



FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN SEPTEMBER 2011

The Fort Greene Association is devoted to historic preservation, neighborhood and park enhancement, as well as cultural, economic, and housing advancement. To find out more, become a member, or to volunteer, visit our website www.HistoricFortGreene.org

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Next FGA Meeting:
Monday, September 19,
7PM

Bishop Laughlin High School, Auditorium, entrance on Greene Avenue

TOPIC: Landmarks – Building Fort Greene

The Fort Greene Historic District is about to expand. Join your neighbors for an evening of discovery and discussion as the FGA hosts the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission to answer all of your questions about the expanded HD and your general landmarks questions. This and all the local neighborhood news.

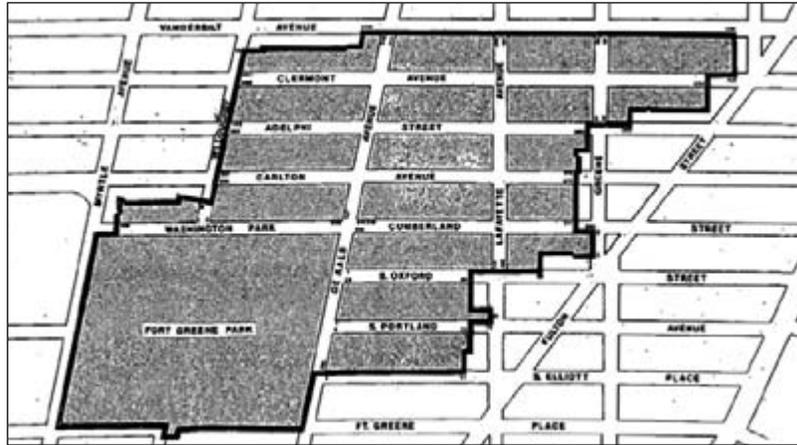
Arrive early to join us for our Neighborhood Mixer. FGA Neighborhood Meetings are free and open to all, homeowners and renters alike.

Fort Greene Historic District is ready to E-X-P-A-N-D

On September 26, 1978 the FGA had its greatest impact upon our neighborhood when then under the leadership of Herbert Scott Gibson the Fort Greene Historic District was established. But the victory has always been incomplete. In the early days of Historic Preservation, just as today, there was fear of what this new Historic District [HD] might bring. While the original request was to create a contiguous HD between what in now the BAM HD and the Fort Greene HD the Landmarks Preservation Commission [LPC] approved only a small

disparate BAM HD and a ragged Fort Greene HD leaving many important buildings in the neighborhood unprotected.

In late 2003 then chair Howard Pitsch began to stoke the



Fort Greene Historic District, Brooklyn, Designated September 26, 1978, Landmarks Preservation Commission.

embers to try to unify the BAM and Fort Greene HD's garnering interest from Community Board 2 for researching this potential by noting that "in 1984 both the National and New York state Registers of Historic Places exceeded the boundaries of what is currently Historic Fort Greene." In 2005 the FGA HD Extension Commit-

(Continued inside) >

Connection by Paul Palazzo, FGA Chair

This item written by me originally appeared in the March 2006 FGA Newsletter. On the 10 year anniversary of the September 11th attack it seems appropriate to reprint these thoughts.

We all have them, those moments of clarity and connection that are indelibly etched into our memory. Mine was shortly after September 11th, 2001, about three days after the attack when my neighbors and I were just beginning to reappear from our protective cocoons. I decided what I needed most was to tend my vegetable patch in what was then the Greene Avenue Community Garden. As I was weeding and collecting tomatoes a fellow gardener, neighbor, friend (the bonds be-tween even the most casual acquaintances had been strengthened by the brutal events of the day) turned to me and said "I'm so glad we have this; I don't think I could make it through otherwise." With focus and purpose she turned her attention back to the weeds in her garden patch, taking solace that land she had managed to transform had turned into a green oasis. So there it was, etched permanently into my mind "I'm so glad we have this." This Fort Greene, not only the beautiful architecture but the people and that underlying spirit; that individually you can create and nurture something and make it your own in what is often a chaotic world. That's how it begins, as if lifted from Spielberg's clichéd *E.T.*, at that moment I became connected to Fort Greene and knew it was something unique, some-thing worth fighting for.

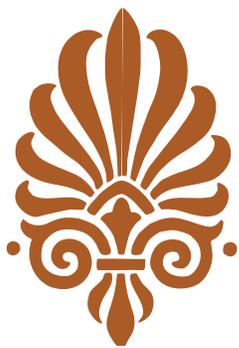
Shortly thereafter Fort Greene suffered another attack on a different front. From my vantage point speculators portraying themselves as horticulturalists would take the Community Garden

Tour, eventually purchase the land, and bulldoze the site in the early morning hours on New Years Day 2003.

