



FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN

APRIL 2007

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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of
Aguayo & Huebener
is proud to
underwrite this issue
of the FGA
Newsletter.

NEXT MEETING:
MONDAY APR 16
7:30PM
Light refreshments
at 7.00PM

TOPICS:
Extending the Fort
Greene and
Clinton Hill
Historic Districts
Residential Parking
Permits

LOCATION:
Paul Robeson
Theater
40 Greene Ave

All are welcome to
attend, homeowners and
renters alike.

Hello Spring

It's been a heady few months. The FGA Board has an amazing mix of new members in addition to those who have demonstrated priceless experience and dedication to this community. Plus, a number of new volunteers are actively contributing their time, energy and talent to the FGA. You will be seeing them at FGA meetings, events and even in this newsletter — as writers. Their contributions to the organization are significant. Look for new initiatives to defend the environment, help our school children, reach out to the entire Fort Greene community, improve Fort Greene Park and even reinvigorate the FGA website as a resource for everyone. If getting involved sounds even a little bit interesting to you, let's talk. There are many rewarding opportunities available, new initiatives you can be part of, and perhaps most importantly... we can work around your schedule and availability. Call 718-875-1855 or send an email to: theFGA@HistoricFortGreene.org.

Phillip Kellogg
FGA Chair

Bus Stop Eliminated?!?

As some of you may have noticed, the bus stop on DeKalb Avenue at the corner of Fort Greene Park has disappeared. After much sleuthing, the FGA discovered that the MTA eliminated this stop in 2005 in an apparently covert operation. Even the Department of Transportation was in the dark, as they maintained the sign until just a few weeks ago.

Although some nice bus drivers continue to stop and pick up passengers, many residents are up in arms about the missing bus stop. One resident, leaning on her cane in the freezing ice and snow, watched several buses pass her by, and asked "why?"

The FGA will ask that question of the MTA in a meeting being organized with the assistance of Councilmember Tish James. Eliminating a bus stop has widespread implications to our residents, and other neighborhoods have practically declared war on the MTA to maintain theirs.

We encourage all bus riders to contact 311 to complain about the lost bus stop. We also encourage you to send your Fort Greene-related subway and bus issues by email to: transit@historicfortgreene.org.

Landmark Extension Study Complete

The FGA will soon submit a proposal to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) to extend the boundaries of the present Fort Greene Historic District. The present District, approved in 1978, left historically significant areas of Fort Greene unprotected. The proposed expansion would create a contiguous district with the BAM Historic District to the west, the Atlantic Commons to the south, and the recently proposed Wallabout Historic District to the north. The district would also be contiguous with the proposed expansion of the Clinton Hill Historic District.

For many years, Howard Pitsch, former Chair of FGA, has been photographing and cataloging both older and newer Fort Greene buildings outside the present district. Recently, the FGA, with a grant from Preserve New York, commissioned Andrew S. Dolkart, Associate Professor of Historic Preservation at the Columbia University School of Architecture, to do a comprehensive survey. The resulting report, *Fort Greene Cultural Resource Survey*, expanded previous research and is now complete. This report, along with his similar report on Clinton Hill, will be submitted to the LPC as a formal proposal to expand both districts. The approval process, among other things, will depend upon how active the community is in promoting the effort. The project complements the FGA's support of re-zoning unprotected areas of Fort Greene and Clinton Hill.

Thirty years ago, dozens of dedicated Fort Greene residents worked to protect their neighborhood by pushing for landmark status. Our goal now is to build on the work of those visionaries and make sure that the many vulnerable historic areas of Fort Greene are protected for generations to come.

Rezoning: We're Getting Closer...

The rezoning of Fort Greene and Clinton Hill was the star attraction at the March 14 meeting of Community Board 2. Amanda Burden, Director of New York City Planning, said, "we want this to happen, it's long overdue and we look forward to seeing it completed". Joining Director Burden was Brooklyn Borough Director, Purnima Kapur, and staff-member, Sara Goldwyn, who made the detailed presentation of the proposal.

