CALENDAR
OF THE
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1965
MEETING AT 10:00 A.M.
IN THE CITY HALL
VOLUME 1  NUMBER 4

City of New York
Robert F. Wagner, Mayor

Landmarks Preservation Commission
2 Lafayette Street, New York, New York 10007

Geoffrey Platt, Chairman
Stanley B. Tankel, Vice-Chairman
Juliet Bartlett
J. Clarence Davies
William R. Fisher
L. Bancroft LaFarge
Frederick J. Woodbridge

Samuel J. LaFrak
Russell Lynes
Loring McMillen
Mrs. Roderic B. Swenson

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1965 at 10:00 A.M.

I
ROLL CALL

II
PUBLIC HEARINGS

Pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 8-A of the Charter of the City of New York
and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York (Local Law
46 of 1965 of the City of New York), the following properties within the City of
New York are submitted for designation by the Landmarks Preservation Commission:

Proposed for Designation as an Historic District

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

No. 1 

Greenwich Village Historic District, Manhattan.
The property bounded by Washington Square South, West Fourth Street, the rear
lot lines of the buildings on the south side of Barrow Street from West Fourth
Street through 27-31 Barrow Street, the southern property line of 289 Bleecker
Street, Seventh Avenue, Leroy Street, St. Luke's Place, Hudson Street, Morton
Street, the rear lot lines of 447 through 451 Hudson Street, a portion of the
southern property line of 453 Hudson Street, the rear lot lines of 453 and
455-457 Hudson Street, the western property line of 37 Barrow Street, Barrow
Street, Greenwich Street, Ferry Street, Washington Street, Horatio Street, the
western property line of 83 Horatio Street, the rear lot lines of 83 through 67
Horatio Street, a portion of the eastern property line of 67 Horatio Street, the
northern property line of 832-836 Greenwich Street, the northern property line
of 827-829 Greenwich Street, the rear lot line and a portion of the eastern
property line of 53 Horatio Street, the rear lot lines of 51 through 45 Horatio
Street, a portion of the eastern property line of 45 Horatio Street, the
northern property line of 639 Hudson Street, Hudson Street, Gansevoort Street,
West Thirteenth Street, the rear lot lines of 69 through 73 Eighth Avenue, the
northern property line of 73 Eighth Avenue, the northern property line of 70-72
Eighth Avenue, the rear lot lines of 253 through 255 West Thirteenth Street, the
northern property line of 24-26 Seventh Avenue, the northern property line of
41-43 Seventh Avenue, a line 100 feet north of the front lot lines of 161 throug
107 West Thirteenth Street, the eastern property line of 107 West Thirteenth Street, the eastern property line and the rear lot line of 102 West Thirteenth Street, the rear lot line of 106 West Thirteenth Street, the eastern property line of 117 West Twelfth Street, West Twelfth Street, the western property line of 71-77 West Twelfth Street, a line 100 feet north of the front lot lines of 71-77 through 69 West Twelfth Street, a portion of the eastern property line of 69 West Twelfth Street, a line 15 feet north of the front lot lines of 47 through 51 West Twelfth Street, a portion of the western property line of 39 West Twelfth Street, a line 100 feet north of the front lot lines of 39 through 11 West Twelfth Street, the eastern property line of 41 West Twelfth Street, West Twelfth Street, Fifth Avenue, the northern property line of 45 Fifth Avenue, a portion of the northern property line of 43 Fifth Avenue, the rear lot lines of 11 through 29 East Eleventh Street, the eastern property line of 29 East Eleventh Street, the eastern property lines of 28 East Eleventh Street and 15-19 East Tenth Street, the eastern property lines of 21 East Tenth Street and 23 East Ninth Street, East Ninth Street, University Place and Washington Square East.

This hearing has been duly advertised.

Close the hearing.

For the convenience of witnesses, those wishing to speak on the general question of whether a Greenwich Village Historic District should be established will be heard starting at 10:00 A.M. At 1:00 P.M. the Commission will listen to testimony about the proposed District's suggested boundaries East of Seventh Avenue. At the conclusion of this testimony, speakers will be heard on the suggested boundaries West of Seventh Avenue.
April 27, 1966

Mr. Pratt Pearsall  
1 Wall Street  
New York City - N. Y.

Dear Mr. Pearsall:-

It was very nice of you to discuss with our Mrs. Ruth Wittenberg on the telephone our invitation to have you speak at the Greenwich Village Association general membership meeting on Tuesday May 3, 1966, at 8:15 P. M.

We are herewith confirming that invitation and we all look forward to having you with us on Tuesday.

Sincerely yours,

GREENWICH VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

[Signature]

Anthony Dapolito  
President
Friday
April 22, 1966

Dear Mr. Pease:

Thank you for spending so much time and thought on our Village landmarks problems.

