

Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc.

PANYC

NEWSLETTER

No. 132

January 2008

Table of Contents:	1
Meeting Minutes	2
Letters (various)	6
NY SHPO Update	9
Article(s)	11
Membership Information	28

Next Meeting:

March 19, 2008
Neighborhood Preservation Center
232 East 11th Street
New York, NY
6:30pm

Newsletter Editor:

Christopher Ricciardi
4110 Quentin Road
Brooklyn, New York 11234-4322
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Minutes PANYC Meeting
September 19, 2007
Neighborhood Preservation Center

Secretary's Report-

Comments on minutes from previous meeting. Spritzer pointed out that we had 37 members, but now we have 42.

Any other comments should be sent to Lizzie Martin or Lynn Rakos

Treasurer's Report-

Spritzer states that as of August 6, 2007, we have \$3177.11 and 42 paid members. Spritzer emailed everyone on the old list, but got few responses. There are only three current members that have not yet paid this year's dues.

A question was raised about when annual dues are collected and whether or not members should be permitted to vote if they have not yet paid annual dues. Reminders for dues are sent out in January and elections are held in March. The PANYC fiscal and membership year runs from March to March so all paid members are eligible to vote.

President's Report-

Rakos stated that since the last meeting a committee to address the NYC Park's Department's RFPs/Scopes of work has been formed and consists of Rothschild, Stone, Geismar, Pickman and Rakos. They sent a letter to Adrian Benepe, the Parks Department Commissioner, expressing PANYC's opinions on certain issues that have come to light of late. PANYC received a response from Benepe (reprinted in the most recent PANYC newsletter) indicating that Parks is revising their specs and working with landmarks but they would like PANYC's input. Later, Rakos was told that Park's lawyers said that it was a conflict of interest for PANYC to look at Parks' specs. In response, the committee has decided to review the new RFPs/specs and compare them with those from previous projects to see how they have changed or not changed and make suggestions. One suggestion PANYC has is that Parks consider hiring an on-call archaeologist to determine whether archaeology is required in particular cases and to help write specs that are more appropriate for specific archaeological projects. PANYC will continue to monitor this situation.

The second issue the president addressed is problems with city re-zoning for development. The EIS for the Manhattanville re-zoning for Columbia University, for example, indicated a surprisingly small number of potentially archaeologically sensitive areas. Only 2 lots were identified. Additional work in these lots was conducted and found no eligible resources. Rakos and others questioned why only two lots were identified, and how this decision was made. It was pointed out that the EIS re-zoning for Jamaica, Queens, identified many more sites, but PANYC can't comment on that because it is already in its final stages. Fear was expressed by PANYC members that there continues to be a bad situation brewing where city planning office is disregarding archaeology. The suggestion was made that PANYC form a committee to investigate the decision-making process- Spritzer, MacLean, and Rakos volunteered to be on this committee. Spritzer will have a friend of hers who is a lawyer take a look at the EIS's first.

Committee Reports:

Events:

See newsletter and...

Rothschild announced that the Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) meetings will be held at Columbia University in the spring. This conference is normally held in England, and it should be an interesting and enjoyable event.

The Roebling Chapter's Annual Symposium on Industrial Archeology of the NY.NJ area will be at Drew University on October 27th

Event at Lloyd Manor on Oct 27th? Contact Chris Matthews at Hofstra for more information.

Stone announces that there is a job opening for a part-time archaeological education assistant at King Manor- see www.kingmanor.org for more information

MacLean announces that on Fri Oct 6th the African Burial Ground opening will take place, and the evening before (Oct 5) there will be a dance performance

Stone questioned whether the legislation committee can be revived to help with the re-zoning issues. Evidently Joan had been the head of this.

Met Chapter-

Stone reports that she talked with Bill Engelbrecht and that the Met newsletter is online, linked to the site. Bill sends the newsletter to chapter presidents who then distribute it to the members.

NYAC –

Sept 29th in Binghamton is the next meeting. Stone will attend and have an update for the next PANYC meeting

Public Program

Stone will call the Museum of the City of NY ASAP to reserve the auditorium for a Sunday in April.

Municipal Arts Society-

Joan Geismar is not here- no report

Research and Planning-

Joe Shuldenrein is not here- no report

Website-

Rakos has the old version on a disk.

Repository-

Cantwell reports that she went to the NY State Museum in early June and they had a whole case of artifacts from the South Street Seaport Museum. John Hart showed her the collection upstairs and they spent a lot of money on making a nice space with climate control, etc. Money for this came from the governor, and they consider these NYC collections to be the 'jewel in their crown'. He said that they were willing to take more collections, possibly from Sheridan Square, but they are running out of room. Collections they would consider taking have to have come from well-documented excavations with good records. Rothschild spoke with someone about artifacts from Hanover Square and the Staat Huys, and he said that it was necessary first to establish ownership of the materials.

Stone asked if there was anything said about the South Ferry collection, and Cantwell said no.

Old Business-

Discussion about creating a new category of member- associate member for anyone interested in archaeology. The purpose of this new category would be to get more members. Most PANYC members did not want to do this.

Freeman is on the committee for new members- plan is to send out flyers to universities.