On that grey and cold morning neighbors salvaged what they could from the destruction but also became inspired in the same way I had. These moments have been repeated throughout Fort Greene and are spreading like wildfire.

Outraged as if each attack was on your own body, new life and cooperation has been blown into individual block associations and the venerable umbrella groups of the Fort Greene Association, Clinton Hill Society, and Historic Wallabout Association. In unison these groups infused with their new energy have begun to pursue the contextual re-zoning of Fort Greene and Clinton Hill, the extension of the Fort Greene and Clinton Hill Historic Districts, the establishment of a newly proposed Wallabout Historic District, and the preservation of Admiral's Row at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Even on the once contentious issue of the development of the Atlantic Yards agreement can be made that our communities are worth fighting for and are in need of protection. The harmony has been resounding.

If you feel the connection, join your voice with the voices of your neighbors. Contact the FGA or your local block association and get involved. Talk to your neighbor about it, they'll talk to theirs, and so on. With these voices in unison the connection we have to our neighborhood will continue to grow and we will be able to pass it on to the next generation of residents lucky to live here as we do.



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(Continued from front cover)

tee was formed and with the help of neighborhood residents Gustav Peebles and Joan Reutershan and FGA Board Members dorris gains golomb and Paul Palazzo, the FGA was awarded a grant allowing for the evaluation of the HD Extension request. The detailed findings were assembled and published in a report by Andrew S. Dolkart on December 2006. Professor Dolkart was already experienced with the architectural bounty of Fort Greene as he had written the original 1978 historic designation of the neighborhood. In 2007 the report and request was officially submitted by then chair Phillip Kellogg to LPC for review and finally last year, with the help of former resident Stephanie Levinsky, the FGA received a first glimpse of what a newly expanded Fort Greene HD would look like.

While the LPC went a great way toward the goal of unifying our neighborhood the FGA took exception to some of exclusions and resubmitted a request to LPC to reexamine the areas in red on the map.

From the FGA correspondence dated June 24, 2010:

The FGA is generally pleased that so much of our request has been honored and while some of the initial study was improbable, the following are exclusions to which we take objection:

North – Carlton Avenue: *The FGA would like to add the West Side of Carlton (Willoughby/Myrtle) extended north up to and including the fire house which was built to produce some of the earliest pumper fire engines. On this side of the block are some fine wooden homes, at least one with scallop shell exterior and ocular windows.*

The proposed district should extend to all houses on the East Side up to and including the old Drake's Cake factory building (now a coop) which is already on the National Register. Moreover, this would include 165 Carlton, once home to Richard Wright, an iconic must-have for our district's multi-ethnic heritage.

East – Vanderbilt Avenue: *The proposed district should include the two buildings just north of the proposed district boundary on Vanderbilt -- both are Pratt-family related structures that were designed by major architects and are quite distinguished. One includes an early apartment building by Lamb & Rich and a studio by William Tubby.*

West – Fort Greene Place: *The residences just north of a minibodega at Fulton along West Side of Fort Greene Place still have a lot of merit and could help sustain a short bit of integrity on both sides of this street. House numbers, moving northerly, would be from 86 to 62.*

To balance this street, with Brooklyn Tech in the proposed HD Extension the East Side of Fort Greene Place should be added to the revision.

There are two or three remarkable Anglo-Italianates with Romanesque portals in that block, and other houses have merit. Numbers, again moving northerly, would be from 87 to 67.

South – Cuyler Gore Park & Fowler Square: *Cuyler Gore Park should be included in the HD Extension, much as Fort Greene Park and the Ronald Edmonds Playground (DeKalb between Adelphi/Carlton) both are.*

The Greene Ave: *The blocks from Cumberland to Adelphi, south side are worth fighting for. There is the Paul Robeson Theatre, as well as the beautifully intact row of brick and brownstones between Carlton and Adelphi.*

It is imperative to include Fowler Square and the three shop houses along South Elliott between Lafayette and Fulton (Smoke Joint and magazine shop at corner of Fulton). These three shop houses will become the backdrop to the current proposal for the expansion of Fowler Square and will truly pronounce the "Gateway to

Fort Greene." For a comparable site, see the superb retention of the shop houses in Manhattan at the northwest corner of Tenth Street and Sixth Avenue, across from the Jefferson Market Courthouse/Library.

