

Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts

Newsletter

no. 1

June, 1983

FOREWORD

This, our first Newsletter, is for a very special group of individuals, you and the other Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts. We are very proud of our accomplishments listed below which were brought about in a very brief period of time, because we followed the dictum that "Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread." And so, we did and managed to come out on the side of the angels...which is a minor miracle in itself. What we have done, we owe to your help and support.

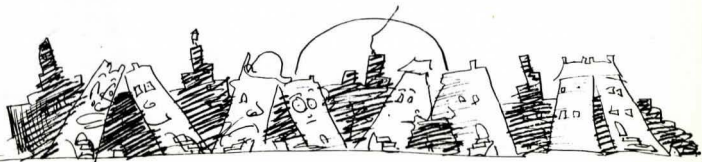
MONITORING

FRIENDS' *raison d'être* is to monitor the landmark districts and individual landmark buildings of the Upper East Side. As you might recall, immediately after the designation of the Upper East Side Historic District, three rowhouses on East 63rd St. were threatened by demolition and a new tower was proposed for the Frick Museum block at 71st St. Some of us worked on both these issues with success. These two crises prompted the Municipal Art Society to organize our community group as an active protective mechanism dedicated to preserving the historic district that the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) had created. Volunteer community groups such as FRIENDS give invaluable manpower and assistance to LPC to see that lawful procedures are followed and that the architectural character of the districts does not disappear through gradual unapproved changes.

Since its creation, FRIENDS has devised a monitoring system of block-watchers and has developed a simple form as a model for other monitors throughout the city. Many of you as monitors have used these forms to provide reports of observed changes in our neighborhoods. Your reports were immediately forwarded to LPC and acted upon. Because of your work, many violations have been issued, and some cases are still pending.

Our monitoring system is in place. We have 100% coverage of the Carnegie Hill H.D., 100% coverage of the Metropolitan Museum H.D., and 80% coverage of the Upper East Side H.D. FRIENDS is looking anxiously for more volunteers to help monitor. Blockwatching involves just looking and filling out a simple form if you see anything happening. FRIENDS then investigates to make sure that proper, lawful procedures have been followed. Even if you are not a designated monitor but see something questionable happening to a building, please notify FRIENDS. Call FRIENDS at 644-2828 or Halina Rosenthal (Pres.) at 249-3434.

Reminder Before Spring repairs and maintenance occur, building owners and monitors should keep in mind that any changes to the exterior of



a building in a historic district must have LPC approval. These include minor projects such as exterior painting, door or window sash replacement, storm windows or doors, repointing, and patching. Building owners must file with LPC for a Permit for Minor Work in these cases. Of course, other kinds of changes also require other kinds of permits. FRIENDS will gladly help building owners, cooperative boards and institutions with additional information and assistance concerning these procedures. Call FRIENDS at 644-2828.

EDUCATION

Education is very important. FRIENDS has come to realize that most people do not willfully harm their buildings. They simply do not perceive the importance of window style and detailing, paint color, and decorative elements of their building. For this reason, another mandated purpose of FRIENDS is to inform property owners of the legal procedures, rights and responsibilities involved in owning a landmarked property, whether it is an apartment building run by a cooperative board, a small brownstone, or a large institution.

A helpful booklet, "Lend a Hand in Historic Preservation" can be obtained from the Citizens Committee. It explains what landmarking is, the requirements for designation, and financial incentives for preservation as well as helpful strategies and resources.

Booklet available upon request, free if picked up, \$.35 if mailed.

Citizens Committee for New York City, Inc.
3 West 29th Street
New York, N.Y. 10001
578-4747

Coming out soon is a standards manual for preservation by LPC with handsome illustrations which will be available through FRIENDS.

CAUSES FOR CELEBRATION

Zoning Victories FRIENDS is working to save our residential neighborhoods not only through preservation but also through zoning. A major accomplishment in this area is the banning of "sliver" buildings. FRIENDS was instrumental in getting this zoning law passed and in modifying the language of the resolution.