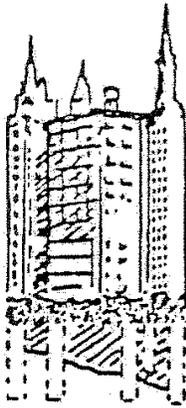
Other suggestions for gaining new members:

- offer student memberships
- offer more talks
- contact archaeologists who work for contract firms
- offer more field trips
- offer career counseling/ a presentation of career options for archaeologists- this might be a job for the Research and Planning committee

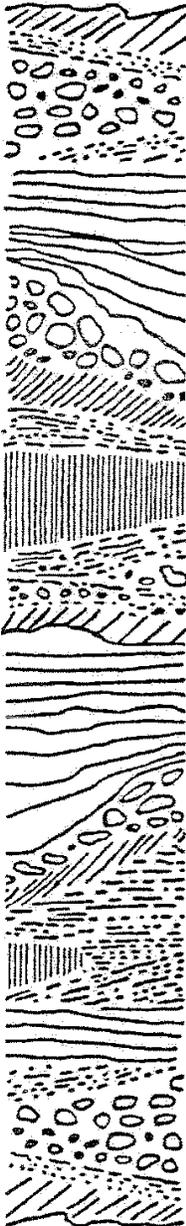
McLean volunteered to compile a list of all academic departments in the NYC area.

Future meetings:

Nov 14, Jan 23, Mar 19, May 21



PANYC



Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc.

230 6th Ave., Apt 4
Brooklyn, NY 11215
January 24, 2008

Steven Englebright
New York State Assembly
Chair, Committee on Aging
824 LOB
Albany NY 12248

Re: Professional Archaeologists of New York City (PANYC) support of the Burial Bill (A07821)

Dear Assembly Member Englebright:

I am writing on behalf of the Professional Archaeologists of New York City (PANYC) to reiterate our support of the Unmarked Burial Site Protection Act. We were appreciative of your efforts when you first introduced the bill in 2005 and later revised the bill in 2006. PANYC continues to be grateful for your work on this much needed state law.

The bill is clearly well thought out however we have a few comments. We ask that you include in the bill the provision for documentation of any human remains removed from the ground. This documentation should be consistent with that required under the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. We also recommend that a registry of burial sites be established and maintained at the state level as it would facilitate the protection and preservation of burials. Graves other than those of Native Americans are encountered in our state, therefore we ask that more detail on how non-Native American burial issues will be handled be added to the bill.

New York remains one of few states without a strong bill to protect unmarked burials. Human remains and funerary objects are vulnerable to looting, and outright desecration. New York State needs a clearly defined process for addressing the discovery of unmarked graves, as you have proposed. Additionally, the State also needs to impose serious penalties on those who knowingly break the law and remove remains and objects without following accepted procedures. Your bill will establish both the needed procedures and the potential penalties.

We urge you to make the few clarifications recommended and swiftly bring the bill to a vote. The unmarked burial site protection act will provide the structure needed to ensure that the unmarked graves of Native Americans, fallen soldiers and other forgotten people in our great State get the respect they deserve.

Sincerely,

Lynn Rakos
PANYC President
(917) 515-4154
PANYC2006@yahoo.co



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Date: Mon, 7 Jan 2008 09:06:35 -0800 (PST)

From: "Professional Archaeologists of New York City Professional Archaeologists of New York City" <panyc2006@yahoo.com> [Add to Address Book](#)
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Subject: Bill A7821 the Burial Bill

To: nostrae@assembly.state.ny.us

CC: panyc2006@yahoo.com

Dear Ms. Nostrand,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Professional Archaeologists of New York City (PANYC) regarding Assembly Bill A7821, the Burial Bill, to protect unmarked burial sites in New York State. We are delighted that Assemblyman Englebright is sponsoring this much needed legislation. PANYC plans to comment on the bill and would like to know the deadline for the comment period.

We also have a few questions regarding the text of the bill that perhaps you could answer or provide some guidance as to where we can get the information.

The following are by page/line:

- 2/9 - What is the not-for-profit corporation law? Does it cover other cemeteries or burials?
- 2/14 - What about inactive, forgotten, non-Native American burials?
- 3/1 - Again, as above, what about non-Native American burials?
- 4/14-17 - What if it is not possible to differentiate Native American from non-Native American bodies at the same site (as has been the case on certain sites)?
- 5/1,6,11 - What are the penalties associated with a Class A or B misdemeanor and Class E felony?

Many thanks for your time. You will be hearing from us soon.

Sincerely,

Lynn Rakos
 President, PANYC
 (917) 515-4154

Sent to the Discovery Channel's "Viewer Relations" link on November 15, 2007.

I am writing to you on behalf of the Professional Archaeologists of New York City (PANYC) to express our concern with your program "Best Places to Find Cash and Treasure." We are appalled that you are promoting what is essentially the looting of our Nation's history for fun and financial gain. The Civil War battlefields and domestic privies that your program encourages the public to "treasure hunt" contain valuable archaeological links to our past and your program is encouraging their destruction. The legality of the practices you condone may also be questionable depending on the state the site is located in and its ownership. We certainly approve of efforts to make history exciting and fun for the general public but the tack taken by "Cash and Treasure" is irresponsible. There are often opportunities around the country for the public to volunteer on archaeological digs. We suggest you develop programming based on these professional endeavors.

Lynn Rakos, PANYC President, PANYC2006@yahoo.com.