I am enclosing a map and the description of the district, from the Landmarks Commission hearing. The citation on the case brought against the Commission is

New York Law Journal
Thursday, March 3, 1966, column 5, 4
Justice Schweitzer,

grigio vs. Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

(Ruth E.) Mrs. Philip Wittenberg
Friday
April 22, 1966

Mrs. Philip Wittenberg
35 West 107th Street
New York 11, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Pearsell,

Thank you for spending so much time and thought on our Village landmarks problems.


Thank you again.

Sincerely,

(Ruth E.) Mrs. Philip Wittenberg
June 8, 1967

Mr. George P. Howard
147 Willow Street
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11201

Dear George:

Enclosed is a letter from the Association of Village Home-Owners suggesting that there may be common City issues on which our respective strengths may be more effective if united. I have advised Mrs. Mindell that I have forwarded her letter to you.

Sincerely,

OPP/jet

Otis Pratt Pearsall
December 15, 1967

Otis Platt Pearsall, Esq.
Messrs. Hughes, Hubbard, Blair & Reed
One Wall Street
New York, N. Y. 10005

Dear Otis:

Thanks again for taking the time to talk to the West Village Committee on Wednesday evening. While what you had to tell the group was in some respects discouraging, it was most interesting and very helpful.

I hope that the various Village groups can keep in touch with you and your Committee so that we can work together when joint interests are involved.

Thanks again.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

RBB/C.
Mrs. Philip Wittenberg, Chairman  
Greenwich Village Historic District Council  
35 West 10th Street  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mrs. Wittenberg:

You have asked for our opinion as to the effect, if any, of the designation of Brooklyn Heights as an historic district on real estate values within the Heights and on the availability of mortgage financing.

In approximately 1955 young families in substantial numbers commenced to purchase houses in Brooklyn Heights. They were attracted by the availability of stately residences at relatively inexpensive prices in a neighborhood of rare charm and atmosphere convenient to Wall Street.

A number of these newcomers commenced to work for the preservation of the area and their efforts brought about increasing publicity as to its historic character. Friends moved in, and their friends, and the rest is history.

Since those days, real estate values have risen steadily and since the designation of Brooklyn Heights as an historic landmark have been maintained and enhanced.

Not long ago I had occasion to ask the mortgage officers of the principal banks interested in mortgage financing on Brooklyn Heights whether the designation of Brooklyn Heights as an historic district had affected their willingness to issue mortgages within the area. To a man they responded that the designation either had not affected or had improved their disposition toward issuing mortgages on Heights property. In various ways they voiced the single view that designation would have a stabilizing influence assuring the long-time desirability of the area.

Very truly yours,

Otis Pratt Pearsall
June 8, 1967

Mrs. Geraldine Mindell
Chairman, Liaison Committee
Association of Village Home-Owners
18 West 9th Street
New York, New York

Dear Mrs. Mindell:

Thank you for your letter of June 6, 1967 in which you suggest that there may be City issues on which our respective organizations should unite.

I have forwarded your letter to the attention of our President, George P. Howard,
147 Willow Street, Brooklyn.

Very truly yours,

OPP/jet Otis Pratt Pearsall
June 8, 1967

Mr. George P. Howard
147 Willow Street
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11201

Dear George:

Enclosed is a letter from the Association of Village Home-Owners suggesting that there may be common City issues on which our respective strengths may be more effective if united. I have advised Mrs. Mindell that I have forwarded her letter to you.

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I hope that the various Village groups can keep in touch with you and your Committee so that we can work together when joint interests are involved.

Thanks again.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

RBB/C.
July 29, 1968

Mrs. Verna Volz Small
134 West 4th Street
New York, New York

Dear Mrs. Small:

I returned from vacation today to find your exciting booklet on "19th Century Dwelling Houses of Greenwich Village". A quick glimpse gives promise of a great treat. I am sure this effort cannot fail to assist in rallying strength for the preservation of Greenwich Village.

I greatly admire the tireless energy which you and Mrs. Wittenberg have put forth, despite the many disappointments you both have experienced. But it is only through the absolute dedication of persons like you that anything really worthwhile is ever accomplished.

