

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.

SUMMER 2016

NEWS FROM FRIENDS

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

SKY'S THE LIMIT ZONING PROPOSED

In the closing days of the legislative session in Albany this June, astonishing bills appeared in both the Assembly and Senate that would have removed any limit on the size of residential buildings in New York City. Introduced as an amendment to the Multiple Dwelling law at the request of New York City's Department of City Planning, the legislation would remove the current residential cap on density. In technical terms, this cap is a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 12. In layman's terms, that means a residential building is currently limited to a total floor area that is no more than 12 times the size of the plot on which it stands. The proposed legislation would eliminate any cap or limit.

That there has been any cap at all may surprise most of us as we stare at the mega-towers rising just to the south of our Upper East Side neighborhoods. Alas, we have come to know that the complexity of the city's zoning code leaves plenty of room for developer's ambitions, most conspicuously through as-

of-right mechanisms such as the transfer of development rights.

Our State Senator Liz Krueger was on the case immediately, along with FRIENDS of the Upper East Side and other advocacy groups that recognized the tremendous threat of this legislation to the character of neighborhoods. As Senator Krueger put it:

Infrastructure in Manhattan is already strained to the limit. What communities in my district and throughout the city are calling for is neighborhood-based community planning that takes this reality into account. Rushing a bill through Albany in the last days of the legislative session that removes one of the few protections we have against overdevelopment has nothing to do with the kind of thoughtful planning we should be engaging in.

In addition, the proposed legislation would not promote affordable housing, which was its presumed goal. To quote Senator Krueger again:

The reality is that the mega-towers that are already being built throughout Manhattan are the opposite of affordable, and nothing in this legislation would have changed that – all this bill would do is give the City the ability to allow even larger residential towers for the ultra-rich. And when you increase FAR you also increase the value of land, making it even harder to build affordable housing.

A year ago, FRIENDS released exactly the sort of thoughtful and comprehensive planning study called for by Senator Krueger. The study quantified our neighborhood's challenges, as well as its strengths, and proposed an action plan that would address our needs while encouraging **contextual** new development. We continue to refine our neighborhood plan, and we invite your participation. Read the highlights on our website, or settle in with the full version, and reach out to the office about what resonates for you. Over the coming months,

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POLICY REPORT: LANDMARKS DEADLINE BILL LIVES ON



FRIENDS Executive Director Rachel Levy speaks at the rally held at City Hall on June 6th.

On June 8th, 2016, the New York City Council voted to pass Intro. 775-A, a bill that imposes restrictive timelines on the landmark designation process. The vote was the City's final say on a policy which had first been proposed over a year ago. In its original form, the bill would have required the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) to act on proposed landmarks and historic districts within strict deadlines. In cases where the LPC failed to act, the bill would have imposed a five year moratorium on reconsideration of the item, during which time the site would remain completely unprotected. Intro. 775, proposed by City Council Members Peter Koo and David Greenfield, grew out of the LPC backlog of 95 sites. After joint advocacy with our colleague groups, the bill was tabled in the fall of 2015.

However, a revised version of the bill (known as Intro. 775-A) was quietly introduced just after Memorial Day. Luckily, the new iteration did not include the moratorium, but FRIENDS still took issue with the lack of flexibility in timelines for historic districts, a provision for extending the timelines for

individual landmarks only with owner consent, and the absence of additional funding for the city's smallest agency while increasing the work load. FRIENDS again partnered with our colleagues to release a joint statement, and organized a press conference on the steps of City Hall to express our dissatisfaction with the bill as written, which threat-

ened to hamper community-driven preservation efforts citywide.

Unfortunately, despite negotiations to amend the bill, a compromise could not be reached. The bill was passed at the City Council in a vote of 40 to 10. FRIENDS is grateful to the Council Members who stood up for preservation in New York City by opposing the bill, including our very own Dan Garodnick and Ben Kallos. In addition to the one- and two-year timelines, the final version of the bill included greater flexibility within the deadlines, and the possibility of a one-year extension for individual landmarks with owner consent. No similar provision was created for historic districts.