2007 – 2011 New York State Statewide Historic Preservation Plan Public Meeting Held 28 November 2007 at the Ukrainian Institute of America, 2 East 79th Street, NYC

Representing NYSOPRHP/SHPO:

Ruth Pierpont

Wint Aldrich

Julian Adams (CLG coordinator)

Amy Sacca (Preservation Planner)

Beth Wellman and Kathy Howe, SHPO staff who work on NYC projects, were also in attendance, as was Meryl Hesch from the New York office.

Unfortunately, the meeting was not well attended by the public. There were approximately 25 people in the audience. Some of the organizations represented included PANYC, Roebling Chapter SIA, Historic Districts Council, Preservation League of NY State, Weeksville, Lower East Side Tenement Museum, Federal Transit Administration, City College, and others. Lynn Rakos and Joan Geismar attended on behalf of PANYC.

The goal of the meeting was simply to hear from organizations, individuals and agencies on historic preservation issues in their community and to get ideas on how to improve historic preservation opportunities. This was the 10th of 13 such meetings held around the state. It opened with the SHPO representatives providing an overview of the history/role/review process of the SHPO followed by an overview of the 5-year plans and how they are developed and implemented. Prior to the meeting they had sent out 5 questions and these questions formed the structure of the rest of the meeting which was essentially an open discussion.

The 5 questions were:

1. If our collective preservation efforts were successful beyond our wildest dreams, what would be different about New York State's communities, government agencies, and preservation organizations in five years?
2. What changes need to be made for us to get to success beyond our wildest dreams?
3. What is the greatest threat to historic properties and/or archeological sites in your community?
4. How can the statewide historic preservation plan help us work better together and achieve our goals?
5. Who (organizations, agencies, individuals) should be involved that is not involved? What is the most effective way to engage them?

Development pressures were considered a major threat to preservation and in “our “wildest dreams” developers would come to understand the need for historic preservation to maintain a community’s link to its past, its sense of scale and its quality as a unique location. The overall sense of the meeting was that education at all levels is required (from children as future preservationists to community leaders to developers/architects). Also needed is an incentive such as the tax credit programs to encourage developers to include historic preservation in their projects. Joan Geismar suggested the idea of using tax credits to conduct archaeological investigations of properties where such resources would be impacted. The credit could provide an incentive for developers to do the work instead of trying to avoid archaeology. Funding needs were also considered a serious issue: funds to inventory properties important to a community or neighborhood, funds to preserve structures, funds to provide outreach and education on historic resources, etc. Lack of communication was also seen as a problem, both in terms of educating the public/official/developers and in educating people about timely information on SHPO and/or EIS reviews so there is time to comment. SHPO admitted that their website should provide info on what is being reviewed but that the updates are not timely. Trying to get the media to cover more on historic preservation was also considered important. Certain frustrations that organizations/individuals are having with the environmental review process are really issues with the NYC agencies and not SHPO.

BROOKLYN DAILY EAGLE

Brooklyn Navy Yard Doesn't Want Admiral's Row if Forced To Preserve Homes

by Sarah Ryley (sarah@brooklyneagle.net), published online 12-06-2007

Report Estimates Houses Would Cost \$18M to Renovate, Could Be More

By Sarah Ryley

Brooklyn Daily Eagle

NAVY YARD — One of the few remaining patches of undeveloped land in the Brooklyn Navy Yard is a row of dilapidated houses and tennis courts reclaimed by forest, where packs of wild dogs roam.

The Navy Yard, for more than a decade, has sought to acquire these ruins from the federal government, raze them, and use the six acres to create more jobs and industrial space. But a group of preservationists want the homes, built during the Civil War but vacant since the 1970s, restored and reused. Portions of the structures, known as Admiral's Row because officers once lived there, are still intact, albeit seriously worn, while in other parts roofs and floors are completely caved in.

The National Guard Bureau will hold a public meeting on the homes next Tuesday, where a draft report will be available for viewing that is expected to estimate the homes would cost \$18 million to repair. Andrew Kimball, president of the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation, said he thinks the number is much higher, and doesn't want the property if the homes must be restored.

“Whether it's \$18 million, \$30 million or \$50 million, the question is who's going to pay for it? What are you going to do with the structures once they're rebuilt from the ground up? And is this the most responsible, economically viable approach to the site? And how does the community benefit?” said Kimball. “We're not interested in the site if there's restrictions put on to rebuild from the ground up.” Simeon Bankoff, executive director of the Historic Districts Council, one of the many groups pushing to preserve the homes, said he's disturbed by Kimball's position. “He is really positing that a public agency does not wish to live up to its obligations ... to look at mitigating the demolition of intact historic structures with public funds.”

Following the hearing, the National Guard Bureau would make the ultimate decision on whether the homes need to be preserved in some fashion. Lt. Col. Ellen Krenke cited several laws the agency must adhere to, including the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. “If the city of New York was to decide that they are no longer interested in purchasing the property, [the National Guard Bureau] would work toward transferring the property to another interested party through alternate means,” said Krenke.

Kimball said the Development Corporation has already invested \$200 million in preserving historic structures within the Navy Yard, including a recently announced historical center that would contain exhibits and archived material. The Navy Yard recently announced it would rehabilitate the 19.5-acre Naval Hospital Campus, which also has historic structures but no running water or electricity.