Sincerely,

Otis Pratt Pearsall

OPP.GM
MEMORANDUM

October 10, 1968

TO The participants in a discussion on designated Historic Districts at Oct. 30 meeting, Association of Village Homeowners

FROM Verna Small, panel chairman

Please know how happy we are that you have agreed to talk over with us some of the meanings and the problems of Historic District—on what we hope is the eve of Greenwich Village designation. Here is a fact sheet on plans for evening. A special pleasure will be meeting in this particular building, a prizewinning example of harmonious new construction related to a landmark, designed by Edgar Tafel, one of our vice presidents. I have found it helpful to have all participants know the projected content of the several presentations in a panel. If each of you will send me a rough indication of the main ideas you plan to convey, in any convenient form—either outline of topics, or a few sentences, I will circulate these notes to all four. Or if this is a nuisance, would you telephone me (between four and five is a good hour), so that I can list your topics. I look forward to our meeting. Verna Small

Copy for Mr. Pearsall
Dear Mr. Pearsall,

Thank you again for yet another act of support for Village preservation—and for pushing for more strength in the law and its administration. Part of the problem was clear! It was a special pleasure for me to meet both of you.

Sincerely,

Verna Small

November 1, 1968
For: Membership meeting, ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGE HOMEOWNERS
On: Wednesday, October 30, 1969
Time: 8 p.m., promptly, to 10 p.m. — with coffee served earlier at 7:30
At: Presbyterian Church House, 12 West 12 Street,

Discussion Theme:
LIVING IN A DESIGNATED HISTORIC DISTRICT:
Some reflections on its significance and some practical experience

Panel members: (Each to speak ten minutes, with questions later)

James Harston Pfitz, Professor of Architecture,
Columbia University, program in Restoration and Preservation:
Historic Districts in the United States and Other Countries

Michael W. Gold, executive assistant in charge of
Historic Districts, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission:
Policies and Procedures for Districts under the Law of 1965

Otis Pratt Pearsall, past president of the Brooklyn Heights
Association and member of its Advisory Board, Chairman
of its Historical Preservation Committee:
What Designation Has Meant for Brooklyn Heights

Edward Rollman, A. I. A., vice president, Brooklyn Heights
Association, Chairman of its Design Advisory Council:
How Individual Buildings Have been Affected by Designation

Presiding: Verna Small (Mrs. Leonard Small)
Chairman, Landmarks Committee
Association of Village Homeowners

Usual attendance is in the range of 50 to 60 people.

President of the Association of Village Homeowners is
Darwin K. Davidson, 32 Bank Street, Phone 242-0094
New York 10014

Executive Secretary is Mrs. Harold Roberts, AL 5-1573
Mrs. Small's phone is CH 7-295. .
Assessment of Impact or Lack Thereof Depends --

- Preservation goals
- How well statutory scheme is conceived to effectuate goals
- How the machinery under such scheme actually works

Preservation goals

- Concept of district
- Purposes of preservation:
  - Demolition
  - New construction
  - Alteration
- Danger of piecemeal erosion

Overall evaluation of impact

- Sincere, hardworking little staff
- Material improvement of preservation posture as to all 3 threats
- But this does not mean
  - law is perfect
  - or is working perfectly

Broadest viewpoint -- the enabling act

- Hole in statutory scheme plugged

Local law -- validity

esthetics zoning o.k. (Jerome; Sailors)
  - so long as constitutionally implemented (Nantucket)
constitutionally -- required weaknesses
  - fair return test
    - recent sale value
  - ultimate weapon of purchase or condemnation
  - examples: Jerome, Grand Central

Local law -- scope

coverage generally good
  - lights
  - fences
  - pavements
Exceptions --

- City-owned or City-aided projects
  - reports may be helpful
- height and bulk
- ordinary repairs and maintenance

Local law (and administrative practice thereunder) -- procedures

- obtaining submissions
  - on minor work (difficulty of policing)
  - where bldg permit ignored

  Community participation

- precision of submissions and certificates issued thereon

- no machinery for follow through

- administrative failures
  - certificates of no exterior effect and appropriateness where there was such effect or clearly inappropriate
  - but clearly commission has acted as brake

- administrative exceptions (painting and air conditioning; public hearings
  - not yet developed into meaningful factor

- community participation
  DAC not fully utilized

Administrative body

Commission, as such, not active in operational aspect, as against designations

Remote - detached - unknown

Staff

Small
Lacks enforcement counsel
Lacks inspectors
Staff people try everything: policemen; architectural consultants; draftsmen; negotiators; conciliators
Too thin
Enforcement
failures to submit --
injunctions
unused
criminal sanctions
police unaware
failures to comply with certificate
policy to conciliate and if that fails to
turn other cheek
to avoid lawsuits
failure to promulgate regulations

Budget limitations
Cross-purposes of other agencies
pavements
lights
November 2, 1968

Dear Mr. Pearsall,

During your excellent talk to the Greenwich Village Home Owners Association last Wednesday evening, you said that Alan Burnham had told you that the current staff is composed of only eight paid employees. While I knew this figure was wrong, I expected Mike Gold to correct this during the meeting. Since he did not, I checked with one of the members of Mike's staff, and was told that the current number is fifteen. Presumably the paid staff could be seventeen, under our budget—for we have not replaced a recently-resigned researcher, and are looking for one more secretary. (Of the fifteen, only three are secretaries, and the remaining twelve are directly engaged in executive or preservation work.)