As the LPC moves forward to implement this legislation, and the City Council continues to push forward the agenda set out by its recent report entitled "Landmarks for the Future: Learning from 50 Years of Preservation," FRIENDS remains committed to strengthening New York's landmarks, and will continue to advocate for a fair and efficient landmark designation process. ♦

FRIENDS WELCOMES A NEW STAFF MEMBER

A graduate of Columbia University's Historic Preservation program, Elizabeth Fagan originally began working for FRIENDS as an intern during her two years in graduate school. Hailing from Danvers, Massachusetts, Elizabeth earned her Bachelor of Arts in History from the University of South Carolina before moving to New York to pursue her master's degree. While at Columbia, Elizabeth was part of the Yorkville Studio that undertook a survey of Yorkville's buildings, creating a preservation plan for the neighborhood and identifying potential individual landmarks. Her master's thesis focused on the history and development of glass blocks and their use in American architecture during the 1930s. After graduation, Elizabeth worked as an architectural historian for a civil engineering consulting firm in the Washington, D.C. area, primarily working on transportation projects and their compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act. Elizabeth has a passion for research and preservation and is excited to be back at FRIENDS as Director of Preservation. ♦

DODGING THE RULES FOR DEVELOPMENT ON EAST 88TH STREET

As more and more high-rise development emerges in Manhattan, the Upper East Side has not been left untouched. Numerous developments in our neighborhood are currently in the works or have begun construction, many of which



180 East 88th Street:



Existing

Proposed

are tall and out of context with the neighborhood. Recently, the supertall development at 180 East 88th Street garnered city-wide attention for skirting the zoning regulations. The condominium building is projected to be the tallest tower north of 72nd Street, standing at over 500 feet tall. An investiga-

tion into the site by Carnegie Hill Neighbors and City Council Member Ben Kallos found that the developers created a loophole to add extra height to the building. By carving out an unbuildable, four-foot-deep lot along 88th Street, the building would not come out to the street wall. Thus, the design

would not have to comply with the contextual zoning laws that are in place on the mid-blocks, which include height and setback requirements. After our colleagues' investigation, and coverage in the *New York Times*, the Depart-

ment of Buildings declared a stop work order on the property and the developer will be required to file new plans with the city. While the final fate of this building remains unknown, you can be sure that FRIENDS will be keeping a watchful eye on our neighborhood's developments, including this one. ♦

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

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we will be taking steps to put it into action and build a coalition of community advocates.

In closing, Senator Krueger lauded the advocacy and community groups that sprang into action, mobilizing their constituencies to contact their elected officials in Albany protesting the legislation. That means YOU!! **Many thanks** to all of you who responded immediately, and now ALL of us must be alert to the next appearance of this proposal.

Sincerely,

Franny Eberhart

Franny Eberhart

IN MEMORIAM

One of New York City's great champions, Fred Papert, passed away on May 23, 2016. A long-time member of FRIENDS' board, Fred began his



FRIENDS honored Fred Papert with our Ninth Annual Ambassador to the Upper East Side Award in 2012 for his fierce dedication to preservation.

career in advertising and founded the legendary agency Papert, Koenig & Lois. But he was probably best known as a tough civic street fighter. He was one of the saviors of Grand Central Station, in the company of Mrs. Onassis, and the founder and president of the 42nd Street Development

Corporation that redeveloped a collection of derelict, seedy buildings on West 42nd Street into the hugely successful Theater Row. He was also a President of the Municipal Art Society, and a founder of Carnegie Hill Neighbors.

That illustrious biography can't begin to convey the character of his unique personality. Outspoken and clearheaded, he was FRIENDS' favorite nudge, essential to our success in getting the extension to the Upper East Side Historic District along Lexington Avenue designated in 2010. His curmudgeonly veneer never successfully masked his affection for many of his colleagues in the civic community. Moreover, his deep love for our city, despite its flaws – which he was always quick to point out – was boundless. Fred was irreplaceable, but his indomitable spirit will continue to inspire all of us. ♦

SAVE THE DATE!

