



FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN

MARCH 2006

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, to become a member, or to volunteer, visit us on the web at www.HistoricFortGreene.org

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Elijah Feinstein of the Corcoran Group is proud to underwrite this issue of the Fort Greene Association Newsletter.

Schooling your child in Fort Greene

A SPECIAL FGA MEETING IN A SPECIAL LOCATION:

MARCH 20, 7:30PM AT PS20 (Adelphi Street, between DeKalb and Willoughby)

Guest Speakers: Principal Keaton of PS20 (K-5)

From the NEW middle school to be located on the PS20 campus starting this fall: Allison Gaines Pell, School Leader and Allison Howry, Planning Team Member

PLUS a live performance by the PS20 Band.

AND regular FGA Committee reports and the Open Forum.

This FGA community meeting is being held at PS20 for the purpose of bringing education to the top of the agenda and introducing the Fort Greene Community to a fabulous resource right in our own back yard. Join us, and tell your neighbors.

The Wheels are Turning

We need your help to keep the momentum going. The people on the board of the FGA are working to make the advocacy and projects of the FGA come alive. They are your neighbors — homeowners and renters alike — who are contributing their time, energy, ideas, expertise and love of Fort Greene to make positive things happen. They are joined by a host of dedicated volunteers whose names are not on this list but who contribute their efforts to building that momentum. Plus there are still more people who send in contributions, ideas and opinions that help shape the work of the FGA.

And it is all that effort that has gotten things rolling. Involvement in an organization like the FGA gives people a chance to shape what gets focused on, to affect how things get done and to give the community an organized voice. If you have an opinion about how things could be better... let us hear it. If you have an idea on how to accomplish something... help make it happen. If you want to participate, but don't know how... simply ask one of the dedicated board members listed to the left. Or you can send me an e-mail (write "Keep the Momentum Going" in the subject line). Phillip Kellogg
Chair

House Tour 2006



This year's Fort Greene Association House Tour looks at two sides of Fort Greene. In addition to gaining access to interiors of extraordinary Victorian residences, you'll also see the architectural exhibit "Fort Greene Modern." The exhibit will be a fascinating and provocative look at how some of world's most renowned architects — including Enrique Norten, Hugh Hardy, and Arquitectonica — work within an historic and contextual framework as they create new works in Fort Greene. The buildings featured will include The Library of Visual and Performing Arts, Theatre for a New Audience, the Wellness Center at Long Island University plus exclusive looks at several recently completed residential projects. This exhibit is being created specifically for the 2006 Fort Greene House Tour by curator, architect — and Fort Greene resident — Annie Coggan. The tour logo (above, designed by Tom Dolle Design) elegantly reflects this year's House Tour theme as it celebrates Fort Greene's architectural legacy while looking to the future. Join us for this very special House Tour benefiting the advocacy and programs of the Fort Greene Association.

Sunday, May 7, 2006. Noon-5pm. Rain or Shine. Tickets (\$20/advance, \$25/day of tour) go on sale starting April 1st at www.HistoricFortGreene.org and at these

Fort Greene locations (cash only): BAM Box Office, Tillie's and Yu Interiors.

Sponsorship Opportunities: For information on how your company can be the exclusive sponsor of a stop on the tour — gaining valuable exposure while showing your support for the Fort Greene community, contact Monica Weedon at 718-875-1855, or send an e-mail to: theFGA@HistoricFortGreene.org

Update-the Williamsburgh Savings Bank

As construction progresses at One Hanson Place, the landmark Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building is being transformed into a condo-apartment building with the former ground-floor banking lobby scheduled to become retail space. The Fort Greene community is closely watching this development, and there is great interest in the future of the former public banking space.

According to Kristin Neil, VP of Development for the Dermot Company (real estate development and management), the search continues to secure a retail tenant. The company's goal is to find a single tenant for the entire space; this is preferable to multiple ground floor retail tenants that would result in the space being subdivided.

She did report that the renovation plans now include the creation of medical or dental office condos on the second floor mezzanine. This 30,000 square feet space will provide for 17 commercial condos. Interior preparation work has begun, and the developer anticipates that construction will commence within the next few months. No date has yet been set for completion of the work. The FGA will continue to follow this project closely.

