

# FRIENDS

of the UPPER EAST SIDE  
HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Founded in 1982, FRIENDS is an independent, not-for-profit membership organization dedicated to preserving the architectural legacy, livability, and sense of place of the Upper East Side. In addition to safeguarding the future of the Upper East Side's six historic districts and 125 individual landmarks, and as an advocate for sound preservation policies for the city, FRIENDS has also been a leader in successful efforts to dramatically improve the zoning laws governing the area's avenues and residential side streets.

For information please call 212.535.2526 or visit [www.friends-ues.org](http://www.friends-ues.org).

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# FRIENDS

of the UPPER EAST SIDE  
HISTORIC DISTRICTS

20 East 69th Street, 4B, NY, NY 10021

## Voice Your Opinion!

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## FRIENDS of the UPPER EAST SIDE HISTORIC DISTRICTS



# NEWS from FRIENDS

SUMMER 2006

## FRIENDS chats with New Upper East Side Council Members

FRIENDS welcomes new city council members Jessica Lappin and Daniel Garodnick. Council Member Garodnick represents District 4. We were fortunate to have Councilman Garodnick present an award at our Awards Ceremony last February and we thank him for his kind words and receptiveness to preservation issues on the Upper East Side. Council Member Jessica Lappin represents District 5 in Manhattan, a seat formerly held by Council Speaker Gifford Miller. A life-long New Yorker, Ms. Lappin joined the City Council staff in 1998 as Senior Adviser and District Chief of Staff to Mr.

Miller. Ms. Lappin was appointed to replace Council member Simcha Felder as Chair of the Landmarks, Public Siting & Maritime Uses Subcommittee, which is the first stop on the Council for deliberation over landmark designations and legislation. We welcome Ms. Lappin to her new position and look forward to working with her in the coming months.

To better get to know our new Council Members and to understand the important role they play in the preservation of our neighborhoods, FRIENDS has asked Council

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## A True Manhattan Landmark

Five years ago FRIENDS put together an exhibition entitled *Modern Architecture on the Upper East Side: Landmarks of the Future*. Prominent among the buildings included in the show was the 1950-1951 Manhattan House, which fills the block between Third and Second Avenues, 65th to 66th Streets. Trumpeted by Architectural Forum as "The biggest, whitest, and most interesting postwar mountain of cliff dwellings for New York's well heeled natives," the 20 story apartment house is a superblock within the metropolis.

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# Chat with Upper East Side Council Members

(Continued from Page 1)

Members Garodnick and Lappin a few questions to find out what is on their minds regarding preservation on the Upper East Side and for the city as a whole.

## Questions for Jessica Lappin

*Can you tell us a little about your background?*

I was born and raised in New York City. I went to Stuyvesant High School and then studied government at Georgetown University. After graduating, I moved back to the city I love to pursue a career in public service. I took a job in 1998 with Council Member Gifford Miller and spent the next 7 years working in my community, helping people, and solving local problems

*How did you come to seek a position on the New York City Council?*

While working for the City Council, I learned that an energetic elected official with fresh ideas can encourage new solutions and ways of thinking about the city's most pressing issues. Running for office seemed like a great opportunity to build upon my experience and to find innovative ways to move our city forward.

*Can you tell us some of your goals while on the Council?*

To preserve affordable housing, improve transportation options on the East Side, protect the historic fabric of our city, and provide funding for our schools, parks, and cultural institutions.

*What is one of your favorite historic buildings or neighborhoods in your district?*

The Renwick ruins on Roosevelt Island, otherwise known as the Smallpox Hospital. The ruins, which were designated in 1970s, are beautiful, mysterious, and full of promise.

*Is there any building or area in your district that isn't protected that you would like to see designated?*

I would like to see the City and Suburban Homes (First Avenue Estate) designated. The First Avenue buildings, which were part of the largest "model tenement" complex ever built, should never have been removed from the Landmarks Preservation Commission's original designation.

*What do you think the impacts of historic preservation are on a community?*

I think the impacts are incredibly positive. Landmarks define our neighborhoods and give us a sense of place. Preserving these landmarks creates

pride in our communities and protects the history and character of our city.

