arranged a wonderful array of activities so that all those attending the conference will have an opportunity to discover and experience our city's suburbs and the beautiful landmarks within them.

I hope all those participating in this exciting event have a terrific time learning more about these treasured neighborhoods, and I wish the Historic Districts Council all the very best in their endeavors.

Chair Tierney was joined at the reception by fellow Commissioners Roberta Brandes Gratz, Sherida E. Paulsen, Jan Hird Pokorny, and Pablo Vengoechea, as well as City Councilmember Gale Brewer, who represents Manhattan's Upper West Side.

On Saturday more than 200 people from across the New York metropolitan area came to the New-York Historical Society in Manhattan to learn about the preservation issues and concerns that affect the city's suburban neighborhoods. Keynote speaker Kenneth T. Jackson, president of the New-York Historical Society, set the tone of the day by talking about how transportation advances enabled the development of suburbs. He was followed by three panels whose discussions are detailed in the accompanying article:

- **Building the American Dream**—Barry Lewis and Anthony M. Tung, panelists; Jeffrey Kroessler, moderator
- **Problems in Paradise**—Renee Kahn, Charla Bolton, Kevin Wolfe, and Paul Graziano, panelists; David Goldfarb, moderator
- **Saving the American Dream**—Pablo Vengoechea, Donald Rattner, and John Collins, panelists; Hal Bromm, moderator

On Sunday more than 130 people joined six bus tours that traveled suburban areas from Fieldston in the northwestern Bronx to Westerleigh on Staten Island. The tours were led by expert guides: John Kriskiewicz, Barry Lewis, Kevin Wolfe, Daniel Donovan, Andrew Dolkart, and James Ferreri, who put together one of most erudite and comprehensive tour programs of historic New York City suburbs ever created. Special thanks to them.

Thanks also to the New-York Historical Society for co-hosting the conference, and to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the LuEsther T. Mertz Fund of the New York Community Trust, and the more than 40 neighborhood partners of HDC for their generous support of this event.



photo: John McNear

Barry Lewis, architectural historian, television personality, and author of "Kew Gardens: Urban Village in the Big City," participated in the Saturday-morning panels and is shown here as he led a group on a bus tour to Forest Hills, Queens, on Sunday.

"PRESERVING THE SUBURBAN METROPOLIS"

continued from page 7

and front yards, and bay windows—and encourages them. The plan mandates lots of a certain size and allows greater density for buildings that incorporate traditional configurations and features, resulting in slightly larger buildings that nevertheless fit in with the Staten Island landscape. The plan is currently being reviewed by the Staten Island Office of the Department of City Planning.

Donald Rattner, director of the Studio for Civil Architecture, ended the day with an examination of how 19th-century architectural pattern books helped transform builders' and developers' ideas into the neighborhoods we now value and seek to protect. He also discussed a number of communities he collaborated with in South Carolina, Georgia, and Illinois to create new design guidelines to help maintain the area's character. In some cases, these guidelines and pattern books detailed specific color palates, architectural

typography, and building materials, as well as the more typical height, setback, and massing requirements. In general, he said, guidelines also help encourage appropriate construction by providing developers with concrete answers about what and where they are allowed to build.



photo: Virginia Parkhouse

Renee Kahn, founder and director of the Historic Neighborhood Preservation Program in Stamford, Connecticut, critiquing planning in her city during a Saturday panel discussion.

HDC HOSTS PANELS IN NEIGHBORHOODS

In keeping with its grassroots mandate, the Historic Districts Council has launched its Preservation Conference Series, panel discussions being held in all boroughs of New York City to discuss preservation.

The first panel was co-sponsored by the Fort Greene Association, Brooklyn, and took place in the evening on April 21st at the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church in the Fort Greene Historic District. Moderated by Simeon Bankoff, executive director of HDC, it was entitled "Preserving Your Historic Neighborhood" and featured the following panelists:

- Mark Silberman, Esq., counsel to the Landmarks Preservation Commission
- Mary Beth Betts, research director, LPC
- Winston Von Engel, deputy director, Brooklyn Office, New York City Department of City Planning
- John Reddick, president of Cityscape Institute, member of Community Board 9 of West Harlem, and member of the board of advisers of HDC
- Andrew Berman, executive director, Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation.