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28



Sarah Greig Photography

Join FRIENDS for an exciting evening as we proudly honor O. Kelley Anderson at our Thirteenth Annual Ambassador to the Upper East Side Award Dinner on Wednesday, September 28th.

Raised in a historic house on Beacon Hill, Kelley Anderson is both an erudite embodiment of the best qualities of the Upper East Side, and a tenacious street fighter for its landmarks and historic districts.

Kelley began his professional life on Wall Street, but in the middle of a successful career, realized his true calling in the art world. For 25 years, Kelley was a director at the Coe Kerr Gallery, one of the premier dealers of American art. Founded in partnership with the collector Frederick Woolworth, the Coe Kerr Gallery exhibited such renowned artists as Andrew Wyeth, Mary Cassatt, John Singer Sargent, and Andy Warhol.

In 1989 Kelley founded The Art Show, the first art fair of its kind in New York City. Presented by the Art Dealers Association of America, the first show drew more than 12,000 visitors, including top collectors, to the Park Avenue Armory, and raised thousands of dollars for the Henry Street Settlement. The Art Show continues to this day, setting the standards of excellence with museum-quality exhibitions.

As a member of FRIENDS board for over two decades, serving as Treasurer since 1996, Kelley has contributed enormously to protecting this community's historic character and quality of life. Kelley has also been a vital member of the leadership team of the Knickerbocker Club since 2003, including three years as its President, and has been a loyal supporter of the Museum of the City of New York, the Municipal Art Society, and the Central Park Conservancy. ♦

A CELEBRATION OF ALL THINGS YORKVILLE!



Oral history panel at Bohemian National Hall.

On Saturday, April 30th, over 125 friends gathered at "Yorkville: A Celebration of Home," hosted by FRIENDS and the Historic Districts Council (HDC) at Bohemian National Hall. This year, Yorkville was selected as one of HDC's "Six to Celebrate" neighborhoods, and the event was a festival of the German, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian, Irish, and other cultures that shaped Yorkville into the vibrant neighborhood it is today.

We were thrilled to welcome attendees to the beautiful Grand Ballroom at Bohemian National Hall, an individual landmark dating to 1896, designed in a refined Renaissance Revival style by William C. Frohne. The morning began with a fascinating look at the building's history and restoration with a presentation by Majda Kallab Whitaker of the Bohemian Benevolent & Literary Association (BBLA). In addition to the BBLA, the building is now home to the Consulate General of the Czech Republic and the Czech Center, an arts organization. During the memory circle moderated by Alexandra Kelly of the New York Public Library's Oral History Project, speakers reminisced about growing up in Yorkville. Panelists Thomas Pryor, Peter Walsh, Irene Mergl, and Edward Kasinec — all longtime Yorkville residents — shared captivating, colorful stories about their favorite aspects of the neighborhood.



Guests enjoy a delicious lunch spread.

Other highlights included a demonstration by Vít Hořejš of the Czechoslovak-American Marionette Theatre, in which he showcased his 200 year old Czech puppets (many discovered in nearby Jan Hus Presbyterian Church after years of neglect), and an architectural discussion by Gregory Dietrich of Gregory Dietrich Preservation Consulting and Elizabeth Fagan, Director of Preservation at FRIENDS. The talk highlighted some of Yorkville's treasured buildings, many of which will be the focus of FRIENDS' ongoing advocacy efforts.

The informative day concluded with a hearty lunch sampling of some of Yorkville's ethnic culinary traditions, including bratwurst and charcuterie from Schaller & Weber, tafel-spitz from Grünauer Bistro (recently featured in a rave review in the *New York Times* Food section!), ziti aplenty from Patsy's Pizzeria, black and white cookies from Glaser's Bake Shop, and more.