If the National Guard's report is accurate, at 47,000 square feet, Admiral's Row would cost \$382 per square foot to rehabilitate before outfitted for reuse. Kimball, backed by the Ingersoll, Whitman and Farragut tenant associations, wants to build two new buildings totaling 265,000 square feet that would house a grocery store similar to Fairway Market in Red Hook, a new jobs center (the current one is located deep in the yards), industrial space and studios. A 300-car parking lot would be at corner of Flushing Avenue and Navy Street.

Kimball estimated the project would create 500 jobs.

"We don't have a decent supermarket where we can shop," said Mary Andrew, president of the Farragut Tenants Association. "The handicap and seniors, they have to pay to go out of the community ... or we have to spend enormous fees at these little bodegas." She said that while some bodegas have a small selection of fruit and meat, it's often spoiled.

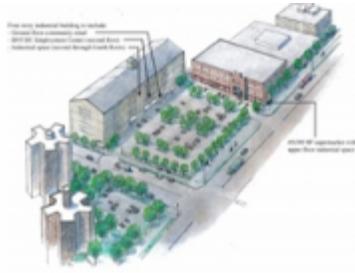
"I think that with some creativity, [the Navy Yard] can still put in a supermarket with enough parking, and retain these buildings," said Bankoff. "I don't think the Navy Yard has ever seriously contemplated what they could do while retaining these buildings." He suggested building a supermarket in place of the tennis courts, and reusing the homes for live-work space, medical offices and the jobs center. "Why would you spend \$5 million to renovate a building to put an employment in center there, when you could require a developer to make space for it in a new building that would also house industrial jobs?" Kimball retorted.

Krenke said the National Guard Bureau, under the Historic Preservation Act, is required "to consider multiple and viable alternatives prior to the transfer of the property."

Despite an agreement signed in 1997 between the city and federal government that would allow the city to raze the homes, it seems their fate is far from a done deal. "This might end up an issue for the courts to decide," said Bankoff.



Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corp wants to build a grocery store, seen here at eye level, with upper-level industrial space and an industrial building also housing retail and the Yard's employment center on the site where the Admiral's Row houses stand. Renderings courtesy of Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corp



Here the grocery store is shown from above. Conceptual renderings courtesy of the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation



A stairwell inside one of the remaining Admiral's Row houses



An overgrown trellis outside the Admiral's Row houses



Portions of the Admiral's Row houses are caved in.
Eagle photos by Sarah Ryley

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A Dying Breed: The Dutch Farmhouses of Brooklyn

by Phoebe Neidl (phoebe@brooklyneagle.net), published online 11-21-2007

ONLY 13 HOUSES REMAIN

177-Year-Old House Pursues Landmark Status for 10 Years

By Phoebe Neidl

Brooklyn Daily Eagle

BROOKLYN — John Antonides lives in a landmark. He's certain of it. The previous owner was certain of it, too — though she hardly understood “landmarking” in the legal sense of the word we so often report on. Theresa Lucchelli lived in Hubbard House for 93 years, and when Antonides offered to bring it before “Landmarks” for her, she looked at him confused. “It is a landmark,” she said. But New York City isn't so sure.

As the owner of Hubbard House since 1997, Antonides resides in one of the 13 remaining Dutch farmhouses in Brooklyn. They are an endangered species — in 1950, there were as many as 70 still standing.

“A number of them were eradicated during a fairly short time during the 20th century,” explained Chris Ricciardi, project archaeologist for the U.S Army Corps of Engineers and co-director of excavations at another Kings County Dutch farmhouse, the Hendrick I. Lott House at 1940 East 36th St.

Of the 13 remaining houses, there are four that aren't New York City landmarks — a number that baffles Antonides, who has been trying to get his home protected by the designation for over a decade now. A hearing was held in 1997, but the commission determined that “further study” was required. The house is still listed by the Department of Buildings as “calendared,” meaning it is under review.

A spokesperson for the Landmarks Commission says the review has been taking so long because it was originally believed to be an 18th century house, but further research indicated it was an early 19th century house, so “we're looking at it through a different lens.”

Some of the un-landmarked Dutch farmhouses seem to have owners who aren't interested (since the designation puts stringent restrictions on changes that can be done to the building), and it would be a very rare case that the commission would designate a home in which the owner wasn't interested. “But look at me,” says Antonides. “They know I'm interested. They know a sympathetic owner has bought the house ... I guess there's not enough of a constituency for it — it's not a part of a district with a group of neighbors interested. It's just me.”

Hubbard House was put in the national and state register of historic places, and Antonides received a \$50,000 grant and a low-interest loan from the non-profit New York Landmarks Conservancy to help with restoration. The Conservancy also hired an expert to assess the construction history of the house, and it was determined that the structure dates back to around 1830.

“Somebody recognized that this house has historic significance,” he said, adding, “if you hear frustration in my voice, it’s because I am frustrated.

“People on the street have more sense than Landmarks, because they stop and ask about it, they know it’s an old house ... It adds to everyone’s quality of life,” says Antonides. Indeed, the small, white, wooden frame farmhouse stands out on commercial McDonald Avenue, crowded with auto-body shops and warehouses.

Antonides home was also featured in Christopher Gray’s Streetscapes series in the New York Times in 2001, as Antonides was completing the two-year renovation and planting his garden, with “something Dutch, with tulips and a topiary.” The Catalpa tree in his yard turned 100 years old this year.

