



NEWS *from* FRIENDS

SUMMER 2008

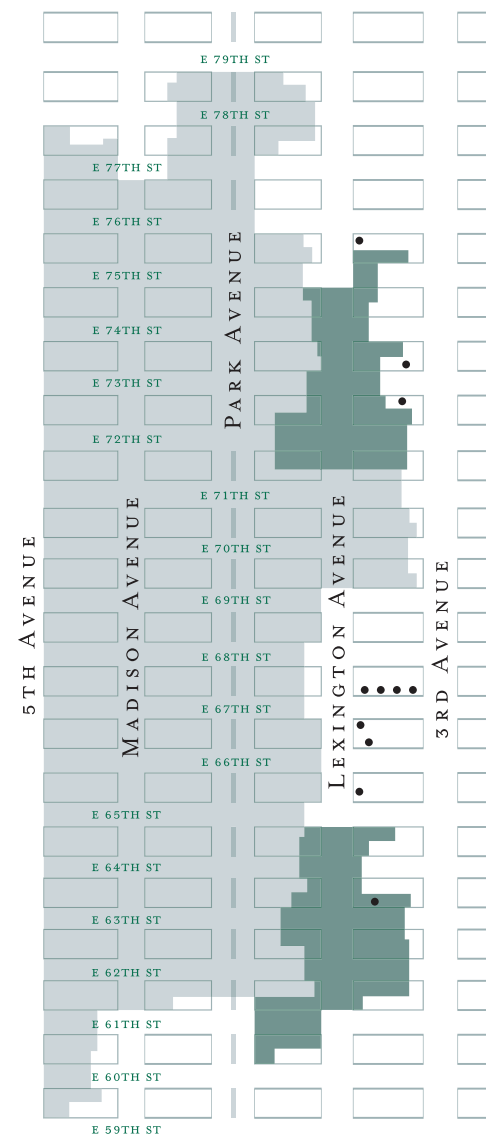
UPPER EAST SIDE HISTORIC DISTRICT EXPANSION — SWEEPING SUPPORT BUT DEMO THREATS CONTINUE

FRIENDS' proposal for the Upper East Side Historic District Expansion has received resounding support from our city, state, congressional, and borough-wide elected officials who represent the area. Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, Councilman Daniel Garodnick, State Senator Liz Krueger, Assemblyman Jonathan Bing and Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney have all written letters to the LPC urging the commission to hold a hearing on this endangered neighborhood as soon as possible. The expansion has also received strong support from neighborhood institutions and businesses, as well as local, state, and national preservation groups.

In recent weeks, FRIENDS has received reports of potential demolitions in the expansion area, including

a neighborhood church, a unique Lexington Avenue residence and more.

Although the expansion is recognized on the state and national level, it is only through local historic district designation by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission that the neighborhood will be protected from demolition and inappropriate development. Despite these threats and the overwhelming support from our elected officials and the neighborhood, the LPC has not yet acted! We need you to show your continued support for the expansion. If you haven't signed a petition or written a letter yet, please do so to preserve this quintessential New York City neighborhood. Visit our website www.friends-ues.org for sample letters and sign up on our email list to learn more.



UPPER EAST SIDE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Current Boundary Proposed Expansion Individual Landmarks

Young Friends

by Sarah O'Keefe

"That looks like Spitzer's building!" exclaimed a second grader during my March visit to his classroom. In the first visit of our architectural education program, we examine pictures of buildings and discuss the clues that can tell us a building's history and function. Amazingly, I hadn't noticed that the image I was holding up was of a modern residential building next door to Governor Spitzer's Fifth Avenue apartment building. It reinforced for me the astounding power of observation and memory that a second grader can possess after seeing a building once or twice on the news. It then comes as no surprise that by our second lesson, children are able to point out many of the twenty architectural vocabulary words they learned during our first visit, and by our third visit they are comfortable adding these elements to their own creative building designs.

For many New York City students, being surrounded by significant buildings is normal—walking past the



First graders from P.S. 290 point to a column as they survey a block in their school neighborhood

soaring columns of a museum or gazing at the Empire State Building is a common occurrence. Our program aims to make students aware of these unusually rich surroundings and hone their already developed skills of observation. We learn to identify houses of worship, schools, museums, and storefronts. Along the way they discover gargoyles, pediments, cornices and lintels in order to create a new vision of the city that surrounds them. We hope that they will share this vision with their friends and family and spread the appreciation of our built environment and the importance of maintaining historic buildings.

Through classroom visits and walking tours, our education program has been very active this spring, working with public and private school classrooms on the Upper East Side and in East Harlem. We have served over 320 students ranging from 1st-4th grade at P.S. 6, 59, 102, 290 and at Convent of the Sacred Heart. We look forward to visiting many more classrooms during the 2008-2009 school year. *If you are interested in learning more about our program or if you would like to volunteer teach, please contact our Education Coordinator, Sarah O'Keefe, at s.okeefe@friends-ues.org or at 212-535-2526.*

Save the Date!

