

30TH

ANNIVERSARY

1982 | 2012

FRIENDS

of the UPPER EAST SIDE HISTORIC DISTRICTS

SPRING 2012

NEWS FROM FRIENDS

CASHING IN ON HISTORY

Yorkville Bank Building May Become the Upper East Side's Newest Landmark

FRIENDS is excited to announce that a public hearing was held on March 27th for the potential designation the Yorkville Bank Building at 1511 Third Avenue! Designed by architect Robert Maynicke in 1905, this elegant Italian Renaissance Revival-style building has been impeccably preserved. Although its architectural integrity alone merits landmark designation, it also stands as a powerful symbol of the German-American community that once densely populated the Yorkville neighborhood.

The Yorkville Bank Building served as a banking center for the Yorkville neighborhood of Manhattan's Upper East Side for more than eighty-five years. Stretching from East 72nd to East 96th Streets and Lexington Avenue to the East River, the area was first settled by German immigrants in the late 18th century. Yorkville was rapidly urbanized when the elevated trains on Second and Third

Avenue opened in the 1870s. By the turn of the 20th century, Yorkville had become a melting pot of German, Hungarian, and



The Yorkville Bank Building. (Courtesy of the Landmarks Preservation Commission)

Czechoslovakian immigrants who came to the neighborhood to escape the overcrowded tenement districts of the Lower East Side.

The Yorkville Bank was established in 1893 on the same corner where it stands today. The original stockholders and management of the bank were largely German or of

German descent. In 1905, the bank hired Robert Maynicke, a German-American architect trained at Cooper Union, to design the stately four-story granite, limestone, brick, and terra-cotta bank and office building. Maynicke worked under the distinguished architect George B. Post before co-founding the firm Maynicke & Franke in 1895. The firm designed the Germania Bank Building (1898-1899) at 190 Bowery, a designated New York City Landmark, as well as numerous buildings throughout the Ladies' Mile, Tribeca, and NoHo Historic Districts. In 1923-24, an addition by architect P. Gregory Stadler expanded the building by replicating Maynicke's original structure using the same materials.

In 1925, the Yorkville Bank merged with the Manufacturers Trust Company, thus be-

continued on page 4

THE UPPER EAST SIDE GAINS ITS 127TH INDIVIDUAL LANDMARK!

On Tuesday, April 17th, the Landmarks Preservation Commission voted for the individual designation of the Barbizon Hotel for Women! Built during the late 1920s, the Barbizon represents one of the earliest residential alternatives for women looking to take advantage of the new professional opportunities in New York City.

THE BARBIZON HOTEL FOR WOMEN IS SIGNIFICANT FOR ITS SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS, AS WELL AS ITS DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURE.

Residents were largely made up of aspiring models and actresses, who paid as little as \$12 a week for nine-foot by twelve-foot cubicles. This “elite dollhouse” harbored the greatest concentration of beauty east of Hollywood, including Grace Kelly, Joan Crawford, Lauren Bacall, Liza



The Barbizon. View from street level on 63rd St. January 7, 1927. (Courtesy of Museum of the City of New York)

Minnelli, Candice Bergen and Cloris Leachman. In addition, the hotel accommodated future writers such as Joan Didion, Ann Beattie and Sylvia Plath, who described a fictionalized version of the Barbizon in her book *The Bell Jar*.

For most of its existence, men were not allowed above the ground floor of the hotel and strict dress and conduct rules were enforced. The establishment loosened these restrictions when it began admitting men as guests in 1981. Finally, in 2006, the building was converted for condominium use.

The Barbizon Hotel for Women is significant for its social and cultural contributions, as well as its distinctive architecture. On a more personal note, it was at the Barbizon Hotel, in Room #803, that FRIENDS had our very first office! In sum, we are absolutely thrilled about its induction as the Upper East Side's 127th landmark! ♦

SAVE THE DATE! Wednesday, September 19, 2012



As always, Fred Papert working diligently in his 42nd Street office.

Join FRIENDS for an exciting evening as we proudly honor **Frederic Papert** at our Ninth Annual Ambassador to the Upper East Side Award Dinner on Wednesday, September 19th.