The house has the rare distinction of retaining its original orientation on its original farm site. It consists of two sections, a one-and-a half-story, one-room-deep main section and a two-story, one room-wide by two-room-deep wing, which represents an alteration from 1924, built on the one-story, one-room shed-extension — a common feature of these houses, which were always small wooden structures, often with lean-tos, dormer windows and small porches.

The majority of the remaining farmhouses in Brooklyn are sprinkled throughout the southern neighborhoods of Gravesend, Midwood, Bensonhurst, Ditmas Park, Marine Park and Flatlands. The two exceptions are the Historic Lefferts House, moved from Flatbush to Prospect Park in 1918, and the privately owned, un-landmarked Bloom-Stoothoff House on Jamaica Avenue at the northern end of East New York.

Southern Brooklyn remained remarkably rural until the early 20th century — which is why there were as many as 70 farmhouses left in 1950, documented by Maud Esther Dillard’s 1945 book “Old Dutch Houses of Brooklyn.”

But this distance from the center of the metropolis may also be why so many of them were lost in just the past few decades, as population has encroached ever more on the outer boroughs. Also, explained Ricciardi, “The houses in southern Brooklyn, further away from Manhattan, are harder to attract tourists to. Nobody wants to take a train, then a bus, then walk for blocks.”

One 18th-century home — the Van Pelt-Woolsey House on Hubbard Place in Flatlands — was just demolished in 2003, quietly pushed aside for condos. It dated back to 1791.

New York City is notorious for knocking down and building over its history — a phenomenon explained succinctly by Ricciardi: “Eight million people on 25 square miles of land. It is what it is. This place is all about moving ahead. Historic preservation is very difficult here.”

At this point, constant reconstruction is actually embedded in New York City history itself. When archaeologists excavated the land around Brooklyn's Pieter Claesen Wyckoff House — the oldest house in all of New York City and the first individual house to be landmarked — they discovered five layers of asphalt as opposed to any telling material record left by the Dutch owners, said Ricciardi. The City of New York had reconstructed the road so many times, it erased the material evidence that could usually be expected at an historic site.

The most fruitful excavation of a Kings County Dutch farmhouse to date is that of the Hendrick I. Lott House by the Brooklyn College Archaeological Research Center, which yielded 100,000 artifacts, says Ricciardi.

“The history is not really known, so much of it is assumed,” Ricciardi says, noting there are still a lot of questions, such as why these Dutch-Americans chose not to participate in the growing material culture of an increasingly wealthy port city — a question born out of the simple and modest possessions uncovered at the Lott site. “There was very little in terms of fancy possessions, no alcohol bottles, simple dishes, no elegant pieces.”

“This history is disappearing, and once it's gone, it's gone forever,” he added.

For Antonides, an editor for the Brooklyn Museum's publications and the descendant of a Dutch ancestor who arrived in Flatbush in 1706, the houses have a very personal appeal. “They're like my children, I go around and check up on them.”

“When Landmarks was formed in 1965, they recognized that the oldest were the most deserving of protection, but somehow they've lost sight of that,” says Antonides. “They're not doing what they were created to do — which is to protect the historic architecture of New York City.”

Remaining Dutch Farmhouses of Brooklyn

** Not a New York City Landmark

* Being considered to be a New York City Landmark

Peter Claesen Wyckoff House, 5816 Clarendon Road, est. 1654

**Van Sicklen/ Lady Deborah Moody House, 17 Neck Road, est. mid-1700s

Wyckoff-Bennett House, 1669 E. 22nd St., est. 1766

Lefferts House, Prospect Park, est. 1777

**Bloom-Stoothoff House, 494 Jamaica Ave., est. 1790s

**Schenck (Stoothoff) Williamson House, 1587 E. 53rd Street, est. 1797

Hendrick I. Lott House, 1940 E. 36th St., est. 1800

*Hubbard House, 2138 McDonald Ave., est. 1830

Van Nuyse- McGaw House, 1041 E. 22nd St., est. 1806

Van Nuyse-Coe House, 1128 E. 34th St., est. 1806

Stoothoff-Kouwenhoven Baxter House, 1640 E. 48th St., est. 1881

Elias Hubbard Ryder House, 1926 E. 28th St., est. 1834

**Ryder Van Cleef House, 38 Village Road North, est. 1840

Information found on the Department of Buildings Web site, the Brooklyn College Archaeological Research Center Web site and the "Old Dutch Houses of Brooklyn" Web site.

Look here for photos:

<http://www.amny.com/news/local/am-endangered1221,0,6213239.story?page=1>

Many of these are "endangered" under the Moynihan project.

Endangered New York: 10 (more) to save

By Lana Bortolot

Special to amNewYork

December 21, 2007

As the real-estate boom year of 2007 winds down, houses of worship, schools, historic residences, whole neighborhoods -- even the corner diner -- tenuously exist under the threat of the wrecking ball.

Indeed, the changes are so breathtaking that the question of whether the city is losing its very soul has been seriously debated among preservationists, community and civic groups.

It's a grim scenario that Simeon Bankoff, executive director of the Historic Districts Council, imagines in neighborhood after neighborhood -- and not affecting just the mom and pops.

"Just picture in your mind: Madison Square Garden is slated to be gone, and you imagine perhaps that Macy's is gone and the Hotel Pennsylvania--that's an entire district. What's on the table is looking at important, enormous parcels in Midtown being vacant or replaced," he says.