FRIENDS to Honor Liz Smith
Monday, September 22, 2008



Photo by Joan Jedell, Dishing, Simon and Schuster

Join FRIENDS for an exciting evening as we proudly honor Liz Smith at our Fifth Annual Ambassador to the Upper East Side Award Dinner on Monday, September 22nd. Liz Smith calls herself "The 2000-year-old gossip columnist." Arriving in Manhattan from the University of Texas journalism school in 1949, she has worked in celebrity/show biz for 57 years. She has written for seven different NYC newspapers and for almost every magazine. She was a CBS radio producer for Mike Wallace, then an NBC-TV producer in the Fifties.

Her memoir, "Natural Blonde" was published in 2000 and immediately flew onto the New York Times Bestseller list and was followed by her food memoir, "Dishing." Her philanthropy is legend — raising millions for AIDS, Literacy Partners, N.Y. Restoration Project, P.A.L., the Mayors Fund to Advance New York, the Landmarks Conservancy and now Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts. With such outstanding company, this is sure to be an evening to remember! For inquiries: 212-535-2526 or info@friends-ues.org.

FRIENDS' TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING AND AWARDS CEREMONY

FRIENDS held its Twenty-fifth Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony on March 18, 2008 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 the members and officers of the board. We are thrilled to have board member Annie MacRae as a new vice president. During the awards ceremony, FRIENDS recognized 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 awards covering diverse categories from Central Park to carriage houses. After the ceremony, honorees and guests headed to the school's art gallery for a reception.

A RESTORATION AWARD was presented to the Central Park Conservancy and their team of conservators for the meticulous and stunning restoration of the Minton tile ceiling in Central Park's Bethesda Terrace Arcade. David Karabell presented the award to the Central Park Conservancy and their project team, from lighting designers to architects and welders.

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney presented an ADVOCACY AWARD to Council Member Jessica Lappin for her dedication to the landmark designation of City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate. Neighborhood activists Elizabeth McCracken and Joy Kieras were also recognized for their commitment to preserving these important buildings.

The Vilcek Foundation located at 167 East 73rd Street also received a RESTORATION AWARD for the outstanding restoration and adaptive re-use of the foundation's headquarters located in an individually landmarked 19th century carriage house. The Rev. John Kamas presented the award to Jan and Marica Vilcek, Tow Studios and the foundation's Executive Director, Rick Kinsel.

A HATS OFF AWARD was presented by Council Member Dan Garodnick to the owners and craftsman behind the cornice replacement of 1046 Madison Avenue. A second HATS OFF AWARD was presented to the owner and architects of 145 East 74th Street for the preservation of the impressive lion studded cornice. The exemplary work on both structures is particularly significant as they are located outside of a historic district.

A PRESERVING CLASSIC NEW YORK AWARD was presented to the Café Carlyle in the Carlyle Hotel for the impressive restoration of the Marcel Vertes murals decorating the walls of this world famous cabaret. Fred Papert presented the award to the artists, designers and hotel management.



Board Member and Host Hermes Mallea, Susan Peck and Friends' President Anne Millard



Council Member Jessica Lappin and Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney

FRIENDS launches New Website and Blog

We are pleased to announce our newly designed and informative website www.friends-ues.org. Explore the site to learn about upcoming events, free publications, our elementary school program and much more! You can also view a list of monthly LPC hearings and decisions on Upper East Side buildings and keep up to date on proposed new developments and our work towards saving the historic architecture of the Upper East Side.



Success Against Madison Ave Demo and Tower

After strong opposition from Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts and a coalition of concerned neighbors, the Landmarks Preservation Commission rejected a proposal for a mid-block 170-foot tall tower at 746-748 Madison Avenue. FRIENDS was greatly concerned with the scale, design and location of the proposed tower, requiring the demolition of the charming two-story neo-Georgian building home to neighborhood favorite La Goulue. Although the proposal included salvaging the historic storefront and incorporating it into the new building, the resulting structure would have been a mid-block tower completely out of context with the character of the block, Madison Avenue and the historic district. If approved, this project could have set a dangerous precedent for the Upper East Side Historic District and historic neighborhoods throughout the city.

At a March public meeting, the LPC commissioners resoundingly disapproved of the scale of the



744-746 Madison Avenue

proposed building. Commissioner Stephen Byrns stated that the tower was "oversized" and called for the "low areas of Madison Avenue to be preserved." Commissioner Roberta Gratz said that the existing two-story building is a contributing building within the historic district and it "deserves

respect." FRIENDS could not agree more, and we thank all of you who have supported this important and precedent setting issue. Prior to this article going to press, we learned of a new proposal for this site. We will be sure to keep our readers up to date.