As president of the 42nd Street Development Corporation and its subsidiary, the 42nd Street Fund, Fred Papert initiated and carried out projects that have transformed large pieces of the City's historic fabric. The not-for-profit corporation was created in 1975 to rescue the far west end of 42nd Street from years of neglect

and misuse. It built Theatre Row, a complex of off-Broadway theatre and support spaces between 9th and 10th Avenues; encouraged the federal government (HUD) to allow a second building to be occupied by subsidized artists; and helped accelerate the comeback of a desolate and dangerous part of the City by building a stable for a NYPD mounted unit.

The 42nd Street Fund's original philanthropic purpose was to make small front-end grants and loans to non-profit organizations, often for real estate projects with preservation, planning and arts components. Among the Fund's earliest programs, *Music and the Brain* now teaches K-2 children to read music and play the piano in 150 NYC public schools, as well as in Paris, New Orleans, Santiago and Afula, Israel.

For almost 25 years, Mr. Papert helped run his own advertising agency, Papert Koenig Lois. But now, preservation is his passion.

Mr. Papert is active on the boards of FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Henry Street Settlement, the Bryant Park Restoration Corporation and the Municipal Art Society. Perhaps most memorably, he joined Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, a fellow board member at MAS, in the battle to save Grand Central Terminal, achieving a victory to uphold the New York City Landmarks Law at the United States Supreme Court.

Says Papert, “the City has to both preserve and renew, and it is not always easy to achieve that balance, at least not without fighting for it. One of the best public things that can happen to me these days is to get involved in some of the City's great preservation issues.”

With such outstanding company, this is sure to be an evening to remember! For inquiries please call 212-535-2526 or email info@friends-ues.org. ♦

SPRING 2012 EVENTS

In celebration of our 30th Anniversary, FRIENDS will be revisiting each of the six historic districts that we are charged with protecting. Over the years, we have testified on countless proposals for alterations to the 1,402 buildings included in these districts, and thus we have fought many preservation battles. This spring, members joined us on two walking tours to rediscover the distinctive architecture that makes our neighborhood great.

Earlier this spring Andrew Dolkart, Director of Columbia's Historic Preservation Program and author of *The Row House Reborn*, led a fascinating tour of the **Treadwell Farm Historic District**. Dolkart discussed the evolution of the area as reflected in the built environment, focusing on the transformation of row houses in the early 20th century. It was during this period that many of the residences in this district were simply and elegantly "modernized" in a wide variety of architectural styles. The tour ended with a special look inside the distinctive Trinity Baptist Church, built in 1930 as the



A surprise look at Trinity Baptist Church on East 61st Street

First Swedish Baptist Church. The facade exhibits a gradation in brick color from base to pinnacle, reflecting trends in Scandinavian architecture at the time. The craftsmanship continues throughout the church's cupolas, ironwork, and interiors. What a surprise to explore this architectural gem!

Our next walking tour began at the charming **Henderson Place Historic District**. This district consists of a group of contiguous dwellings built in 1881-82 by developer John C. Henderson for "persons of moderate means." Designed by the architectural firm of Lamb & Rich, the buildings abound in picturesque Queen Anne style turrets, gables, chimneys, scalloped shingles, oversized round arches, and terra cotta ornament. Franny Eberhart, Chair of the FRIENDS Preservation Com-

mittee, and Sarah O'Keefe, Education Director at FRIENDS, then led the group on a journey through the surrounding Yorkville neighborhood in search of clues to the area's immigrant history. Our last stop was the breathtaking Church of the Holy Trinity, an outstanding example of the French Gothic style adapted for a late-19th century religious structure. The bell tower is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful in New York City.

CARNEGIE HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT: A WALKING TOUR

Designated in 1974, and expanded in 1993, the Carnegie Hill Historic District is the second largest historic district on the Upper East Side. Named after industrialist Andrew Carnegie - who constructed his elaborate mansion on Fifth Avenue and East 91st Street in 1901 - it remains one of the city's most prestigious neighborhoods. The area is characterized by a rich mixture of freestanding residences, intact rows of townhouses, and stately apartment buildings. Its rare architectural integrity is enhanced by a sloping terrain, making for a delightfully distinctive urban experience. Bernie Cohen, of Bernie's New York Walking Tours, will lead this tour of spectacular architecture along New York City's "Gold Coast."

RESCHEDULED—Saturday, July 14th, 1:00 p.m.
Please meet at the NW corner of Fifth Ave. & E. 86th St.

\$10 members, \$15 non-members
Advance registration and payment is required.
Please call 212-535-2526 or visit
www.friend-ues.org/events/ to register.