Of course, it's not just the big projects such as the Hudson Rail Yards or a new Penn Station that worry preservationists. It's about losing the city's "incredible layering of architecture" says Peg Breen, president of the New York Landmarks Conservancy.

"People throughout the city are slightly uneasy about the pace of change and the loss of familiar things in their neighborhoods," Breen says. "We're in a period where real-estate interests have clearly dominated. [Development] is not bad, but what makes the city unique and a joy to live in are the layers of history--you don't want to lose a sense of place."

This year has not been entirely without rays of hope. The Landmarks Preservation Commission protected more than 1,100 structures--the greatest number since 1990--and identified new areas to shield, such as DUMBO

News, however, seemingly comes every day of another disappearing institution. What follows is amNewYork's "10 to Save," our second annual look at the city's endangered places -- a small sampling from the growing list of sites that at any time could be only a memory.

1.) Modernist architecture

Midtown will lose the Donnell Library Center when it's razed for an 11-story luxury hotel. The new property will include space for a significantly smaller library that won't match the scope of services now provided. The building made architect Robert A. M. Stern's "Landmarks in Waiting" list, but Breen says, "I think modern buildings aren't as easy to love sometimes and most people wouldn't have put their arms around this one. Some buildings give you an emotional response like Grand Central Terminal and some, like Donnell, require a more intellectual understanding." (Address: 20 W. 53rd St. Completed: 1955 Architect: Edgar I. Williams)

The Morris B. Sanders House in Turtle Bay is a rare, authentic, intact, and very early modern house. After a public hearing in October, the building has interim protection, but has still not been designated. (Address: 219 E. 49th St. Built: 1934-35)

George Washington Bridge Bus Station, also on Stern's landmark list and still undesignated, is one of the few buildings its famed engineer and architect designed outside of Italy. Its flamboyant form evokes the thrill of arrival in the modern city. (Address: Broadway, between West 178th-179th streets, Washington Heights Built: 1963 Architect: Pier Luigi Nervi)

2). Pennsylvania Station area

Much of the Penn Station area is endangered, beginning with the historic James A. Farley Post Office Building on West 34th Street. Though on the National Register for Historic Places and a city landmark, the state, which owns the building, does not have to go to the landmarks commission for approval of what happens there.

Preservationists and aesthetes alike are concerned that the building will lose its integrity if Madison Square Garden moves in and commands a chunk of the Eighth Avenue portico. "We're concerned internally and externally that they would carve up the landmark quality," says Breen.

"Everyone is going to know where the Garden is located. But we want people to know there is a beautiful post office and I hope, a beautiful, well-designed train station that shouldn't be dominated by a sports arena."

A related concern: The Hotel Pennsylvania. Preservationist and author Anthony Wood says the hotel is "one of the last pieces of the great Penn Station complex and it has a great cultural history. If we weren't in a super-heated real-estate market, it would be a logical candidate for designation and brought into the future in some way."

Wood refers to the original Penn Station, the masterpiece of neo-classic architecture much mourned since its demolition in 1964. (And of course, who can forget the hotel's still operative phone number, Pennsylvania-6500, made famous by Glenn Miller--one of many big bands that often played there.)

Several neighborhood religious buildings (See No. 10 for more on churches) also face pressures from developers including St. John the Baptist (207 W. 30th St.), Church of St. Michael (414 W. 34th St.), St. Francis of Assisi Church (136 W. 31st St.) and Beth Israel West Side Jewish Center (347 W. 34th St.). At press time, demolition was under way at the 1867 Glad Tidings Tabernacle (325 W. 33rd St.).

And it's not only the land acquisition that has preservationists worried: More than 5 million square feet of air rights are in play, which, if developed, change the skyline and scale of this neighborhood forever.

3). Macy's

It's hard to imagine 34th Street without Macy's, but some day you might have to. Developers want to lure the retail anchor into the proposed Penn Station mall, a move that would leave the fate of its building unknown. Though listed on the National Register, it's not a designated landmark. Says Bankoff: "Macy's defines Herald Square and should it leave, the question is what will replace it."

4.) Homes with abolitionist history

Development pressures in downtown Brooklyn threaten the existence of several houses possibly linked to the Underground Railroad. Preservationists say the city ignored documents detailing the historical significance of the houses on Duffield Street.

After nearly four years of protest, one of the homes, No. 227, has been saved. But the fate of others on the street (Nos. 231 and 233) is up in the air. They're slated for demolition as part of a major redevelopment project for Willoughby Square.

Also on watch: The 1847 James Sloan and Abigail Hopper Gibbons home in Chelsea (339 W. 29th St.). Newspaper editor Horace Greeley and abolitionist John Brown were known to stay here, and the house was specifically targeted during the 1863 Draft Riots. Community Board 4 is advocating its preservation: the current owner is remodeling and wants to add a penthouse.

5.) Residential blocks under attack by high-rises

Buildings from the city's Gilded Age are under siege -- part of a larger trend endangering elegant and intact residential blocks. It's too late for four houses at 31-37 W. 56th St.; worthy of landmark designation, they were demolished for a 16-story high-rise now under construction.

Though three Federal buildings on Greenwich Street (Nos. 94, 94-1/2 and 96) have all had public hearings, they still lack designation--at least one developer was interested in building a hotel there.

And in Greenwich Village, St. Vincent's Hospital proposes building a smaller, more modern hospital, which would affect surrounding historic residential blocks should a developer come in. Says Breen: "It may be a good cause, but it would be an unprecedented number of buildings to go within a historic district."