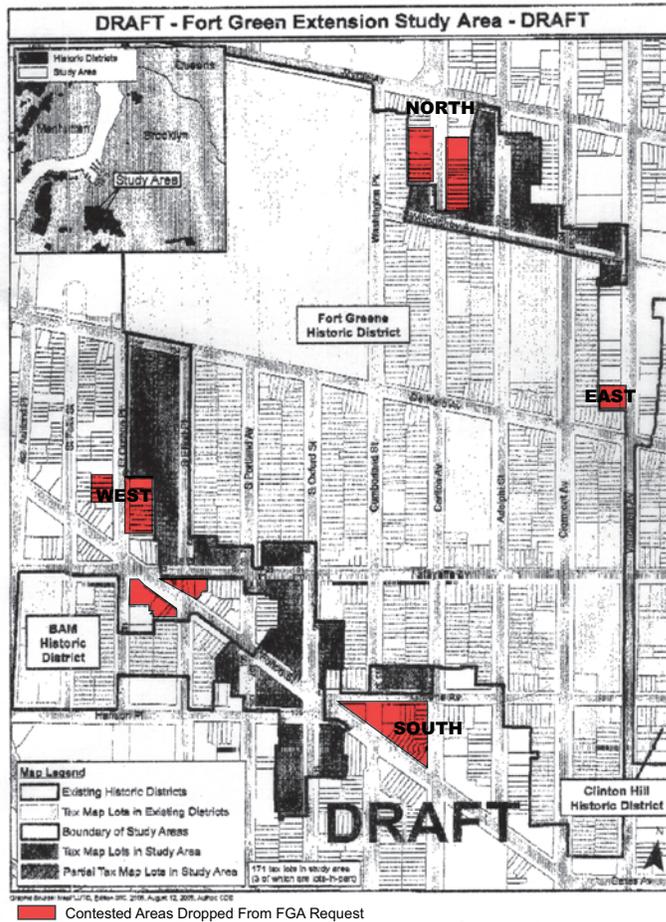
The FGA would like to see the south side of Fulton between South Elliott and Fort Greene Place included. The building where the current Deniz Restaurant is at South Elliott, along with Frank's and the Medical Plaza building would help preserve a lower scale opposite Fowler Square. Furthermore, the white brick Medical building is a good representation of the mid-20th Century emphasis on linear fenestration across the second floor.

The FGA looks forward to meeting with you in person as we move forward with our shared goal of the Expansion of the Fort Greene Historic District.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Palazzo for The Fort Greene Association.

(Continued next page)



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Reach hundreds of Fort Greene households in the mail, via email & on the web by underwriting the FGA Newsletter.

Call for details:
347-224-6487.

Newsletter production by
Abby Weissman

The Fort Greene Association Pays the Bills

Of the many services the Fort Greene Association provides to Fort Greene is that of an incubator for other organizations. One such example is the Fort Greene Park Conservancy [FGPC] originally known to the FGA as the Fort Greene Parks Committee. As part of the FGA in 2002, the committee chaired by Ruth Leonard Goldstein, was awarded a \$350,000 New York State grant making the FGA the fiscal conduit for the restoration of the Fort Greene Monument and Urn within the park. The renovation price tag which began in 2002 was a mere \$342,000 and it was money well spent. The Prison Ship Martyrs Monument was rekindled for its Centennial in 2008 and today the entire neighborhood enjoys the wonderfully restored plaza equipped with its proud eagles. It is a fitting ending to one restoration project and brilliant beginning for more projects of our treasured landmark and park.



Members of the FGA and the FGPC paying the tab for the restoration of the Prison Ship Martyrs Monument and Plaza at Fort Greene Park.

From top left Norman Ryan, Paul Palazzo (Chair FGA), Martin Goldstein, Fred Lasker, Ruth Leonard Goldstein, Susan Butler, Charles Jarden (Chair FGPC).



Monument Photo by Steven Soblick

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FGA Welcomes a New Board Member



The FGA would like to welcome our new Board Member **Joshua Beauregard**. Get involved, like Josh, and join the expanding group of your fellow Fort Greeners eager to do great things in our Neighborhood. Contact Fred Lasker at fred@HistoricFortGreene.org for an interview today and start making a difference.

Joshua Beauregard and his wife, Emily, are new and proud residents of Fort Greene as of 2010. Josh is currently completing his doctoral degree in education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Prior to returning to graduate school, he served as an educator in the New York City public school system. Josh can often be found in the wee hours of the morning walking his two dogs, Grizz and Mabel, down South Oxford Street to one of their favorite neighborhood spots – Fort Greene Park.

Josh is the author of the new FGA blog column, “Our Kids Biz.” Our Kids Biz is bimonthly briefing featuring Fort Greene’s finest youth programs. From clubs, sports, and activities to school and organization-based programs, this bimonthly briefing highlights local programs serving Fort Greene’s youth in positive and meaningful ways. Visit www.HistoricFortGreene.org to find out more.