*What influence do you think preservation advocacy groups have on the city council?*

Council Members rely on their research and expertise and, often, look to them for guidance.

*What can advocacy groups do to be the most effective with the City Council?*

Develop relationships with their local City Council Members and educate them about endangered properties and preservation priorities for the area.

*Do you think the city council should have more or less power (or the same) over the landmarking process?*

Right now, the Council serves as a check and balance on the Commission. We give the people a greater voice in the process and play an important and appropriate role.

*How would you characterize the relationship of the City Council to the Landmarks Preservation Commission?*

There seems to be a sense of frustration with the length of time it takes to review and designate Historic Districts. I believe that this is partly due to inadequate funding and staffing levels at the Commission. As a result, I circulated a budget proposal with Council Member Avella to increase the agency's budget next year by \$500,000.

## Questions for Daniel Garodnick

*Can you tell us a little about your background?*

I was born and raised on the East Side of Manhattan in the Stuyvesant Town/Peter Cooper Village community, where I continue to live today. I am an attorney with a background in civil rights. I graduated from Dartmouth College with a B.A. in Government, and from the University of Pennsylvania Law School. After law school, I clerked for a federal judge before becoming a litigator at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP.

*How did you come to seek a position on the New York City Council?*

My background in civil rights and education advocacy propelled me toward a career in public service. When I learned that my predecessor, Eva Moskowitz, was running for higher office and leaving her Council seat, I thought that there could be no greater

honor or challenge than representing the district in which I grew up.

*Can you tell us some of your goals while on the Council?*

I am very concerned about the transportation options available to East Siders. I also consider affordable housing a top priority throughout the City. Additionally, we continue to be challenged by a number of quality of life issues on the Upper East Side such as newspaper racks, graffiti, illegal street vendors, and illegal bicycle practices. I also firmly believe that historic preservation adds to the character and integrity of our neighborhoods and to our quality of life.

*What is one of your favorite historic buildings or neighborhoods in your district?*

I am very proud to represent the Upper East Side and Carnegie Hill Historic Districts. The Upper East Side Historic Districts contain excellent samples of American architecture, and are a perfect example of the evolution of urban architecture in the City. Carnegie Hill is equally beautiful. With the construction of the Hotel Graham at the turn of the 20th Century and the further development of the area following the construction of the Carnegie Mansion, the area has an immense array of architectural styles which tell the story of development in this area.

Additionally, I have always been moved by the bold design and ingenuity of the Chrysler Building. I think the image is an icon of New York City and I am proud to have it in my district as well.

*Is there any building or area in your district that isn't protected that you would like to see designated?*

I have asked the Landmarks Preservation Commission to consider designating the Manhattan House at 200 East 66th Street and the Horn and Hardart Automat at 106 West 57th Street as individual landmarks. I consider the Manhattan House to be a significant development in the architectural history of New York City. It is the first white brick apartment building and is one of the City's first examples of the International Modern Style (see front page article). The Automat on West 57th Street was designed by Ralph B. Bencker and once functioned as an important cultural and historical meeting place for members of New York's music, dance and art gallery district.

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# FRIENDS ANNUAL MEETING & AWARDS CEREMONY

**F**RRIENDS held its Twenty-Third Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony on February 8, 2006, at The New York School of Interior Design. FRIENDS' president, Anne Millard, greeted the audience and thanked Inge Heckel, president of the New York School of Interior Design for allowing us use of their marvelous school. The first order of business was to nominate two new members of the board; David W. Levinson and Annie MacRae. Next was the awards ceremony. Each year FRIENDS recognizes fine restoration, renovation, and advocacy work on the Upper East Side, both in and out of the districts. Hermes Mallea, a FRIENDS' board member and architect, gave a lively presentation of this year's six awards covering diverse categories from churches to cornices. After the ceremony, honorees and guests headed to the school's art gallery for a reception.