On the West Side, development threatens brownstones flanking either end of the West End Historic District at 508-510 and 732-734 West End Ave. And community advocates are fighting Congregation Shearith Israel's plan to build a nine-story luxury condo on the brownstone block of West 70th Street.

6.) Admiral's Row, Brooklyn Navy Yard

This handsome lot of badly deteriorated mansions has been at the center of a debate between the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corp. and preservationists. The Navy Yard wants to build a 60,000-square-foot supermarket; nearly everyone else wants to save this small slice of history.

Preservationists advocate a creative solution modeled after the Red Hook Fairway. "It would be unfortunate if this issue remains polarized --that it's either a grocery store or preservation. We should look at a way to do both," says Lisa Kersavage, director of advocacy and policy at the Municipal Art Society.

"Grocery stores can be critical [for] a neighborhood. But these are significant buildings that the government has failed on all levels to preserve."

An engineering report commissioned by the National Guard and released last week found eight of the 10 buildings are sound and "retain an extremely high level of historic integrity." The site will undergo a new federal historic assessment known as Section 106 review. (Built: 1858-1901, various architects, including Charles Bulfinch, Thomas U. Walter)

7). Brooklyn Waterfront

Listed this year as one of the 11 Most Endangered Sites in the nation by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Brooklyn industrial waterfront faces extraordinary development pressures. Luxury high-rises in rezoned Greenpoint and Williamsburg threaten historic dockyards and factories, and historic neighborhoods teeter on the edge between gentrification and overdevelopment.

"Greenpoint remains the most endangered of the neighborhoods because of upzoning that now allows for 40-story buildings to be built on the waterfront," Kersavage says. "These areas have real meaning and utility for the maritime industry and beyond."

At risk: The Austin, Nichols & Company Warehouse (1913-15, Cass Gilbert) and parts of the Domino Sugar factory site. Three buildings in the complex have been designated but will be rezoned, and there's talk of a glassy addition to the top on the designated buildings.

Says Kersavage: "The way these buildings are constructed and how they meet the sky are on their own important." The unprotected iconic refinery sign remains intact--for now.

8.) Brownstone Brooklyn

Entire unprotected strips of brownstone Brooklyn are under watch by preservationists --but not under protection. Carroll Gardens, Prospect Heights, the emerging area called Wallabout and parts of Brooklyn Heights are changing radically and quickly as developers swoop in and national retailers follow, compromising the scale and cohesion of entire neighborhoods.

Says Bankoff: "It's great that commercial strips are being brought back, but at the same time, we're losing things around the edges." Also in peril around the edges of the neighborhoods: Downtown Brooklyn and, in particular, the Franklin Building, at 186 Remsen St., one of several Romanesque buildings that give the Heights its architectural uniformity.

9.) The humble diner

A mainstay of working-class Manhattan, especially along 11th Avenue, the classic diner is a vanishing breed of affordable dining and predictable comfort. This year saw the demise of places such as the Moondance Diner in Manhattan, and Victory Diner on Staten Island. Diner aficionado Kevin Walsh, creator of forgotten-ny.com, says, "Landlords aren't crazy about keeping restaurants that don't make a lot of money and that cater to people who don't make a lot of money."

10.) Religious buildings

Dwindling congregations and funds make religious buildings a particular target for demolition. The French Romanesque West-Park Presbyterian (1890) at 86th Street and Amsterdam Avenue has already agreed to sell its chapel in exchange for renovations to the main church. A 21-story condominium tower would be built where the chapel now stands.

In Maspeth, community advocacy groups are fighting to save St. Saviour's, a 1847 Richard Upjohn church, which is scheduled to be razed for a housing development --the parson's house is already gone, as are many old-growth trees that served as a de facto park for this area.

In Brooklyn, the 1899 Bay Ridge United Methodist--called the "Green Church" because of its distinctive stone facade--is in contract for \$10 million with plans for a condominium in its place.

Navy Yard supermarket on hold as feds consider 'Row'

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

A plan to tear down 10 historic houses at the Brooklyn Navy Yard and replace them with a supermarket has been delayed indefinitely thanks to a decision by federal officials to review whether the dilapidated 150-year-old mansions can be saved.

"There is absolutely no way we can give any sort of end date at all ... there is no mandated time limit," said Kristin Leahy, the manager of the National Guard Bureau Cultural Resources Program, which is investigating the mansions' historical integrity — to the frustration of those eager to see the run-down buildings torn down.

Leahy said the earliest that she could hold a meeting with the city, area residents and preservationists is March. And that meeting would be just the first of a series.

Admirals Row, which overlooks Flushing Avenue near Navy Street, sits on six acres of federally owned land in the otherwise city-controlled Navy Yard.

The National Guard wants to sell the land, and according to local law, must give the city first dibs. But because of the houses' historic significance, the Guard must also go through an arduous public comment and historic review process.

"I'm disappointed," said Councilwoman Letitia James (D-Fort Greene), a proponent of the supermarket proposal.

"We're trying to expedite the process," added James. "[And] we've been in touch with some federal elected officials [to help do that]."

The Navy Yard's proposal is popular in the surrounding community, particularly among residents of the Farragut, Ingersoll and Whitman public housing projects, who have little access to fresh produce.