We have five volunteers on a steady basis: that is to say they can be counted on, at least a few times each week, to do serious work in a regular, staff-accredited way. Three of these have been engaged in archival research (and know more about this subject than any one on the paid staff), and one is Bancel LaFarge.

In the summer, our staff is increased by Urban Corps and other students. I have been told that we have had as many as twelve. The Urban Corps is, of course, paid on a full-time basis by the Federal Governments.

I am told, by one of the Villagers, that Harmon Goldstone has stated within the past few days that the staff is sufficient for the work at the present time. I agree with him. (Of course he is talking numbers, and has not had yet a chance to evaluate quality).

The problem with our staff is, I believe, that it is composed at the top level, of instant executives. There is no one now in an authoritative position who has had the slightest administrative experience, and the staff has been able to blunder along without any of its errors brought to the attention of the Commission itself. But I am extremely hopeful that the new set-up, with a paid Commissioner actually in the office several days a week, we shall get back to Preservation, and away from Parkinson's Law. For Harmon Goldstone is a real pro.
It occurs to me that only two of Brooklyn Heights' "erosian" problems have been put to the consideration of the Commissioners. One was the problem of the contemplated fire escape on a house; the other the revision made on Mrs. James' house on Pierrepont Place. The Commissioners were, on both occasions, whole-heartedly in favour of maintaining the integrity of the original architecture. (We have, of course, heard a lot about the A & P, and Jehovah's Witnesses).

I found Mike Gold's talk extremely illuminating. And I am delighted that there were three other Commissioners present at the meeting to hear it. While I have frequently heard Mike declare his views in the office, I was startled to hear him make them public. Perhaps you, in Brooklyn Heights, or someone in the Village should report to our new Chairman that the man in charge of administering Historic Districts has stated that:

1. he doubts his right to enforce the law;
2. he hasn't enough staff to do so;
3. he finds his administrative work boring (sic).

May I also suggest that any further erosian permitted by the staff be forcibly brought to the attention of all the Commissioners. Since letters of complaint addressed to us at 305 Broadway have a way of getting "lost" before they reach the Commissioners, I suggest you get the home addresses of all of us. It is common practice for members of the public--pro and con preservation--to present their views directly to us in this way. I am positive you will have more sympathetic consideration from a majority of the Commissioners than you have had in the past from the staff itself.

I hope that in making these few observations to you I shall not seem disloyal to the many staff members and Commissioners who have worked hard and effectively for Preservation. And I hope we are really now at a turning point, and that under Harmon Goldstone the staff will make a more courageous stand for Landmarks Preservation.

It was such a pleasure to hear you speak! What you have to say is so geggent--and how well you say it!

Sincerely,

(Mrs. Justin Haynes
435 East 52nd Street
New York, N. Y. 10022)
November 19, 1968

Mr. Michael W. Gold  
Executive Assistant  
Landmarks Preservation Commission  
305 Broadway  
New York, New York  10007

Dear Mike:

In accordance with your recent request, I am enclosing a copy of the outline of my talk on October 30 before the Association of Village Home Owners. As I mentioned to you on the telephone, the outline was prepared to trigger my own thoughts and not for inspection by others, so that I am afraid you may not find it too meaningful.

Sincerely,

Otis Pratt Pearsall

Enclosure

cc:  Mr. Harmon Goldstone  
     Terence H. Benbow, Esq.  
     Mrs. Justin Haynes  
     Mr. Alan Burnham

OPP.GM
November 8, 1968

Mrs. Justin Haynes  
435 East 52nd Street  
New York, New York  10022

Dear Mrs. Haynes:

Many thanks for your nice letter of November 2nd and the information therein provided. You may be sure that we will take advantage of your invitation to present our erosion problems directly to the Commission.

One point I should correct. I did not intend to say that the staff consisted of only eight paid employees currently, but only that at one time in the not too distant past this was its composition. My purpose was not so much to pin down the actual number as to indicate the order of magnitude. Actually, I think the number I used was probably out of date about a year, and I am greatly encouraged to learn that the paid staff has now doubled. One of our greatest concerns has been that the "policing" of Brooklyn Heights -- already susceptible of some criticism -- might be further watered down were large additional districts, such as Greenwich Village, to be designated.

I really am very optimistic about New York's preservation program. I dwell on the problems only because I am as confident that they can be solved as I am certain they won't be unless persistently pointed out.

Sincerely,

Otis Pratt Pearsall

OPP.GM