

## **Statement of Significance**

### **76th Street Historic District Brooklyn, New York 11209**

The 76th Street Historic District is located in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn on 76th Street between Sixth Avenue to the west and Seventh Avenue to the east. The district encompasses house numbers 611-655 on the north side and 618-658 on the south side. It consists of 37 buildings; 19 row houses on the north side and 18 row houses on the south side. Originally, the 600 block of 76th Street was comprised of 52 row houses; 25 on the south side and 27 on the north side. In the early 1960's, in order to make way for the Gowanus Expressway extension to the Narrows Bridge, 15 of the row houses were demolished, as well as many other buildings along Seventh Avenue and elsewhere.

Bay Ridge has a long and rich history dating back to its purchase from the Nyack Native American tribe by the Dutch East India Company in the mid-1600's. After the Civil War, because of its location and beautiful views of the bay, many mansions and exclusive clubs were built along the water. The neighborhood remained the same until the early 1900's, when it began to change due to the arrival of the 4th Avenue subway. The introduction of the subway caused the neighborhood to nearly double in population. By 1924, many of the mansions had been replaced by row houses and apartment buildings. The 76th Street Historic District, is a perfect example of the types of homes being built to accommodate this historic boom in population.

All 37 houses in the district were designed by local architect Fred W. Eisenla of the firm Eislena and Carlson in the Renaissance Revival style and were built between 1905 and the early 1920's. They are 2 story barrel-front brick homes with a stoop leading to the main entrance and steps leading down to a basement entrance below grade. Typical to the Renaissance Revival style, the facades of the houses have a variety applied details such as carved foliated accents, emblems, and floral motifs.

The houses are set back from the street and are on a garden level platform, which is two steps up from the sidewalk level. Some owners have adorned their front yards with gas or electric coach lanterns. Many yards have wrought iron fences surrounding the garden. The brownstone stoops leading to the main entrances have low concrete railings and many have an added wrought iron railing atop this structure. The recessed wood double-leaf main entry doors have a single-light panel opening on

each door. Several of the homes still have their original wood doors. Above the doors, are decorative stained glass transoms with address markers.

The entablature above the main entry door contains a frieze with a center rosette flanked by foliated scrolling embellishments. Above the horizontal decorative frieze is a stacked cornice, which is crowned with a smooth triangular pediment. Just below the frieze, to the left and right of the door openings, are two decorative corbels, which vary in design from house to house.

The houses are a light brick color from the parlor floor up to the cornice, accented with cast concrete lintels and sills that wrap around the barrel-front. The basement level portion of the facade is red brick, with the windows at this level capped on the top with a brownstone lintel and on the bottom with a brownstone sill. On each house, below the second floor concrete sills, are decorative brick designs which vary from one house to another. All of the houses are crowned with a layered cornice and dentil.

The only notable exceptions to uniformity on the block are as follows: the two westernmost houses on the north and south sides of the street (Nos. 618 and 611) and the house at the northeastern corner (No. 655). No. 618 has a driveway, which is original to the residence and No. 611 has an original alleyway, which accesses the rear of the property. No. 655, at the north eastern corner of the block, removed the front garden area and created a small legal driveway many years ago. It is evident that, although this change was made, attention to detail was taken to ensure it would be in keeping with the rest of the homes on the street.

The 76th Street Historic District is architecturally significant because the block itself is nearly fully preserved on both sides, like a snapshot of what the architect and builder had planned and built over a century ago. The facades of the majority of the homes on our block retain their original architectural integrity and, for the most part, have not been altered to any great degree. Lined with hundred year old sycamore trees, the 600 block of 76th street is a wonderful example of early 20th century Renaissance Revival row houses being built in Brooklyn during this time period.