An **EXTERIOR RESTORATION AWARD** was presented to Bohemian National Hall, 321 East 73rd Street, for the impeccable work restoring this historic cultural center. Rev. John A. Kamas presented the award to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Jan Hird Pokorny Associates, NABYTEK EUROPA and Martin Holub, Architects & Planners.

Andrew Dolkart presented a **RESTORATION AWARD** to City and Suburban's York Avenue Estate for the magnificent restoration of this building.

Mr. Alan Wasserman, Mr. Mark Wasserman, Mr. Stanley Wasserman, Philip Toscano, R.A., Mr. Frank Vacca, Mr. Charlie Vacca, Mr. Ed Wynne, Mr. Steve Goldenberg, Ms. Stephanie Wallace, Mr. Bill Bendernagle, Ms. Joanne Jensen, and Mr. Richard Lebow were there to receive the award.

The Church of St. Vincent Ferrer, 869 Lexington Avenue also received a **RESTORATION AWARD** for the outstanding restoration of the church's exterior. Bannon McHenry presented the award to St Vincent Ferrer Church, Father Kevin Robb, O. P., and Mr. Alfred Gallicchio.

A **HATS OFF AWARD** was presented by Hon. Dan Garodnick to 850 Park Avenue for the replacement of the building's cornice. The Seventy-Seventh Street Corporation, Walter B. Melvin Architects, LLC, West New York Restoration of Connecticut, Boston Valley Terra Cotta, Essex Works Limited, and Seal Reinforced Fiberglass, Inc. were in attendance to receive the award.

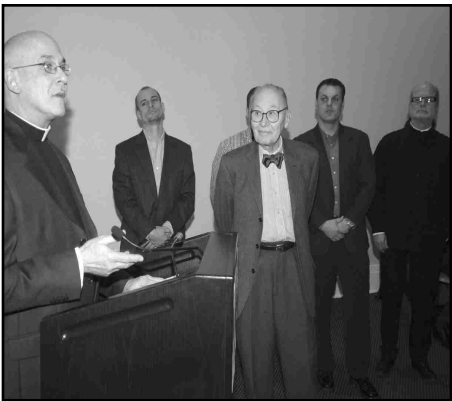
The **TECHNOLOGY AWARD** was presented by Winthrop Aldrich to the New York State Historic Preservation Office for their website, which now makes information on State and National Register listings available to the public online.

The **REMEMBER THE ALAMO! AWARD** was presented to The Alamo Sculpture at Astor Place for its recent conservation. Tony Rosenthal, the sculptor of the

Alamo and FRIENDS' Honorary Chairman, presented the award to the office of the Mayor, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and the New York City Department of Transportation.



Friends' President Anne Millard with Tony and Cynthia Rosenthal



Board Member Rev. John Kamas presenting an award to the architects and owners of Bohemian National Hall



Board Member Andrew Dolkart with the awardees for City and Suburban Homes York Avenue Estate



# We made new “Friends” at PS 183



Volunteers Franny Eberhart and Mary Kay Judy taught our three-session Young Friends “mini-course” to some very enthusiastic 2nd graders. During the first session of the course, students learn architectural vocabulary, which enables them to “read” a building’s age, material, purpose, and nature of the neighborhood at the time of construction. Armed with their new knowledge, the students ventured out into their school’s neighborhood for the second class. In the field, the students have the opportunity to use their new vocabulary to survey the blocks, and to learn important information about their neighborhood’s history. During the third session, the students have a chance to become architects, and design a building of their own, using collage materials. By stimulating an interest in architecture, the program strives to instill in children a sense of community pride and an awareness of and sensitivity to their surroundings. For more on this program, please contact us at 212-535-2526.

**We also have FRIENDS in India.** For the fourth year, FRIENDS donated educational literature to the Cultural Heritage Educational Initiative in Lucknow, India. We were happy to help spread the word on preservation!

## Save the Date

FRIENDS’ to Honor *Emily K. Rafferty*  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2006. 6:30 P.M. THE COLONY CLUB

Join FRIENDS for an exciting evening honoring Emily K. Rafferty, President of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, at our Third Annual “Ambassador” to the Upper East Side Award Dinner on Tuesday, September 26th at the Colony Club.