Carlton Development

The empty lots on Carlton Avenue between DeKalb and Willoughby....Good news!

There was a meeting of a small group of residents and civic leaders to get a preview of preliminary designs for those lots and the church. The group included among others Council Member Tish James, Carlton-Willoughby Block Association President John Scheffler, Fort Greene Association Chair Phillip Kellogg, Adelphi Street resident and Director of the Pratt Area Community Council Deb Howard. There was a collective sigh of relief when we saw the plans, drawings and models. The proposal is sensitive to scale (no tower) and to the historic district.

Here are a few highlights (with caveats that the designs are still be worked out and details may change):

-houses to be built across the empty lots on Carlton, with stoops and windows echoing the rest of the block

-expect apartments, not single family homes. Condo, probably. Floor-throughs, some duplexes and some studios

-the back of the structures to align with existing houses (no deep extensions)

-the Parish house (with the ironwork balcony) will be part of the development, but the exterior will not change

-the cornice will line up with the rest of the block

-nothing on the roof will be visible from the street above the cornice

-the church on Adelphi will stay, with the back half rebuilt and added to for more apartments. Major restoration will be done to the stonework and the steeple, which has stucco right now, to preserve the structures

-A common interior courtyard, a MEWS, will be put in place (instead of individual back yards)

-Parking is mandated by zoning regulations and they are planning underground parking (beneath the new structures) with an entrance on Adelphi Street.

All the design elements you see from the street appear to be historically sensitive, even the parking, drive entrance, and gates. They do have a couple of design issues to deal with. The plans will be going through Community Board 2 and the Landmarks Preservation Commission, with plenty of opportunity for public comment. Expect construction to begin in about 18 months (or so).

FGA Traffic

The FGA is pleased to announce two recent signage changes in the neighborhood.

The DOT mistakenly installed a new sign on Fowler Square across from Cambodian Cuisine that indicated alternate-side of the street parking regulations. According to DOT's own policies, small triangles should be NO PARKING or NO STANDING on all three sides. The FGA successfully lobbied the DOT to change the signage.

Months ago, DOT in cooperation with MTA installed an ACCESS-A-RIDE bus stop on South Elliott near Hanson, removing another parking space from the neighborhood's inventory. Based on anecdotal evidence that rarely is there, an ACCESS-A-RIDE bus actually parked there. The FGA lobbied to return the space returned to inventory. DOT explained that the ACCESS-A-RIDE must be located at this position, but compromised by changing the signage to NO STANDING only from 7am-7pm Mon-Fri. We appreciate DOT's flexibility with this issue.

Goodbye PURCHASE

by dorris gaines golomb. FGA Board Member

Some of you may be aware of the saga surrounding this designated Landmark at the edge of the coming Brooklyn Bridge Park. For those of you who aren't, the center of the matter was the request of the Brooklyn Bridge Park Development [BBPD], in an application to the Landmark Preservation Commission [LPC], to demolish the Purchase Building at 11-85 Water Street in the Fulton Ferry Historic District.
(continued next page)

Goodbye PURCHASE

A simple, straightforward structure built in 1936 under the WPA program and part of our Brooklyn waterfront history. The Park advocates for demolition want to create a "view plane" at the Purchase site, a step they argue will enhance the Park while many opponents feel there is a strong potential for adaptive reuse of the building.

The request came before Community Board 2 [CB2] Land Use Committee [LU] at the January 18 meeting which included a presentation by BBPD representatives for demolition of Purchase. Much public testimony corroborated the LU vote denying demolition application

Fast forward to the February 8, CB2 general monthly Board meeting. Generally at these meetings only Board members can participate, however, at the suggestion of a Board member, Chair McRae allowed participation by BBPD representatives.

Lively discussion followed in which BBPD was asked three times how they might use the Purchase if retained and the response was always that they had no plans, expecting the building to be demolished. (At an earlier point, comment was made that the remaining vacant footprint would probably be covered with asphalt. Very park like.)