Panelists discussed the rules governing designated neighborhoods as well as what they have done locally to pursue historic designation for their districts.

The series is supported in part by funds from the New York Community Trust.

THE DREAM OF REHAB TAX CREDITS

For the past seven years, preservation advocates have been lobbying the New York State Legislature to provide monies for rehabilitation of residential properties in historic districts. In the most recent budget negotiations, bills were introduced in the Senate and Assembly that

would provide a 15 to 20 %tax credit up to \$50,000 for appropriate exterior or interior renovation to properties on the State and National Registers of Historic Places (many of New York City designated historic districts are so listed).

Governor George Pataki introduced his own version of the bill in his executive budget, which would offer a state income-tax credit for owners of eligible properties in economically distressed neighborhoods as defined by Census tracts and State Empire Zones. The monies would be offered either as a tax credit or a rebate for qualified expenses. According to Geographic Information Systems analysis done by the Preservation League of New York State, this bill would stand to benefit 11, 676 homes throughout the state, 4,788 of which are within New York City, mostly within Brooklyn and Queens. New York City Assembly members remain very vocal in their support of this bill.

However, as of this writing, it has been widely reported that as long as Governor Pataki refuses to contemplate tax increases, Legislature leadership will refuse to contemplate any tax incentives. Given the state's economic climate, it would seem obvious that now is the time to encourage investment in our older neighborhoods and inner cities. Instead, the dream of rehabilitation incentives are being held hostage to rhetoric.

NEW BOOKS ABOUT OLD NEW YORK

"The Automat: The History, Recipes, and Allure of Horn & Hardart's Masterpiece," by Lorraine B. Diehl and Marianne Hardart. Clarkson Potter, 128 pp., \$18. The city's dozens of Automats contained surprisingly lavish architectural ornamentation—stained glass, carved beams, pink terra cotta—amid the utilitarian food-vending machinery. The chain died in 1991, and its outlets have been obliterated. This book is well illustrated with period photos of long-gone interiors.

"Modern Arcadia: Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and the Plan for Forest Hills Gardens," by Susan L. Klaus. University of Massachusetts Press, 208 pp., \$39.95. A scholarly yet riveting study of how Olmsted collaborated with architect Grosvenor

Atterbury to create this planned community's cozily quasi-medieval character.

"New York City Trees: A Field Guide for the Metropolitan Area," by Edward Sibley Barnard. Columbia University Press, 240 pp., \$17.95. A pocket-size aid to identifying more than 100 species, including such exotica as katsuratrees. Particularly handy for preservationists, since so many of the city's grandest trees shade landmarks and historic districts.

"New York's Pennsylvania Station," by Hilary Ballon. W. W. Norton, 224 pp., \$55. The city's preservation movement arose from the 1960s rubble of McKim, Mead & White's Pennsylvania Station. Ballon chronicles the station's history from the digging of the first tunnels to the dumping of the remains in the Meadowlands. An optimistic closing chapter describes long-delayed plans to make a station out of the General Post Office across Eighth Avenue from the original (see article on page 4).

"Sanctuary," by Thomas Roma. Johns Hopkins University Press, 84 pp., \$29.95. Roma photographed 46 churches throughout Brooklyn, ranging from 19th-century Gothic landmarks to recently adapted storefronts, capturing how these

outposts of faith often clash with their ill-tended neighborhoods.

"Greenwich Village: A Guide to America's Legendary Left Bank," by Judith Stonehill. Universe/Rizzoli, 96 pp., \$22.50. This pocket-size volume details four walking tours in the loci of bohemianism through the decades: the sites of artistic salons and balls, 1960s "happenings," and, always, writerly and painterly accomplishments and binges.

"New York's Forgotten Substations," by Christopher Payne. Princeton Architectural Press, 112 pp., \$21.95. Between the subway system's landmarked stations, in Art Deco or neoclassical shells, stand obsolete substations full of power transformers, converters, fuses, and switchboards. In this slim but exquisitely illustrated study—the large-format photos are tributes as loving as Charles Sheeler's 1930s images of Ford plants—architect Christopher Payne analyzes the architecture and functioning of these abandoned, endangered sites.