Ms. Rafferty, a native New Yorker, has served on the staff of The Metropolitan Museum since 1976. A frequent speaker on topics related to non-profit management and fundraising, Ms. Rafferty has been affiliated with a number of arts and inter-museum organizations. She has been a member since 1990 of ArtTable (Board of Directors 1991- 1994); a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and Women in Financial Development; and for ten years served on the development committee of the American Association of Museums. Ms. Rafferty is a member of the Board of Directors of the World Trade Center Memorial Foundation, the Steering Committee of the Association for a Better New York, and a member of the Women’s Forum. With such an outstanding honoree, this is sure to be an evening to remember!

# Landmark

(Continued from Page 1)

The combination of Skidmore Owings and Merrill, with engineer and architect Albert Mayer and his collaborator Julian Hill Whittlesey, produced an innovative H plan, 20 stories of apartments, most with Bauhaus-style balconies, set above a transparent lobby floor. Light and air were guaranteed as the building, a narrow slab, occupies only 40 percent of the site. A common area on the rooftop contributes to the aura of indoor-outdoor living exceptional in city dwellings. Deep setbacks from the crosstown streets create a felicitous relationship between the apartments and the urban context. A passion to create conditions of humane living within the city, which Albert Mayer shared with town planners Henry Wright and Clarence Stein, led to the design of this remarkable building.

Manhattan House, a much in demand rental property since originally built by New York Life Insurance Company, was recently sold and will become a condominium, in a wave of city-wide condominium conversions. Rent-stabilized tenants will move and Manhattan House will enter a new phase. This is the proper moment to landmark an extraordinary ornament to the Upper East Side, and an important document in the history of “white buildings,” a design which has been endlessly copied but never equaled.

transverse road. A large curved roof spanning the existing courtyard was proposed to enclose the U-shaped building and the open space below. FRIENDS did not take issue with the addition of a modern structure to the stables, but felt that the proposed roof was too high, overwhelming the intimate scale of the stables. FRIENDS and other community preservation organizations testified against the proposal at the LPC public hearing. The LPC considered the objections and in the end a compromise was achieved to allow for a roof, but at a much reduced height.



## 39 East 63rd Street

Mott B. Schmidt, one of the most prominent early 20th century architects to work on the Upper East Side, designed houses for an impressive list of clients including the Astor, Vanderbilt, and Morgan families. Often employing the Neo-Georgian style, Schmidt redesigned many townhouse facades, updating them in a more fashionable style.

In April, a proposal to alter 39 East 63rd Street, Schmidt’s first commission in Manhattan came before the LPC. Erected in 1882 as one of a row of brownstones, Schmidt redesigned the façade in a restrained Neo-Georgian style in 1917. Curiously, the building is noted as “no style” in the local designation report, making protection of the building more challenging. The proposed alterations included a redesign of the Schmidt façade, as well as rear and rooftop additions.

FRIENDS testified that the alterations would destroy this exquisite building by an important architect and urged that the building be restored. The LPC agreed and did not approve the plans. The architect is currently working on a revised proposal with the LPC. To stay apprised of this application, visit the FRIENDS website where current LPC items and decisions are posted on a regular basis.

# Lexington Avenue Update



Be on the lookout this summer for our web exhibit based on FRIENDS’ efforts to expand the Upper East Side Historic District on the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

Our web site will include a historical narrative, the National Register Nomination, vintage photographs, and most importantly, a database of individual buildings within the extension, searchable by address, date of construction and great information.



# LETTER from the PRESIDENT

This is the beginning of the “Greening of New York.”

There are twinges, and then tickles, and then a full assault on the senses that have been buried deep in our souls over the winter of “graying.” Central Park is a wonderful barometer of the activity to come. It starts with the yellow daffodils nudging the dirt away after their long winter sleep. It reminds me of Rip Van Winkle. They seem to reign alone for a few weeks before their friends and buddies join them for their “coming up party.” The cherry trees, the Frick magnolias, the tulips on Park Avenue, the dogwood and that glorious wisteria on many brownstone blocks make every street a sensual delight. What fun to watch the boats on the Pond in Central Park! I thought the Manhattan Solstice was magical.