In memoriam

This spring the preservation community lost two of its most devoted and inspirational leaders, David F. M. Todd and Roger P. Lang.

David Todd was appointed to the Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1984 and was named Chair by Mayor Koch in 1989. As an architect, he brought a contemporary design sensibility to the commission, as well as experience in residential and educational buildings. Although he professed to being primarily interested in the architectural qualities of proposed landmarks, as opposed to the cultural or historical, he presided over the designations of the City and Suburban Homes Company model

tenements. This was a bold and controversial move that recognized the planning and philanthropic principles of the buildings. David was a good friend to FRIENDS, writing just months before his passing to congratulate us on the walking tour guide of Lexington Avenue historic district extension, calling it "the best of this kind of teaching the public what's what."

Roger Lang came to New York from Boston in 1992 after many years there working as an architect and preservationist. As the Director of Public Policy at the New York Landmarks Conservancy, he became a familiar and beloved figure at

public hearings where his eloquence, insights, and humor were memorable. Advocates across the city depended on his good sense and passion as they fought for their causes. One of his lasting triumphs was his campaign to save the south side of Ellis Island, where a collection of hospital buildings languished in the shadow of the restored Arrivals Building. His and the Conservancy's concern for these structures led to a compelling exhibit of photographs shown at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C., which in turn led to their stabilization. FRIENDS joins the preservation community in grateful remembrance of these two outstanding leaders.

Mt. Sinai Hospital Proposes 600 Foot Residential Tower

The renowned and respected Mt. Sinai Medical Center, located from 98th Street to 102nd Street between Madison and Fifth Avenues, has embarked on an ambitious expansion plan to build a new Center for Science and Medicine on Madison Avenue and East 101st Street. To help finance the expansion, Mt. Sinai has proposed selling air rights to a private developer for the construction of a 600 foot market-rate residential tower in the mid-block of East 102nd Street between Fifth and Madison Avenues. Because the project does not conform to existing zoning rules, waivers are required by the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) related to the set back and lot coverage of the science building.

While we certainly value and respect the extraordinary work of Mt. Sinai hospital as one of New York City's premier medical institutions, we do not support the institutions' request for the zoning waivers because of its negative impact on the livability and character of the surrounding area. Such a large intrusive tower would loom over the neighborhood and Central Park and be completely out of context with the 6-story tenements and 15-story public housing that distinguish the neighborhood. To understand the impact of the proposed building, one can look at Mt. Sinai's Annenberg Research Building and Icahn Building. The new tower would dwarf these massive buildings by at least twenty stories, casting long shadows across Central Park and the surrounding blocks. In addition it will be invasive on the Fifth Avenue skyline as seen from Central Park and the west side.

Although Mt. Sinai hospital is located outside a historic district, Friends of

the Upper East Side Historic Districts' preservation and planning committee found it critical to testify against the proposal before the BSA because of the projects far-reaching implications. We were in good company; Community Board 11, Civitas, Carnegie Hill Neighbors and East Harlem Preservation all testified against the proposal before the BSA on May 6th. The BSA has asked the project team to return for a second hearing. We will be sure to keep our readers updated on this important issue.

Join us for a Tour

FRIENDS is sponsoring free walking tours of the proposed Upper East Side Expansion Area. Visit our website for tour dates at www.friends-ues.org.

IN GRATITUDE

Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts wishes to acknowledge the generous support of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Council Member Daniel Garodnick and Council Member Jessica Lappin through the Department of Youth and Community Development and State Senator Liz Krueger.

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 2009 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 December 1st, 2007 and December 1st, 2008.

LETTER *from the* PRESIDENT

It has been a beautiful Spring with the blooming of cherry, calary pear and so many more trees and flowers all welcoming the warm weather. It is always special to New Yorkers to see their streets come alive with the lovely sights and smells of springtime.

Lexington Avenue is just such a street, with its blocks of low-scale historic buildings and quirky personality that MUST be preserved for all to enjoy. FRIENDS is continuing our work on expanding the Upper East Side Historic District to include Lexington Avenue from 60th to 75th Street and the charming residential side streets. We are trying to save this truly unique New York neighborhood before we lose any of its architectural gems.

And we need you to help to make this happen! Join us on July 21st at 6:30 p.m. as we present our work to the community board. We will need your enthusiasm and support!



FRIENDS

of the UPPER EAST SIDE
HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, founded in 1982, is an independent, not-for-profit membership organization dedicated to preserving the architectural legacy, livability, and sense of place of the Upper East Side. We safeguard the future of the Upper East Side's six historic districts and 126 individual landmarks and act as an advocate for sound preservation policies for the city. Friends has also been a leader in successful efforts to improve dramatically the zoning laws governing the area's avenues and residential side streets.

For more information please call
212-535-2526 or visit our website at
www.friends-ues.org.

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Voice Your Opinion!

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