Director Burden predicted "certification in April". Certification means the plan has a timeline and deadlines that must be met by various agencies and officials — and ultimately will go to the City Council where it would be made into law. Typically, that process takes seven months. However, it's possible to expedite the process. Considering that the plan has been a work of collaboration between so many community groups, government agencies, elected officials and the community at-large, we hope the pace can be picked up. Plus, for four years tremendous effort has gone into informing the community about this proposal and its importance. The rezoning proposal is truly a community-based initiative, supported by some very creative thinking on the part of NY City Planning and championed by Community Board 2, Borough President, Marty Markowitz and his office, Councilmember Tish James, Pratt Area Community Council, Pratt Institute, Myrtle Avenue Business Partnership, Fulton Avenue Business, area Block Associations, hundreds of neighborhood volunteers, the Society for Clinton Hill and the Fort Greene Association.

So, the question on so many people's minds: "are we there, yet?" The answer: Almost.

Current Landmarked Areas, and Proposal for Expansion



Rendering: FGA

Garden Tour in June

The Brownstone Brooklyn Garden District Annual Garden Walk will take place on Sunday June 3rd from 11am to 5pm. This marks the 10th Anniversary of the Garden Walk, this year showcasing eighteen gardens on a self-guided walking tour through the three historic neighborhoods: Prospect Heights, Fort Greene and Clinton Hill (van service will be provided).

Gardens by designers Bill Fidelo, Lesley Reed, John Rattigan, Sara Stopek and others feature foliage gardens, a secret garden, a paved courtyard garden, and a double garden with a brick cottage and mature trees. Visitors will enjoy the cooling influences of pools, streams, waterfalls and grottos.

Advance tickets, \$15, are available at Tillie's on Dekalb at Vanderbilt and at the Forest Floor, 659 Vanderbilt Ave. at Park Place in Prospect Heights. Tickets may also be purchased on day of the tour for \$20 at Tillies, the Forest Floor, or the BAM Garden. For additional tour information please call the Garden Walk Hotline at 718-707-1277.

The FGA is proud to support the Brownstone Brooklyn Garden District in their efforts to make our neighborhoods greener and more beautiful.

Clinton Hill House Tour

Our neighbors to the east are getting ready to open their doors to their architectural wonders...

Residential Clinton Hill was built in the 19th century as the borough's "gold coast". It is uniquely saturated with free-standing mansions erected by such distinguished and prominent industrialists of their time as the Pratts (oil), the Underwoods (typewriters), the Singers (sewing Machines), and the Bristols and Pfizers (pharmaceuticals).

The neighborhood's architectural styles include Italianate brownstones, Neo-Georgian, Queen Anne, Romanesque and Greek Revival houses that rub shoulders with Beaux-Arts apartments and hotels. Clinton Hill also has what may be the largest collection of carriage houses in the city. Come see for yourself.

The Clinton Hill House Tour will be held on Sunday May 6th, noon to 5pm. Advance tickets are \$20 at Havana Outpost, Tillies', Yu, Sisters Hardward, Pillow Café and the Farmer's Market at Fort Greene Park, or online at: www.societyforclintonhill.org. Tickets are also available on the day of tour for \$25.

Tour starts at St. Luke's Church, 259 Washington Avenue, between Dekalb and Willoughby.

If you like flowers, or simply the look on someone's face when they see a garden, help make the 2007 Brownstone Garden Walk a success. Contact Natasha Harsh at: natashaharsh@earthlink.net

Crime issue or concern? Go right to the top of NYPD's 88th Precinct. 7:30pm, Tue April 17. Call for location: 718-636-6526.

Reach hundreds of Fort Greene households in the mail, via email and on the web by underwriting the FGA Newsletter. Next availability: November. Call for details: 718-875-1855.

Where have all the Placards Gone? – A success story!