Under the revised zoning, building additions or new construction on lots up to 45 feet wide in residential areas can be no higher than the width of the street they face or of the taller abutting building, whichever is greater. The restriction does not apply to larger lots, which are subject to other zoning regulations.

FRIENDS also spearheaded the downzoning of Lexington Ave. We felt the fragile and narrow street was threatened to become the uptown version of the "midtown tunnel" with inappropriate, very tall new buildings. FRIENDS was represented on a sub-committee of Community Board 8 and the City Planning Commission concerning this and other issues. We are happy to report that Lexington Ave. has been downzoned to a more reasonable height, assuring the residents in the neighborhood of light and air.

Lever House FRIENDS is concerned with matters of preservation principles that have the potential of affecting the quality of a landmark or of a historic district. Therefore, we at times get involved in such general

issues that may begin outside our immediate neighborhood but may set precedents which would eventually affect it.

Such a matter of principle brought us to the issue of the threatened demolition of the landmarked Lever House. Because there was no organized constituency for Lever House, FRIENDS felt compelled to speak on its behalf to keep this important seminal building which appears in every textbook dealing with contemporary architecture. We joined in the tremendous efforts, as so many of you did individually, to uphold the landmark designation of Lever House and to oppose its demolition. Winning was sweet, as we are sure you will agree.

ONGOING ISSUES

Lever House Somewhere lurking in the background are possible modifications to Lever House. FRIENDS has gone on record with LPC to oppose those modifications which would turn our hard won Prince into a Frog. However, FRIENDS would have no objections to those changes that would enhance or benefit the building.

Zoning Existing mid-block zoning on our residential side streets is a constant threat to our neighborhoods. The original intent of R8 zoning on the Upper East Side was preservationist. Over the years, with the introduction of new zoning resolutions and the changing economy this original intent was lost. Under the present zoning, it is possible to erect in an R8 residence district structures of greater density, bulk, and height in the middle of a block than previously allowed, providing that a suitable site wider than 45' can be assembled.

FRIENDS has been in the forefront of the effort to bring about the contextual downzoning of the mid-blocks of our side streets in order to preserve the small-scale ambience and character of our area. Members of FRIENDS have testified repeatedly before the Community Planning Board, City Planning Commission, and Board of Estimate on this issue. Since members of FRIENDS made the original request for this legislation, we have reiterated our position that the mid-block downzoning now being contemplated for Yorkville and the Upper West Side be made generic and include our area.

Church legislation Legislation to exempt religious properties from local landmark and historic district laws was introduced in Albany in May, 1983-- New York State Assembly Bill Number A-7942 and New York State Senate Bill Number S-6684. Landmark and historic district laws are local land use issues, not state issues. New York State law is enabling legislation only which allows each community to make its own laws regarding land use. It would be inconsistent for State lawmakers to extend a blanket exemption to laws which they do not enact.

FRIENDS strongly opposes the proposed exemption of churches from having to obey NYC's landmark laws. Such an exemption would seriously undermine all preservation efforts by setting a dangerous precedent for other broad exemptions. We need your participation, please call FRIENDS to find out how you can help.

Local Law 10 This city legislation troubles us greatly. Although it was created for a very good reason, i.e. to protect the life of passers-by, the law was hurriedly written in an emergency situation. Taking effect at the end of Feb. 1980, the law requires the owners of buildings

that are more than six stories high and closer than 25 feet to the sidewalk to have filed with the Department of Buildings a detailed report on the structural condition of the facades. Immediately thereafter, work must begin on any measures required to correct unsafe conditions. The process is to be repeated every five years and to be certified by an architect or engineer. The unforeseen ramifications have been the stripping and demolishing of decorative architectural elements from buildings throughout the city. The effect on possible future landmark buildings and districts has been devastating.