Fort Greene Historic District is ready to E-X-P-A-N-D (Continued)

(Continued from previous page)

In response to the FGA comments LPC made partial remediation by including the East- Vanderbilt Avenue and West – Fort Greene Place boundaries within the new HD. Further enhancement has been recently garnered by Councilperson Letitia James’ request for individual landmark status for St. Casimir’s Roman Catholic Church now known as The Paul Robeson Theatre. Research investigation and public hearings have been held on the building. At this time The Paul Robeson Theatre is currently calendared for final determination by the LPC.

Conspicuously missing from consideration is the frontage surrounding Fowler Square which the FGA Board deems essential before consideration of turning Fowler Square into Fowler Plaza.

The fear and misconception that Historic Preservation is detrimental to neighborhood potential continues to arise in today’s news. As recently in the debate for the newly designated West End HD groups like the Real Estate Board of New York continue to argue that the historic districts limit the economic potential of the neighborhood, adding an “economic burden.” The FGA and every Fort Greener know differently that Historic Preservation is linked to real estate enhancement, job creation, and economic development. The facts are clear; it is evident and proven in what has become today’s Fort Greene.

So please join your neighbors at our next FGA Neighborhood Meeting on Monday, September 19th as we continue to build our Fort Greene. See you there.



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NEWSCENES

80 Dekalb Avenue at Rockwell Place:
Three on a hip new strip in the Fort Greene landscape.

SMASH BURGER, high quality, fast casual food, preparation takes 6 minutes: classic hot dogs, Brooklyn hot dogs, 400 cal burgers (create your own) all are 100% angus beef. Chicken, salads, Haagen-Dazs shakes, soft drinks, beer, and wine by the glass. Hrs: Mon – Sun 10am to 10pm.

BROOKLYN BAGEL WORKS, bagels Old World style are baked on the premises using top ingredients. Full breakfast grill. Desserts made on the premises. One of the two owners, Charlie Christoforatos is a Brooklyn Tech graduate. Charlie, with his partner George Ionides, arrange school trips for the kindergarten crowd when they can. Hrs: Mon – Fri 6am - 6pm; Sat & Sun 7am - 3pm.

A LA CRÊPE, specialty crêpes and desserts freshly made every day. Espresso Bar. Hrs Mon – Fri 7:30am - 9pm; Sat 10am - 9pm; Sun closed.

MORE NEWSCENES

DINO, Northern Italian, family-style restaurant, 222 Dekalb Avenue, lunch & brunch, organic eggs; diner, favorites Buffalo, veal meatballs, vegetable platter, wide range of pasta, plus salmon, chicken, beef, pork. 718 222 1999. Hrs: Mon – Thurs 10:30am -12am; Fri – Sun 10am - 1am.

TRIBECA PEDIATRICS, 771 Fulton Street bet S. Portland and S. Oxford, provides high care approach to pediatrics in a neighborhood setting. Following the neighborhood concept, Dr. Judith Hoffman, Fort Greene resident, reached out to founder Dr. Cohen to establish a center in her neighborhood for its residents and others in easy reach. Other reason they are here? According to Office Manager, Leslie Pennypacker, they really like Fort Greene. Hrs: Mon, Wed, & Fri 9am – 5pm; Thu 10:30am – 6:30pm; Sat 9am – 3pm. (718) 618-9599, fortgreene@tribecapediatrics.com

BERLYN, 25 Lafayette bet St. Felix and Ashland, directly across from the Brooklyn Academy of Music. German restaurant with a Brooklyn accent. Owners Ursula and Jonas Hegewisch, have taken a creative approach to cocktails. Their recipes are regionally inspired – the MoCADA, Betty Carter, & Richard Wright; upcoming seasonal choices are Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church and the General Fowler. Specialties from the menu – potato pancakes with smoked trout salad – flammkuchen, a German regional thin-crust pizza with cheese, smoked bacon and chives. Brunch will be added in the fall. Are you hungry yet? Hrs: Tue – Thu 5:30pm -11pm; Fri & Sat 5:30pm – midnite; Sun 5:30 - 10pm. 718 222 5800, berlynrestaurant.com

GREENE BITES, 116 Dekalb Avenue, Owners, Younis Ali & Jamal Saleh open their Gourmet Deli, Grill, Café with outside seating on Wed Aug 10th. 718 855-3757. Keep an eye out for a well-stocked versatile establishment.

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Call for details: 347-224-6487.

SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY
MAY 5, 2012

 FORTGREENEASSOCIATION

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2012
FORT GREENE
HOUSE TOUR

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Find out more about the FGA at
www.HistoricFortGreene.org

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**SAVE
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**FORT GREENE
HOUSE TOUR**