It is no surprise that congestion and parking are only getting worse in Fort Greene. More commuters are driving through Fort Greene to get to Manhattan, more commuters are parking on our streets to catch the subway, and more city and state employees are using their placards to park most anywhere.

We welcome the shoppers, and the FGA worked with Councilmember Tish James to install meters along Fulton and Lafayette in order to create turnover for Fort Greene's unique stores. Unfortunately, many of those spaces, as well as those in front of the church on Hanson Place pictured below, were taken all day by state employees at 55 Hanson Place who have placards allowing them up to three hours parking.

To address the situation, the FGA contacted Governor Eliot Spitzer's office, asking that state employees that do not need their cars during the course of the workday leave them at home and utilize public transportation.

To our great surprise, illegal placard parking practically evaporated on

Hanson and on Lafayette, with great assistance from the Department of Taxation and Finance. We are still pinching ourselves in amazement, and hope that other state and city agencies will be only half as cooperative as Taxation and Finance have been. Thank you!

What "No Parking" in Fort Greene Used to Look Like



Photos: FGA

New FGA Grants Announced

The FGA Funding Committee announces several exciting projects and grants.

MUSIC - In January, the FGA received a targeted grant of \$500, from the Cheswaty Foundation of Tyringham, Massachusetts. One of the Foundation's members lives here in Fort Greene, so this is really a 'giving back to the neighborhood' kind of a grant. The grant was written specifically to forward the musical education of a child who would otherwise be unable to afford to study outside of classes given at his or her local public school.

Working with Richard Parker, the music teacher at PS 46 on Clermont Street here in Fort Greene, a student was chosen who would receive 14 weeks of individualized instruction in the instrument of their talent.

Seeing this as a special opportunity, the FGA decided to match this grant, dollar for dollar, to allow a second student to obtain 14 weeks of additional, individualized, instruction.

We look forward to keeping you updated on the progress of both these wonderful, young, musicians.

ARTS - This grant proposal came to us from Beth Conard, an Arts teacher at PS 46. The plan, which the FGA is co-funding with Donors Choose, will allow the students to do a study of the natural and built aspects of our Fort Greene neighborhood. These studies will be converted into designs for clay tiles that the students will create and kiln fire. The tiles will then become part of the PS 46 campus.

DDDb - The FGA has put some money where our heart is, in supporting the 'Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn' group's efforts regarding the Atlantic Yards project. A \$1000 check has been forwarded to support their legal defense fund.

TRASH CANS – an update - We have seen the trash-cans-as-art project as a work in progress, and expect to see its debut in Fort Greene Park soon.

The FGA is continuing to accept applications for Fort Greene Association Grants Projects. Please continue to spread the word and submit Grant Proposals. Grant Applications can be requested by e-mail to: theFGA@HistoricFortGreene.org.

You, Landmarks, and the FG Historic District, Part 2

In the February 2007 FGA Newsletter, we talked about how to make doing work in a Historic District much easier. Topics included information on the process for determining if your home is indeed inside the historic district, how to apply for a permit and how to make things go smoothly by working with the Landmarks Preservations Commission (LPC). (Part 1 is available at no cost online at www.HistoricFortGreene.org). In PART 2 below, we cover some additional topics and repeat the mantra – ask before you act.

SIDEWALKS

White concrete sidewalks have become a plague in historic districts. It seems that some private contractors, are charging ahead and installing white concrete sidewalks. Please keep in mind that bluestone is preferred. Or, as an alternative, concrete that is tinted a dark grey. Avoid white concrete, even at the urging of a contractor. And, tinted concrete costs only a little more per square foot over the illegal, white concrete.

WINDOWS

Do not assume that because your neighbor has a certain kind of window, it will be ok for you to get the same ones. Windows are the category of construction giving people the most problems in historic districts. Beware the contractor who comes along saying they can do windows for you in a half day. Perhaps they can, but they may be white aluminum "quickies," almost always unacceptable in historic districts. Clear your plans with the LPC first. You will need both Buildings Department and an LPC permits before work starts. If the contractor says, "Oh, I'll take care of the permits", tell them you want to see the permits before construction starts. And keep in mind, that as property owner, you are one ultimately responsible for obtaining all necessary permits.