Over 30 tour-goers gathered at Henderson Place on a beautiful Spring day

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

This special year marks the 30th Anniversary of FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts! From the initial conception as a committee of the Municipal Art Society, to the flourishing leadership of Halina Rosenthal, to the present day, FRIENDS has been a vocal advocate for the architectural legacy, livability, and sense of place of the Upper East Side. In

celebration of this monumental occasion, we have planned a year filled with special tours and events that we hope will inspire reflection on all of our previous accomplishments, and also provide inspiration for the future of this great organization.

We give thanks to our members, as we could not have endured so long without the passion-

ate support of this neighborhood that we call home. Please join us in celebrating our past thirty years, and continue to support us in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Cashing in on History
(continued from page 1)

coming part of one of the largest banking institutions in the country. The Manufacturers Trust Company maintained the Yorkville Bank's Third Avenue site as a "unit bank," allowing the building to continue running much like an independent banking center. It was not until 1991, when Manufacturers Hanover (as the company became known in 1961) moved to a new site nearby, that the building ceased to function as a bank. Soon after, the ground floor was converted into the Gap and the upper stories were converted for use as a gym by the Equinox Fitness Club. Despite the new ownership, the building has seen very few modifications to its dignified, well-proportioned exterior. The ground floor windows were enlarged in the 1990s for use as show windows for the retail space but the elegant arched openings, with flanking pilasters and roundels, were left intact. The building's sculpted bronze entrance doors are a noteworthy surviving element, though much of the original architectural detail has endured to the present day.

The Yorkville Bank Building is a prime example of the graceful architecture that was designed, constructed, owned and frequented by German-Americans. In the latter half of the twentieth century, this ethnic community dispersed, and much of the architecture associated with it has since been lost. The Yorkville Bank Building is one of the rare, fully-intact survivors in a neighborhood marked by unsympathetic alterations and characterless new construction. At the moment, there are few New York City landmarks that reflect this rich immigrant community. This is an issue that FRIENDS hopes to rectify as we undertake our large-scale historic resource survey from Lexington Avenue to the East River, from 59th to 96th Streets. We hope that the designation of the Yorkville Bank Building is just the beginning of a new-found awareness of this neighborhood's rich heritage. ♦

Young FRIENDS

On a recent January morning, a group of Landmarks Preservation Commissioners, neighbors, school officials and preservationists met to discuss a proposal to demolish a historic 1904 school building and replace it with a tall glass structure. Various constituents questioned all angles of the proposal: What are the benefits to the school? How would the building look at night? Would the new structure fit in with the context of the rest of the block?

This meeting didn't take place downtown as you might expect; but rather on the Upper East Side, in a classroom...and the participants were 2nd graders holding a mock LPC hearing! The session was part of a new lesson plan, *Landmarks and Preservation*, which FRIENDS proudly piloted this winter. The lesson introduces students to several new concepts, such as: What is a landmark? What does it mean to preserve something? How would you feel if your favorite building was torn down? Students learn about the history of preservation in New York City, including the destruction of Penn Station and the Brokaw Mansion, soon followed by the introduction of the Landmarks Law in 1965. We also study maps of the six historic districts on the Upper East Side and examine recent preservation cases. Finally, our course ends with a mock application and hearing. The class is divided into groups and asked to take on the perspective of the school, a neighbor, or a preservationist. The teams work independently to consider their talking points until we call the hearing to order and each group presents their view on the proposal.

As educators, it is often a challenge to make our curriculum come alive. Creating a mock LPC hearing that is relevant to our students immediately engages and excites them as they act out their roles. In fact, when the mock proposal was eventually rejected during a recent visit, cheers erupted in the classroom!

As FRIENDS celebrates our 30th anniversary this year, we continue to nurture the next generation of preservationists through our education programs. We are proud that our newest lesson plan aligns so clearly with our mission, and is already working to create young, passionate stewards of our architectural heritage. ♦

UPDATE ON THE FIRST AVENUE ESTATE HARDSHIP APPLICATION

A special thanks to all our FRIENDS and colleagues who attended and testified at the January 24th hardship application hearing at the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC)! We were so grateful to have the support of Council Member Jessica Lappin, State Assembly Member Micah Kellner, State Senator Liz Krueger, Community Board 8, Historic Districts Council, the Municipal Art Society of New York, New York Landmarks Conservancy, Society for the Architecture of the City, Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, Landmark West!, CIVITAS, Carnegie Hill Neighbors, Defenders of the Historic Upper East Side, East Sixties Neighborhood Association, Friends of the First Avenue Estate, and of course, all of our devoted neighbors and residents. Your testimony and your presence made an enormous impact; we couldn't have done it without you!