But to more serious matters! We must renew our vigilance in reviewing Landmark applications and checking on the construction on rooftops and in rear yards. Those blue tarps can cover a multitude of sins! Please be our eyes and ears for what may lurk beneath those behemoths!

And we continue our pursuit of the extension of the Upper East Side Historic District on the National Register. We will be meeting with those property owners who have concerns and hopefully resolve any unease. We will be sure to keep you posted. Happy summer and enjoy all that our unique city has to offer.

*Anne Millard*

Anne Millard  
President



# In Review



## Seventh Regiment Armory Update

The Seventh Regiment Armory Conservancy has rapidly expanded its operations this spring, setting up offices at the Armory and growing from 2 employees to 10 plus two interns since February. They have quickly launched a community outreach effort making presentations to local co-op boards, interested residents, and City and State officials, offering tours, establishing an "Armory Neighbors" advisory committee, and attending meetings of the Community Board 8 Armory Subcommittee. In March, CB-8 held a meeting for public commentary where Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Municipal Art Society, CIVITAS, the Central Park Conservancy, Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, Assemblyman Jonathan Bing's office, art and antique show organizers and nine neighborhood residents all spoke or submitted letters in support of the Conservancy's plans at the Armory.

This summer the Conservancy will be working on some immediate improvements to the building as well as planting beds and putting together an exhibit on the first floor about the Armory's history and decoration to open in the fall. The Conservancy is happy to give tours throughout the summer (be warned, it gets hot in there in summer with no air conditioning), call Kirsten Reoch, Project Director, at 212-616-3937, for more information.

## 116-118 East 80th Street

In January a proposal came before the Landmarks Preservation Commission to build a one-story rooftop addition on

the Lewis Spencer and Emily Coster Morris house, located at 116-118 East 80th Street. This elegant town house, built in 1922-1923 by the famed architecture firm Cross & Cross, is one of four individually designated houses on the block, all modeled on 18th century London residences. Such a remarkable ensemble of graceful homes contributes significantly to the outstanding character of this Upper East Side neighborhood.



While the roof top addition initially proposed was a tasteful design, it was highly visible from many locations both on the street and from neighboring buildings. Such a noticeable addition is inappropriate for an individual landmark on one of the most historically and architecturally significant blocks on the Upper East Side. Thanks to the efforts of FRIENDS, other neighborhood constituents and the LPC commissioners, a compromise was reached in which the rooftop addition was reduced in scale to greatly minimize its visibility. This case is an excellent representation of how historic preservation does not seek to discourage change, but rather to encourage sensitive design while protecting historic resources.

## 166 East 73rd Street



Another individual landmark on a very special block on the Upper East Side was

threatened with inappropriate alterations this past February. 166 East 73rd Street was designed by renowned architect Richard Morris Hunt in 1884, and is one of eleven individually designated carriage houses on East 73rd Street between Lexington and Third Avenues. The proposed addition included a two-story rooftop addition and the removal of the existing stucco façade to expose the underlying brick.

The proposed addition would have been highly visible from the street, overwhelming the carriage house's intimate scale and elegant architecture. Such a large addition would greatly detract from the low-scale character that makes this streetscape so unique. FRIENDS strongly opposed the addition and the LPC denied the application. The architects revised their design to a one-story addition that will be significantly less visible. Refinements are continuing to be made on the proposed addition to achieve even less visibility.

And there is more good news. Removal of the stucco façade could have been a risky procedure. Often the underlying brick is in poor condition or the stucco cannot be removed. After careful testing it was determined that the stucco can successfully be removed and the original brickwork will be restored.

## 86th Street Police Precinct



The 86th Street Central Park stables designed by Calvert Vaux and Jacob Wrey Mould were being considered for reuse as a police precinct this past January. The proposed plans included restoring the now dilapidated buildings to their original beauty. It would also have resulted in an addition that FRIENDS felt would destroy the relationship that the stables have with the park's landscape.