ROOFTOP AND REAR ADDITIONS

Huge problems are presented by rooftop and rear additions. While you would most likely be engaging a contractor or architect to design such a project for you, be aware that it will come under significant scrutiny by the LPC and your neighbors. You might want to talk to the Landmarks Commission first, as they may suggest a few guidelines.

HELP IS AVAILABLE

Contact the Director of Community Affairs of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, Diane Jackier, and she will direct you to a staff person to answer your questions. Call at 212-669-7923. 90% of LPC inquiries are handled by the staff, and do not involve a public hearing. A phone call can save you time and trouble - and perhaps money. If you would like a copy of the "Rowhouse Manual", the primer of preservation information, contact dorris.gaines.golomb, Chair of the Fort Greene Association Landmarks Committee, at 718- 624-5719, or send an email to: dorrgg@verizon.net.

South Elliott Place Block Association Re-invigorated!

South Elliott Place Bash Draws Award Winning Photographers, Novelist, Composer, Dancer, Political Activists, Editors, Musicians, Designers...

Actually, it was a potluck gathering of our block association, held on March 11th, to welcome new residents and reinvigorate an important neighborhood institution. The South Elliott Place Block Association was founded over thirty years ago by neighbors, many of whom still live on the block. Back in the day, our block association performed some pretty important civic functions, making sure our little corner of the city was not neglected. Their community spirit, hard work and involvement have gone a long way toward making our neighborhood what it is today.

While many of the serious issues that motivated some block association to form have been resolved or addressed, there are still good reasons to form or maintain an active block association.

1. A block association can help foster a stronger sense of community. Knowing ones neighbors knits the community together.
2. Having a block association gives your street more clout with city agencies and politicians.
3. A block association is an organization that can be mobilized quickly and join forces with other block associations and community groups to address larger issues of concern.
4. Block associations can put together email directories which can be very useful; for example: residents can exchange information/recommendations regarding: contractors, repairmen, babysitters etc. and notify each other of upcoming events or important issues.
5. It's a great excuse to have a party and meet interesting people.

The Fort Greene Association encourages members of the community to create block associations in order to address block-specific issues, and to work with the FGA to address bigger community issues.

For tips on getting started, send an email to thefga@historicfortgreene.org.

Spring into Greene, 11am April 14th at Fort Greene Park

Held in conjunction with the Step It Up 2007 campaign for National Day of Climate Action, the event will include local musicians and speakers offering information and practical green business and lifestyle solutions. For more information: <http://events.stepitup2007.org/events/show/726>.

"Greene" Energy

Typical utilities produce most of their electricity by burning gas, oil and coal, producing a significant part of America's carbon dioxide. You can switch to 100% wind, solar and hydro power by calling Con Ed or one of the other alternative energy producers listed below. There would be no change in reliability. There would be a slight increase in cost, generally less than \$5 per month.

To switch through Con Ed Solutions call 888-320-8991. You can also enroll online through their website, www.conedsolutions.com. All you need is your account number and home phone.

Another option is Community Energy. You can reach them at 866-WIND-123. Information is available at www.newwindenergy.com and www.nypirg.org/energy/

One of a Kind Art!

Kudos to FGA member, and fabric artist/crafter, Kathryn Zarczynski, who took her FGA Tote Bag (the one with the E on the other side) and made it her own with some appliquéd fabrics.

A Souped-Up Fort Greene Bag



Photo: FGA

Monument Restoration

If you've visited Fort Greene Park recently, you've seen that work is being done on the restoration of the Prison Ship Martyrs Monument at the top of the hill. This restoration is mainly through the efforts of the Fort Greene Park Conservancy (at the time a subcommittee of the FGA) which secured a grant from the New York State Dormitory Authority for \$350,000 to restore the urn at the top of the Monument.