"Empire City: New York through the Centuries," edited by Kenneth T. Jackson and David S. Dunbar. Columbia University Press, 994 pp., \$39.95. An anthology of 158 odes to the city or extracts from official documents, arranged chronologically from Henry Hudson's arrival to the September 11th attacks. The texts can be as bureaucratic as military orders, and as impassioned as The New Yorker writer Ian Frazier's simple "happy to be someplace in Queens."

"New York City: City Secrets," edited by Robert Kahn. The Little Bookroom, 582 pp., \$24.95. Brief but enthralling paeans to landmarks and oddities in all boroughs by a variety of astute observers, including Historic Districts Council board member Susan Tunick. The texts explore underappreciated angles of icons like the Empire State Building and such unsung attractions as the by-appointment-only Enrico Caruso Museum in a private home in Gravesend.

"The Historic Shops & Restaurants of New York," by Ellen Williams and Steve Radlauer. The Little Bookroom, 352 pp., \$14.95. Organized by business genre (fishmongery, apothecary, haberdashery, saloon), the book's listings explain the quirks of fate that have preserved these pockets of history, sometimes even with original woodwork unscathed.



photo: Thomas Roma

The Greater Jerusalem Baptist Church in East New York, Brooklyn, as shown in Thomas Roma's book "Sanctuary." Houses of worship are illustrated that stand within and apart from their sometimes run-down neighborhoods.

MOTT HAVEN HISTORIC DISTRICT, THE BRONX

*First in a series of portraits of
New York City's designated
neighborhoods*

In the southwestern Bronx, Willis Avenue and Third Avenue extend north of the bridges of those names and meet at East 149th Street to form two sides of a right-angle triangle, with East 138th Street as its base. Along one leg of that triangle lies the Mott Haven Historic District, an early designation of the Landmarks Preservation Commission—July 1969. Alexander Avenue is the main axis of the district (see map) and is arrayed on both sides by row houses, always unusual in this part of the Bronx and now, with housing projects on all sides, even more so. In addition, two churches at the eastern corners of the district, a library and a police station on the western side of Alexander Avenue, and four or five individual houses on side streets add to the community feeling; and each of them is distinctive on its own.

This is one of the oldest parts of the Bronx. According to the designation

report, in 1639 the Dutch West India Company purchased the land from the Indians and sold it two years later to Jonas Bronck, a Danish Lutheran who bought vast tracts of the borough and gave the Bronx his name. One year after that, Bronck sold his property there to Richard and Lewis Morris, merchants from Barbados—thus Morrisania.

There is no indication that much happened there until 1828, when Jordan L. Mott, the inventor of a coal-burning stove, established an ironworks on the Harlem River at East 134th Street and built his house nearby. It was bucolic countryside, and even though the Morris family sold him the land, they resented the industry he brought with him. Jordan Mott, however, was enchanted with the area and wanted to name it Mott Haven, so he asked the Morris family if they had any objection. They said they did not and he could call the Harlem River the River Jordan for all they cared. So the story goes.

Mott developed the area as an industrial village and residential suburb for Manhattan commuters, and development accelerated after the Third Avenue El arrived in 1886. The greater part of the row houses were built around that time. According to "The Encyclopedia of New York City," it was largely because of them and the fact that they were owner-occu-



photo: Penelope Bureau

St. Jerome's Roman Catholic Church, built 1898 by Delbi & Howard, on the southeast corner of East 138th Street and Alexander Avenue.

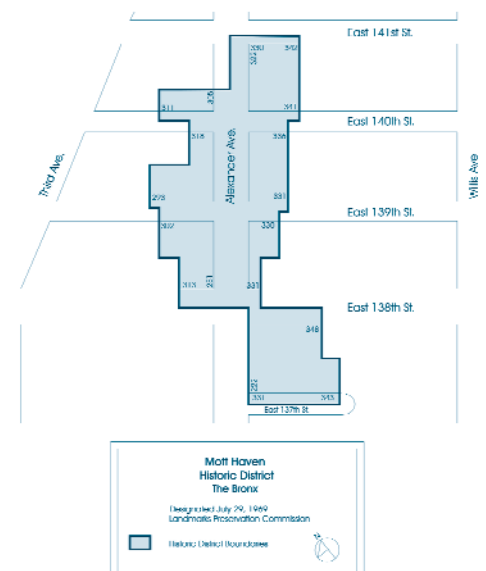
pied that this district escaped the slum clearance that leveled much of the South Bronx in the 1960s.