By your reporter's count there were approximately 34 speakers, including Michael Burke, Downtown Brooklyn Council; Michael Weiss, Fulton Mall; Roger Lang, NYC Landmarks Conservancy; Historic Districts Council; former NYC Parks Commissioner, Henry Stern; and many well and lesser known preservationists and individual residents. (FGA testimony opposing the demolition was read nicely by Monica Weedon.)

After reviewing all of the testimony the CB2 full Board passed unanimously the resolution as follows:

- Deny application to demolish Purchase Building.
- Recommend maintaining the facility and as much

of the rest of the building to make it appropriate for adaptive reuse, without the loading docks.

Next stop the February 21 LPC Hearing. In the packed room the Commissioners asked many questions and it appeared that at least three might be leaning toward retention. Two Commissioners -- Roberta Gratz, who spoke eloquently for saving the Purchase, and Stephen Byrns voted "no" to demolition. At the end of the morning the Commission voted 7-2 to demolish. As someone along the way asked, "When was the last time an historic building [designated] was demolished?" Now there is this precedent -- regrettable and unsettling -- to cite in future instances. Beware. Bye Bye Purchase.

Connection

by Paul Palazzo. FGA Board Member

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 between 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 ET, at that moment I became connected to Fort Greene and knew it was something unique, something 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 have 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 rezoning 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.

Elijah Feinstein of the Corcoran Group is proud to underwrite this issue of the Fort Greene Association Newsletter.



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HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN

Box 170563, Brooklyn, NY 11217-0563

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(Adelphi Street, between DeKalb and Willoughby)

Guest Speakers:

- Principal Keaton of PS20 (K-5)
- From the NEW middle school to be located on the PS20 campus starting this fall: Allison Gaines Pell, School Leader and Allison Howry, Planning Team Member

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www.HistoricFortGreene.org

GOINGS ON

MEETINGS

FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION - Meets Mondays at 7:30 pm, Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, 85 South Oxford Street, Fort Greene. February 27, March 20, April 17, May 22. Participate in our OPEN FORUM.

COMMUNITY BOARD 2 - Meets 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6 pm. Call CB2 office, 718.596.5410, for location. Attend.

88TH PRECINCT - 3rd Tuesday of each month, 7:30. Call 718.636.6511 ext 526x for location.

BROOKLYN ARTISTS BREAKFAST - 3rd Wednesday of the month, 9am, BODEGAS restaurant, 868 Fulton Street at Clinton Ave (open for breakfast at 8am). Questions: 718.624.5719.

NEWSCENES

BEST BUY WINE & LIQUORS - 701 Fulton Street (corner St. Felix). 718 237-1145 Mon-Thurs 8:30 am-10 pm; Fri-Sat 8:30 am-12 am; Sun noon-9 pm. Owner P. Lopez. Handsome lanterns at the entrance invite you into a bright, welcoming shop where you can browse the shelves to find just what you want. Stop in, say hello.

CRUNCH Fitness Center - 691 Fulton Street (near Ashland/St.Felix). 718 797-9464. New name, same location. Pay them a visit.

LOS POLLITOS III - 499 Myrtle Avenue. 718 636-6125. Rotisserie chicken--Authentic Mexican Cuisine. Owner Amando Cumbo.

Ahh - those good tastes. KAREN'S BODY BEAUTIFUL - Has relocated to 436 Myrtle Avenue. 718 797-4808. Natural bath, body & skin products made on premises. Owners husband and wife Karen Tappin Saunderson and Damani Saunderson. This new sleek storefront with its lively interior design is a MUST see.

Benefit Tag Sale
March 17, 18, 19

Preview sale Friday 3/17 from 6 to 8 PM
Saturday 3/18 from 11 AM to 8 PM
Sunday 3/19 from 1 to 6 PM
104 South Oxford (bet. Fulton and Lafayette)

Proceeds in support of:
Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn
Fort Greene Park Conservancy
Brownstone Brooklyn Garden District

SAVE THE DATE
SUNDAY MAY 7, 2006
NOON - 5PM
JOIN YOUR FRIENDS AND
NEIGHBORS AT THE 28TH
FORT GREENE
HOUSE TOUR
IT'S SURE TO BE A SHOW
STOPPER

Elijah Feinstein

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