The stables are nestled into Central Park below grade near the 86th Street

# FRIENDS "Lunching" Tours



While we are always eager to learn more about our own backyard, FRIENDS headed downtown this Spring for two fascinating tours. In April, FRIENDS' board members and our "Best Friends" members attended a very special tour and luncheon at 195 Broadway, the old AT&T headquarters. We were invited to take part in a private viewing of this spectacular building by our new board member, David L. Levinson, whose company, L & L Holding, bought the building last year. Mr. Levinson took us on a tour of the magnificent lobby of massive 40 foot-high Doric columns, ornate marble friezes and bronze sculptures. We continued our tour to the top floors of the building to walk through the old AT&T offices and to enjoy the expansive view of lower Manhattan. Next, we headed to the basement for a sneak peak at the building's vault of architectural artifacts and AT&T memorabilia. Our tour ended with a lovely lunch among the columns and grandeur of the lobby. The lobby is

currently being considered by The Landmarks Preservation Commission as a designated interior landmark. Our second tour took FRIENDS on a ferry trip just a few hundred yards off the southern tip of Manhattan to visit Governors Island. Claire Kelly of the Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation (GIPEC), led us on a fascinating walk around the island to visit the island's two fortifications – Fort Jay and Castle Williams, erected between 1796 and 1811. The forts sit within a larger National Historic Landmark District of military housing and other historic structures, all with fantastic views of the harbor and New York City skyline. Today, city, state and federal agencies are in the planning stages of converting this former military installation into new public parkland and a spectacular destination in New York Harbor. Keep on the lookout for other exciting and unique tours sponsored by FRIENDS.

# Call for Entries

Each year, Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts awards outstanding achievements in preservation, architecture and advocacy on the Upper East Side. Nominations are sought for our 2007 Annual Awards. If you know of a restoration or renovation project, or even a new building that fits with its historic neighbors, let us know! Projects must be completed between October 1, 2005 and October 1, 2006.

## PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Each month FRIENDS' Preservation Committee reviews Certificates of Appropriateness applications for individual landmarks and buildings within the six Historic Districts on the Upper East Side. A representative of FRIENDS attends the Landmarks Committee of Community Board 8 and testifies at the LPC's hearings. The monthly agenda is posted on our web site ([friends-ues.org/currentLPC.htm](http://friends-ues.org/currentLPC.htm)) along with photos, FRIENDS' testimony and the Commission's decision.

Visit us at [FRIENDS-UES.ORG](http://FRIENDS-UES.ORG)

# Chat (Continued from Page 4) What do you think the impacts of historic preservation are on a community?

The Upper East Side—my community—needs to stand firm in defense of historic preservation. Preserving New York's history reminds us of who we are, where we come from, and allows us to maintain the character of our neighborhoods. I also believe that all new developments in our area should respect the history and the buildings that tell the story of the City. Preservation also has a significant economic impact on a historic neighborhood—providing benefits through tourism, arts, and culture.

## What influence do you think preservation advocacy groups have on the city council?

Preservation advocacy groups play an integral role in the decision-making of the Council. Historic preservation is something that requires a very specific knowledge and advocacy groups provide the expertise needed to help us make informed decisions regarding a designation of or a modification to an existing landmark.

## What can advocacy groups do to be the most effective with the City Council?

The most effective way to influence the City Council is to make thoughtful, well-considered arguments in favor of designating buildings and districts. Using history and reason to support preservation is most compelling—and captures the attention of preservation-minded Council Members.

## Do you think the city council should have more or less power (or the same) over the landmarking process?

The current role of the Council to make final decisions on designations is appropriate. The process allows public testimony before the Landmarks Preservation Commission, which considers that testimony in its evaluation of a building or development. However, when the item comes to the Council, broader policy considerations are taken into consideration. This allows for an evaluation of these issues from both a historical and a contemporary perspective.

## How would you characterize the relationship of the City Council to the Landmarks Preservation Commission?

It appears to me that the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the City Council have a reasonable working relationship, with the Council overturning only three designations in the past fourteen years. I do, however, believe that the Commission needs more funds in order to accomplish its mission of researching and designating historic buildings.