Originally the area was so heavily populated by Irish that Alexander Avenue was known as "the Irish Fifth Avenue." Today the district is largely African-American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican.



photo: Penelope Bureau

Row houses, built 1863-65, on the east side of Alexander Avenue between East 139th and 140th Streets. These are among the oldest existing row houses in the Bronx.



Map of Mott Haven Historic District, the Bronx, designated in July 1969.

RECENT GIFTS AND GRANTS

The Historic Districts Council is grateful for the contributions it receives from foundations, government, local groups, corporations, and Friends. Together they enable HDC to carry out its advocacy, planning, and education activities. Many thanks to the following donors:

Foundations: Gramercy Park Foundation, Hunter College Foundation, Ittelson Foundation, Samuel H. Kress Foundation, James A. Macdonald Foundation, National Trust for Historic Preservation, New York Community Trust/LuEsther T. Mertz Fund, New York Community Trust/Windie Knowe Fund, Robert Shampaine Philanthropic Fund, Robert W. Wilson Fund.

Government: New York State Council on the Arts, Office of New York State Senator Liz Krueger.

Local groups: Brooklyn Heights Association, Douglaston/Little Neck Historical Society, The Drive to Protect the Ladies' Mile District, Historic Landmarks Preservation Center, Lower East Side Tenement Museum, Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America, Murray Hill Neighborhood Association, Stuyvesant Park Neighborhood Association, Sunnyside Foundation for Community Planning & Preservation,

Sutton Area Community, Turtle Bay Association, Queens Historical Society.

Corporations: A. Ottavino Corporation; Baxt Associates Architects, PC; DiGeronimo, PA; Higgins & Quasebarth; Li/Saltzman Architects; Preservation Design Group; Robert M. Gold, Inc.; Walter B. Melvin, Architects, LLC.

Friends: Hugh B. & Renate Aller, Mark & Nancy Ann Anderson, Marilyn Appleberg, Charlotte P. Armstrong, Agnes Atwood, Janet Anne Baker, Penelope Bateau, Andrew Berman, Dennis Bertla, Thomas J. Bess, Minor L. Bishop, Leo J. Blackman & Kenneth T. Monteiro, Betts Logan Bohm, Françoise Bollack, AIA, & Tom Killian, Mary A. Brendle, Hal Bromm & Doneley Meris, Andrea Burk, Mr. & Mrs. Paul Byard, Roger Byrom, Diana Carulli-Dunlap & Bryan R. Dunlap, Kenneth R. Cobb, Dr. Lawrence J. Cohn, Robert Condon, Alex Connolly, Elizabeth Rose Daly, Robert M. Delgatto, Dennis D. Dell'Angelo, Louis A. DiGeronimo, AIA, Christine Donovan, Daniel J. Donovan, Frances A. Eberhart, Eleanor Edelman, Mr. & Mrs. Yehuda Even-Zohar, Katherine Hartnick Elliot, Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Falco, James G. Ferreri, Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Fucigna, Ann Walker Gaffney, Mary Kay Gallagher, Michael Gannon & Lisa Mueller, Jonathan Gellman, Elizabeth B. Gilmore, Karen Ginsberg, David Goldfarb, Dorris Gaines Golomb, Richard & Rena Golub, Guillermo Gomez, Mary Green, Ruth Gross, Dr. Patricia O. Halloran, Pat Hetkin,