FRIENDS would like to see the law amended so that incentives be given to the property owners who maintain and restore the ornamental architectural elements of their buildings, to induce building owners to restore rather than to destroy them.

AWARD

FRIENDS has received its first award! For the work that FRIENDS has already accomplished in the field of preservation, the award was presented jointly by the Citizens Committee, the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the Landmarks Conservancy and the Municipal Art Society. All this happened on April 9 at the Citizens Committee's Landmark Conference held at Hunter College. You should be proud of of your hard work that led to this award.

OFFICE

FRIENDS has a wonderful office at the Barbizon Hotel, Room 803, telephone 644-2828. The office has been graciously given to FRIENDS free of charge by David Teitelbaum, a member of our Board.

INCORPORATION

We are happy to say that we are incorporated and our tax exemption is forthcoming. In the interim, all contributions are tax deductible through the Municipal Art Society, our fiscal agent.

MEMBERS

Plans for the early Fall include a Annual Membership Meeting, annual awards, etc. The time and place will be announced early so that you can save the date. We hope you will all be able to come - monitors, members, and FRIENDS.

MEMBERSHIP

Finally, we depend on membership dues and contributions in order to function. If you are not a member, our membership categories are: Contributing \$25.00 - Supporting \$50.00 - Sustaining \$100.00. All contributions are tax deductible and checks should be made out to M.A.S./FRIENDS and mailed to our office at the above address.

* The ruckus drawing of the whispering brownstones is a gift to us from Red Grooms.

Board of Directors

Lily Auchincloss Jeanne Brown John Burgee Rita Chu Christina Davis
Felicia Dryden Brendan Gill Peter Gimbel Red Grooms Celeste Holm William Judson
David I. Karabell Arie L. Kopelman Henry Lambert Mimi Levitt Ralph C. Menapace
Alice McGown Richard Meier Anne Millard Frederick S. Papert Li-Chung Pei
Genie Rice Halina Rosenthal Alexandra Schlesinger Tom Schulhof David Teitelbaum
Jane Trichter Max Weitzenhoffer Margot Wellington William H. Whyte Anthony C. Wood
Coordinator: John Weiss

Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts

• Individual Landmark

Outline of districts,
number indicates last
street address included
within the district



INDIVIDUAL LANDMARKS

STREETSEast 60s

Metropolitan Club Building, 1-11 E. 60th St.
 Abigail Adams Smith Museum, 421 E. 61st St.
 Knickerbocker Club Building, 2 E. 62nd St.
 Barbara Rutherford Hatch Residence, 153 E. 63rd St.
 Sara Delano Roosevelt Memorial House, 47-49 E. 65th St.
 St. Vincent Ferrer School (including the Holy Name Society Building), 141-151 E. 65th St.
 45 East 66th Street Building
 131-135 East 66th Street Apartment House
 130-134 East 67th Street Apartment Building
 149-151 East 67th Street Building
 Park East Synagogue, 163 E. 67th St.
 Automation House, 49 E. 68th St.

East 70s

The Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.
 11 East 70th Street House
 15 East 70th Street House
 17 East 70th Street House
 19 East 70th Street House
 21 East 70th Street House
 Frick Art Reference Library, 10 E. 71st St.
 Lycee Francais de New York, 7 E. 72nd St.
 Lycee Francais de New York, 9 E. 72nd St.
 161 East 73rd Street Building
 163 East 73rd Street Building
 165 East 73rd Street Building
 166 East 73rd Street Building
 167 East 73rd Street Building
 168 East 73rd Street Building
 170 East 73rd Street Building
 171 East 73rd Street Building
 172-174 East 73rd Street Building
 173 East 73rd Street Building
 175 East 73rd Street Building
 177-179 East 73rd Street Building
 178 East 73rd Street Building
 180 East 73rd Street Building
 182 East 73rd Street Building
 The Commonwealth Fund, 1 E. 75th St.
 New York University Institute of Fine Arts,
 1 East 78th St.
 157 East 78th Street House
 159 East 78th Street House
 161 East 78th Street House
 163-165 East 78th Street House
 208 East 78th Street House
 210 East 78th Street House
 212 East 78th Street House
 214 East 78th Street House
 216 East 78th Street House
 218 East 78th Street House
 The New York Society Library, 53 E. 79th St.
 59 East 79th Street Building
 63 East 79th Street Building
 The Yorkville Branch of the New York Public Library, 222 E. 79th St.