The event was made possible in part by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with City Council Member Ben Kallos. ♦

Preservation Wins on 75th Street



11-15 East 75th Street:



Existing



Proposed

Approved

An unusual megamansion project was the subject of Landmarks Preservation Commission review this spring. The applicant proposed to combine three individual rowhouses, Numbers 11, 13, and 15 East 75 Street, into one large residence. The three structures were originally built as a row of late 1880s Queen Anne style buildings. The house at No. 11 was subsequently remodeled with a new, Neo-Federal style facade in 1923.

During the early twentieth century, it was common for rowhouse owners to “update” their houses, and the Colonial Revival style (which includes Neo-Federal and Neo-Georgian) was all the rage. To keep up with the fashions of the day, owners hired architects to demolish the facades of their buildings and replace them with new ones. Here at 11-15 East 75th Street, the house at No. 11 was re-

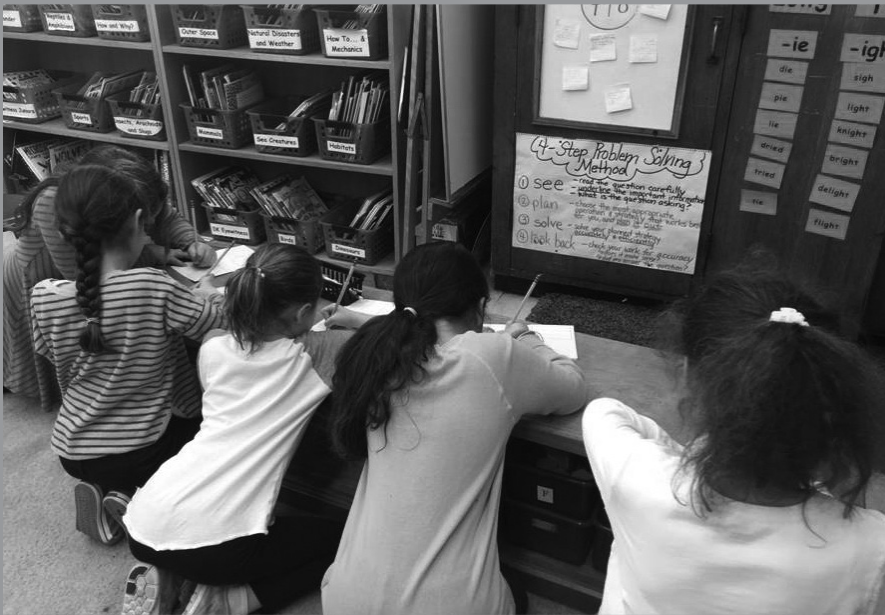
modeled, while the houses at Nos. 13 and 15 remained in their original Queen Anne style.

At the first LPC hearing in April, the owner of the three buildings sought to demolish the facade of No. 11 and replace it with a brand-new, faux Queen Anne style facade. But FRIENDS argued, and the Commissioners agreed, that the existing facade at No. 11 is historic in its own right. At over 90 years old, it was designated in the Upper East Side Historic District as a 1923 Neo-Federal style building. Indeed, the remodeling of rowhouses in the early twentieth century is one of the special characteristics of the Upper East Side Historic District, and has been studied in such books as *The Rowhouse Reborn*, by architectural historian and FRIENDS Advisor Andrew S. Dolkart.

In addition to our own comments, FRIENDS presented testimony written by Dolkart on his behalf, urging the LPC to preserve the layered history of the Upper East Side as exemplified by this row of buildings. The Commission asked the applicant to return with a plan that incorporated the existing facade at No. 11. In June, a revised application proposed not only to retain, but also to restore, the brick facade at No. 11 as part of the larger plan to combine the three buildings into one home. FRIENDS is pleased to see that the applicant responded to our concerns, and we look forward to seeing the final project. This quirky set of buildings contributes to the diverse character of the Upper East Side, and the revised proposal allows the special history of alteration at these buildings to be preserved as part of the streetscape. ♦

YOUNG FRIENDS 2015–2016

A picture is worth a thousand words ... and we have many of them highlighting our very busy, enriching, fun and architecture-filled year! Through our Yorkville Immigration, Building Fun, and Landmarks & Preservation programs, Young FRIENDS taught nearly 2,000 students! ♦



Students enjoy the design process and create original new buildings; learn to decipher visual clues on walking tours; see the results of team work and individual creativity; and visit with owners of some of the neighborhood's storied establishments, like Glaser's Bake Shop.