Elliot & Elizabeth Ellis Hurwitt, Judie Janney, Linda Jones, Gary Joseph, Eve Kahn, Irma & William Kennedy, Hilary Hinds Kitasei, Valerie S. Komor, Robert Kornfeld, Sr., John Krawchuk, John Kriskiewicz, Roger P. Lang, Stuart Jay & Roberta Leon, Joseph LePique, Barry S. Lewis, Christopher W. London, Kay T. & Malcolm MacDermott, Ann Maloney, M.D., Maryann Manfredonia, Elizabeth & Peter Manos, Sabine Marcus, Katharine McCormick, Alice L. McGown, Moira J. McGrane, Ronald L. Melichar, Michael Morrell, Kenneth P. Murphy, Marian O. Naumburg, Judith York Newman, Louis Newman, Frank Nicoletti, Janet O'Hare, Valerie Paley, Virginia L. Parkhouse, Robert & Marlene Payton, Jacqueline Peu-Duvallon & Mason V. C. Stark, Donald & Gaby Rattner, Joan V. Rome, Rena Sichel Rosen, David Rosenberg & Bernice K. Leber, Joseph S. Rosenberg, Jack & Mary Ann Routledge, Mr. & Mrs. Edwards F. Rullman, Julia Schoeck, Herbert J. Schwarz, Jr., Mrs. Frederick R. Selch, Debbie Shepherd, Mr. & Mrs. Wilhelm Sievers, Albert B. & Ellen Siewers, Teri Slater, Beverly Moss Spatt, Ph.D., John F. Sprague, Susan W. Stachelberg, Deirdre Stanforth, Sami Steigmann, J. Daniel Stricker, Jack Taylor, Bess Terry, Susan Tunick, Philip Tusa, Merin Elizabeth Urban & Peter Storey, Deborah Ann Van Cura, John Pettit & Susan B. West, Gil Winter, Anthony C. Wood, Andrea Woodner, Lori Zabar, Howard & Janet Zimmerman.

HELP PRESERVE NEW YORK CITY'S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS — BECOME A FRIEND OF HDC!

With the help of our Friends, HDC has had success in the past year extending historic districts in Tribeca and Harlem; and we are engaged with communities such as Stapleton, Staten Island, and Crown Heights North, Brooklyn, to further their designation efforts.

Our advocacy is never finished. Many historic neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs are unrecognized, unprotected, and under threat. Buildings in designated districts may sometimes be at risk of neglect by some owners and flouting of the law by others. HDC seeks to redress these failures partly by enhancing public appreciation for landmarks and historic districts and more directly by holding seminars and publishing documents about landmarking, what it means, and how to comply with its regulations and guidelines.

This ambitious agenda would not be possible without you and preservation partners like you throughout the city. You are the backbone of HDC.

Yes, consider me a Friend of HDC!

Enclosed is my gift of

\$50 ___ \$100 ___ \$250 ___ \$500 ___ Other \$ _____

Please make check payable to Historic Districts Council and mail to: 232 East 11th Street, New York, NY 10003. For information, please call 212-614-9107.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Fax _____

E-mail _____
(for news and electronic alerts)

DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN

continued from page 4

Mightn't we have it back? Done! said the president. For one dollar. To be used for public purposes. Mostly public purposes, I demurred..."

That was in 1995, and for eight years the city and state bickered about its use. At one point the federal government wanted \$500 million for it. But finally, at the end of January 2003, an agreement was reached by which the island will be returned to New York for a nominal but so far unspecified amount. Moynihan was delighted that the deal was consummated—"It's like getting another borough," The Times quoted him as saying.

The other big deal for New York was—is—the conversion of the James A. Farley Building, usually known as the

General Post Office, on Eighth Avenue between West 31st and West 33rd Streets in Manhattan. It was built between 1908 and 1913 by McKim, Mead & White as a companion to the Pennsylvania Station the firm also designed, which was located across Eighth Avenue and was torn down amid protests in 1963. Moynihan's plan would convert the Post Office Building into a new Pennsylvania Station, retaining the main portion of the building and pulling train tracks still terminating across the street into its base, where platforms already exist. The interior as well as portions of the Ninth Avenue, 31st, and 33rd Street facades will be reconfigured for passenger and freight access and egress. In the planning stages since 1993, the project is now scheduled for completion in 2008.

It will be called the Daniel Patrick Moynihan Station.



Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan in 1999 accepting the Louise DuPont Crowninshield Award of the National Trust for Historic Preservation for superlative lifetime achievement and commitment in the preservation and interpretation of the country's historic and architectural heritage.

DISTRICT LINES

NEWS AND VIEWS OF THE
HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL



THE ADVOCATE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S
HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

232 East 11th Street
New York, NY 10003

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

e-mail hdc@hdc.org

www.hdc.org

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
NEW YORK, NY
Permit No. 3732