"Saving historic homes may be significant to some people, but to the people who live in a neighborhood that doesn't have easy access to fresh fruits and vegetables, it is of much less importance," Ed Brown, the president of the Ingersoll Tenants Association, recently said in a letter to The Brooklyn Paper.

Even so, neighboring and city preservationists argue that the houses should be rehabilitated, and are pleased that the federal government is taking its responsibilities seriously.

"I think they've handled themselves well," said Scott Witter, a Clinton Hill artist and one of the most outspoken opponents of the city's plans.

Simeon Bankoff, another opponent of the city's plan and the executive director of the Historic Districts Council, agreed, saying that the National Guard's deliberate approach has convinced him that there would not be "a rush to judgment."

Parks Dept: Human bones found in Washington Square Park

1/22/2008, 8:56 p.m. EST
The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Archaeologists testing soil for new utility lines have found several dozen human bones in Greenwich Village's historic Washington Square Park, the city Parks Department says.

The bones — the equivalent of two skeletons — were uncovered on Monday near a men's restroom at the south end of the park, the department said Tuesday.

It was not the first such discovery in the park, a centerpiece of Greenwich Village that was built in the early 19th century atop a potter's field and former parade ground. Bones also were found during at least one of three previous excavations, the agency said.

The bones, that were found without any accompanying coffin, will be analyzed by a forensic archaeologist and reburied respectfully, the department said. It appeared the bones had been moved from their original burial site many times over the years as the area was transformed into an urban plaza.

Washington Square Park, bordered by landmark 19th century townhouses and New York University's campus, is a traditional gathering spot for students and Greenwich Village residents.

N.Y./Region

January 23, 2008, 3:40 pm

3 Skeletons Discovered in Washington Sq. Park

By SEWELL CHAN

At least three mostly intact sets of skeletal remains were discovered this morning by city archaeologists doing soil testing as part of a restoration of [Washington Square Park](#) in Greenwich Village, city officials said. The discovery could have significance for scholars studying the history of the early United States; the area of the park was used as a common burial ground, or potter's field, from 1797 to 1826.

The Parks Department immediately announced that the skeletons would be left in the ground out of respect and that some of the plans for renovating the site would be adjusted so as not to disturb the burial site.

On Monday, [several dozen human bones were found in the park](#). As The Associated Press reported on Tuesday, archaeologists testing soil for new utility lines discovered the bones, the equivalent of two skeletons, near a men's restroom at the south end of the park, on Monday. The bones, which were not accompanied by a coffin, were to be analyzed by a forensic archaeologist and "reburied respectfully," The A.P. reported.

According to the Parks and Recreation Department, it appeared the bones had been moved from their original burial site repeatedly over the years. Jama Adams, a spokeswoman for the department, said that bones had been discovered in the park during at least three previous excavations, including during the 1895 installation of the arch and during a Consolidated Edison project in the 1960s.

According to The Encyclopedia of New York City and the Parks Department's [official history](#), the area of the park was once a marsh fed by Minetta Brook near a settlement of Sappokanican Indians. After two decades as a potter's field — a role that [Hart Island](#) plays today — the city acquired the land in 1827 for a public park, and development in the surrounding community accelerated. After the Parks Department's creation in 1870, work accelerated, with statues of Giuseppe Garibaldi

erected in 1888 and of Alexander Lyman Holley in 1890. A temporary arch, erected in 1889, was replaced in 1895 by a permanent one designed by Stanford White.

Until the 1960s, the park was bisected by Fifth Avenue, when a through street and a bus turnaround were closed off and the park, now free of traffic, became a gathering spot for Village residents and New York University students.

A current plan by the Parks Department to renovate the park has encountered some community opposition. Under the plan, the fountain will be shifted 23 feet and placed in line with the arch. The 9.3-acre park will have more area dedicated to lawns, and the dogs runs will be moved and spruced up. The statues of Garibaldi and Holley will be restored and moved within the park.

Community groups have filed two lawsuits to stop the renovation project, [but have so far been unsuccessful](#). The groups asserted, among other things, that the Parks Department did not give local groups enough input; that the project would harm the park's status as a place for political expression; and that the work's environmental impact needs to be studied. The community groups also assert that the Parks Department has not been completely honest about the project's scope.

Asked about the discovery of the bones, Daniel L. Alterman, a lawyer for the community groups, said in a phone interview today of the Parks Department, "One would hope that if in fact they have found an archaeologically significant site in Washington Square Park that they would preserve the integrity of the scene until they can determine what, if anything else, exists there."

Jonathan Greenberg, a longtime Greenwich Village resident who has spearheaded opposition to the renovation project, said the discovery of the bones disturbed him. In a phone interview today, he said the Parks Department had told community groups that the work would not be so disruptive as to uncover human remains because workers did not intend to dig more than three feet deep.

"There has never been a request by the community to change the walkways of Washington Square Park," Mr. Greenberg said. "We only

would like them to repair the pavement. We have been assured from the very beginning that they would not dig more than three feet deep.”

The presence of human bones under the park is not particularly surprising, Mr. Greenberg said, given that local historians have estimated that as many as 20,000 people may have been buried there during the area’s use as a common burial ground.

Ms. Adams said the archaeological work was begun precisely to ensure that any findings of historical significance would be treated appropriately. She noted that until this week, multiple soil tests had been conducted, following archaeological protocols, without any bones being found.

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