BUT our fight is not over yet! Following the hearing, Stahl requested additional time to respond to over 200 pages of public testimony and a comprehensive list of questions set forth by the LPC. A public meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, July 17th. Stay tuned for future updates on this ongoing battle to save the City & Suburban First Avenue Estate. ♦

WEBSITE UPDATES COMING SOON!

We're currently working on our website! Please check back in early summer to see our new features and updated look! Visit www.friends-ues.org

TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL AWARDS

FRIENDS held its Twenty-Ninth Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony on March 14, 2012 at The New York School of Interior Design. Each year FRIENDS recognizes fine restoration, renovation, and advocacy work on the Upper East Side, both in and out of the historic districts. Hermes Mallea, a board member at FRIENDS, gave a dynamic presentation of this year's awards. After the ceremony, honorees and guests adjourned to the adjacent art gallery for a spirited reception.

- The RESTORATION AWARD was presented by Michele Birnbaum to FSI Architecture for 875 Park Avenue.
- The DISTINCTIVE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD was presented by David Karabell to the Central Park Conservancy for the East Meadow.
- The RENAISSANCE AWARD was presented by Council Member Daniel Garodnick to Bade Stageberg Cox for the National Academy Museum & School.
- The GOOD NEIGHBOR AWARD was presented by Kathy Jolowicz to Schaller & Weber.
- The EXTRA MILE AWARD was presented by Christopher Gray to 7 Gracie Square.
- The TRANSFORMATION AWARD was presented by Hon. Margery Perlmutter to Davis Brody Bond for The Frick Collection Portico Gallery.



Landmarks Preservation Commissioner Margery Perlmutter with "Transformation" awardees Ian Wardropper, The Frick Collection, and Carl Krebs, Davis Brody Bond.



"Good Neighbor Award" presenter Kathy Jolowicz and friend raising a glass to Schaller & Weber.



Council Member Daniel Garodnick with "Renaissance" awardees Charles Biada, National Academy Museum & School and Jane Stageberg, Bade Stageberg Cox Architecture.

OUR MISSION

Founded in 1982, FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts is an independent, not-for-profit membership organization dedicated to preserving the architectural legacy, livability, and sense of place of the Upper East Side by monitoring and protecting its six historic districts and 127 landmarks. FRIENDS reviews and actively responds to all Landmarks Preservation Commission and other city government actions affecting the Upper East Side. FRIENDS educates the public about the benefits of historic preservation and appropriate urban planning, responds to residents' concerns about landmark laws and encourages compliance with those laws. FRIENDS also has played, and continues to play, an important role in maintaining and improving 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.

2012 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Halina Rosenthal

First President (1982-1991)

Anne L. Millard, *President*

Rita C. Chu, David I. Karabell,
Annie MacRae, Gretchen Siebel

Vice Presidents

O. Kelley Anderson, *Treasurer*

Franny Eberhart, *Secretary*

Kent L. Barwick, Christina R. Davis,
Andrew S. Dolkart, Lionel Goldfrank III,
Erin Gray, Thomas Jayne, E. William Judson,
Rev. John A. Kamas, Christian K. Keesee,
David L. Levinson, Mimi Levitt, Hermes Mallea,
Joyce Matz, Alice McGown, Frederic S. Papert,
Judith Price, Robert C. Quinlan, Genie Rice,
Patricia B. Selch, Andrew P. Steffan,
Daniel B. Strickler, Jr., Patricia F. Sullivan,
Margot Wellington

Tara Kelly, *Executive Director*

IN GRATITUDE

FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts wishes to acknowledge the generous support of: The J. M. Kaplan Fund, The Gilbert & Ildiko Butler Conservation Fund, The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Council Member Daniel Garodnick and Council Member Jessica Lappin through the Department of Cultural Affairs.

INFORMING OUR FRIENDS

FRIENDS continues to be a good neighbor. Via an e-mail list, we inform the community about important preservation issues on the Upper East Side, as well as items under review at the LPC. Members can subscribe by visiting our website at www.friends-ues.org or by joining us on Facebook!

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

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



966 Lexington Avenue, #3E | New York, NY 10021

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
New York NY
Permit No. 1347