East 80s

116 East 80th Street House
 120 East 80th Street House
 124 East 80th Street House
 Junior League of the City of New York,
 130 East 80th St.
 The Regis High School, 55 E. 84th St.
 New World Foundation Building, 100 E. 85th St.
 Holy Trinity Church & St. Christopher House,
 312-316 E. 88th St.
 Parsonage of Holy Trinity Church, 332 E. 88th St.
 146 East 89th Street House
 148 East 89th Street House
 150 East 89th Street House
 152 East 89th Street House
 154 East 89th Street House
 156 East 89th Street House

East 90s

McAlpin-Miller House, 9 East 90th St.
 11 East 90th Street House
 15 East 90th Street House
 17 East 90th Street House
 Convent of the Sacred Heart, 1 E. 91st St.
 Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 E. 91st St.
 Convent of the Sacred Heart, 7 E. 91st St.
 Soviet Consulate, 9 E. 91st St.
 Soviet Consulate, 11 E. 91st St.
 120 East 92nd Street House
 122 East 92nd Street House
 Smithers Alcoholism Rehabilitation Unit of Roosevelt Hospital, 56 East 93rd St.
 Lycee Francais de New York, 60 E. 93rd St.
 60 E. 93rd St.
 67 East 93rd Street House
 69 East 93rd Street Building
 Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church
 Outside of Russia, 69-75 E. 93rd St.
 Lycee Francais de New York, 3 E. 95th St.
 House of the Redeemer, 7 E. 95th St.
 Manhattan Country Day School, 7 E. 96th St.
 St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Cathedral, 15 E. 97th St.
 Saint Cecilia's Convent, 112 E. 106th St.
 Saint Cecilia's Church, 120 E. 106th St.

AVENUESEast End Avenue

Gracie Mansion, East End Avenue at 88th St.
 in Carl Schurz Park.

East River Drive

Asphalt Rink Recreational Center, East River Dr.
 at 90-91st Sts.

Third Avenue

Sidewalk Clock, 1501 Third Ave. near 85th St.

Lexington Avenue

Church of St. Vincent Ferrer, 869 Lexington Ave.
 at 66th St., Priory also designated.
 St. Jean Baptiste Church, Lexington Ave. at 76th St.

Park Avenue

Seventh Regiment Armory, 643 Park Ave. at 66-67th Sts.
 Center for Inter-American Relations, 680 Park Ave.
 Spanish Institute, 684 Park Ave.
 Italian Cultural Institute, 686 Park Ave.
 Consulate General of Italy, 690 Park Ave.
 Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, 980 Park Ave. at 84th St.

Madison Avenue

Gertrude Rhineland Waldo Mansion, 867 Madison Ave.
 at 72nd St.
 1261 Madison Avenue Apartment House at 90th St.
 1321 Madison Avenue House at 93rd St.
 Squadron "A" Armory, Madison Ave. at 94-95th Sts.

Fifth Avenue

The Arsenal, Central Park at 64th St.
 Yugoslav Mission to the United Nations, 854 Fifth Ave.
 French Embassy, 972 Fifth Ave.
 998 Fifth Avenue. Apartment House at 81st St.
 Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 80-84th Sts.
 Main floor interiors also designated.
 1009 Fifth Ave. House at 82nd St.
 Felix Warburg Mansion, 1109 Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.
 International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave.
 at 94th St.
 Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave.
 at 103-104th Sts.