THIRTY-THIRD ANNUAL MEETING & AWARDS CEREMONY

FRIENDS held its Thirty-Third Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony on March 29, 2016 at The Cosmopolitan Club. Every year, FRIENDS highlights outstanding restorations, renovations, local establishments, and advocacy work on the Upper East Side, both in and out of the historic districts. FRIENDS Board Member Hermes Mallea led the evening, once again enlightening our members with his engaging presentation of this year's projects. Following the ceremony, honorees and guests enjoyed a cocktail reception in the club's beautiful ballroom.

- **Restoration Award**
20 East 93rd Street
Presented by Andrew Dolkart,
Columbia University
- **Good Neighbor Award**
Orwasher's Bakery
Presented by Rev. John Kamas,
St. Jean Baptiste Church
- **Renaissance Award**
Apple Store, Upper East Side
Presented by Thomas Jayne,
Jayne Design Studio
- **Ralph C. Menapace Memorial Award**
**Susan Henshaw Jones &
The Museum of the City of New York**
Presented by Kent Barwick,
President Emeritus of the Municipal Art Society
- **Advocacy Award**
Unite to Save the Frick
Presented by Peter Pennoyer, FAIA,
Peter Pennoyer Architects
- **POPS-Star Award**
Steel Park at 401 East 80th Street
Presented by City Council Member Ben Kallos



FRIENDS Board Member Rev. John Kamas presents the Good Neighbor Award to Keith Cohen of Orwasher's Bakery.



Design team members of the Apple Store project, winner of the Renaissance Award.



Kent Barwick, FRIENDS Advisor, and Joanne Sliker of Ennead Architects present the Ralph C. Menapace Memorial Award to Susan Henshaw Jones.



Council Member Ben Kallos presents the inaugural POPS-Star Award to Dennis Brady of 401 East 80th Street and Cynthia Rosenthal, widow of artist Tony Rosenthal, who designed the plaza.

FRIENDS INDUCTS TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS

At our 33rd Annual Meeting & Awards Ceremony, FRIENDS nominated two new members to our Board of Directors:

Alexandra Cushing Howard holds a master's degree in Architectural History from the University of Virginia. She graduated from Sarah Lawrence College and holds an MBA from Columbia University. She did the initial survey of the Upper East Side Historic District in 1974 for the Division of Historic Preservation of the NY State Parks. She is a docent in European Sculpture and Decorative Art at the Met. Her grandfather was Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes's best friend and she is descended from the philanthropist Robert Fulton Cutting, a founder of the City and Suburban Housing Authority.

Carol E.R. Miller serves on numerous voluntary boards and committees in New York as well as in and around the Capital Region. She has been a longtime supporter of The Preservation League of New York State and the Rensselaer County Historical Society. She is a member of the Fort Orange Garden Club and assisted in the garden designs of the Pruyn House, the Philip Schuyler Mansion and the Albany Rural Cemetery (all listed on the National and State Registers of Historical Places). A graduate of the Emma Willard School and Ithaca College, she is eager to contribute her enthusiasm for historic preservation to the FRIENDS office. ♦

OUR MISSION

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. In addition to monitoring the Upper East Side's seven historic districts and 128 individual landmarks, FRIENDS has also been a leader in successful efforts to improve the zoning laws governing the area's avenues and residential side streets. Through effective advocacy and successful educational programs, FRIENDS acts as a steward safeguarding the future of all Upper East Side historic districts and the designated and contributing buildings that make those districts special.

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IN GRATITUDE

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FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts
966 Lexington Avenue, #3E New York, NY 10021
t. 212-535-2526 f. 212-535-2155
www.friends-ues.org



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