It is with great anticipation the FGA joins in the 100th Anniversary of the Rededication of the monument in 2008. The new light and restored urn atop the monument will act as a reminder — seen throughout Fort Greene, downtown Brooklyn and Manhattan — of the heroic efforts of these martyrs from our past.

Volunteer for the Clinton Hill House Tour, get a ½ price ticket plus an invitation to the after-tour party. Send an email to: Wash308@aol.com

Fowler's Flowers! Look for the statue of General Fowler, at Lafayette & Fulton, spruced up courtesy the FGA and members Peter Vitakis and Rodney Gordon who did all the dirty work.



FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION
HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN

NOTE
Special
Location

Next FGA Meeting: Monday April 16, 7:30pm *Light Refreshments at 7pm*
Paul Robeson Theater, 40 Greene Avenue (between Carlton & Adelphi)

This special presentation is a joint effort of the Fort Greene Association and the Society for Clinton Hill

EXTENDING THE FORT GREENE & CLINTON HILL

HISTORIC DISTRICTS

FEATURING THE AUTHOR OF THE 1973

HISTORIC SURVEYS, ANDREW DOLKART, WHO HAS JUST COMPLETED HIS NEW, EXTENSIVE, SURVEY OF THE AREA FOR THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS COMMISSION TO CONSIDER.

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New Scenes
and
Current
Events

"FITTED by the BEST": 69 Lafayette Ave (near S. Elliott), 718 858-0050. Men & Womens Urban Apparel/Personal Shopping/Image Consulting/Stylist Services. Owners Toni S. Johnson and R. Avery. Tues-Sat 11-7; Sun 12-6. Fun designs - stop in for a warm welcome by 4 young charmers.

RALPH's Internet Café: 694 Fulton St. (near S. Portland). 718 222-0402. Open 11am to 11pm. Falafel & More. Busy and buzzing - check out the technology and the menu.

CLINTON HILL RE and BUSINESS SERVICES CENTER & FedEx Center: 115 S. Oxford (off Fulton). 718 624-9500 Owner Adolphus E. Dickerson. Clinton Hill Properties - Arthur A. Tate, Broker, several years at this location. Office Manager Denise Carter. Mon-Fri 10-8, Sat 11-5. The new attractive space is contemporary and fresh. Say hello, have a look, find out about their many services.

Roslyn Huebener of Aguayo & Huebener is proud to underwrite this issue of the FGA Newsletter.

www.HistoricFortGreene.org

WALKS FOR WOMEN: Fort Greene SNAP is organizing Fort Greene MOVES, a walking group dedicated to improved health and exercise for women in Fort Greene. To learn more, contact SNAP at 718 694 6957, go to www.fortgreenesnap.org or stop by for a visit at 328 Myrtle Ave.

NEW BABY: Arthur Devdan Wade, born Feb 10. Weighed 10 pounds, 4 ounces, was 21½" long at birth and now lives with his parents, Julie and Bryan Wade, at The Griffin. "He is healthy & happy and we are, too." Congratulations!

NEW BABY: Syndey Lam Bassin, born January 11. She weighed in at 8 1/2 lbs, 20 inches. The proud parents are Michael and Annie Bassin, brother Max Bassin and grandma Joan, all of 102 South Oxford. A bundle of best wishes and much fun to the entire family!

The Sackett Group presents Lanford Wilson's The Mound Builders directed by FGA Member John C. Scheffler. Performances at Brooklyn Music School Playhouse, near BAM. Apr 13-29, Information and tickets www.sackettgroup.org

EVENTS AT SOUTH OXFORD SPACE, 138 South Oxford Street, 718-857-2783:

- The Alliance of Resident Theatres/New York (A.R.T./New York) is pleased to present "Carry On Baggage", a multimedia exhibit by Fort Greene artist Chanika Svetvilas at Gallery Three. This intimate third floor gallery is open to the public weekdays 10am to 4pm and weekends 10am to 1pm.

- Kings County Shakespeare presents the play Ruff Love or What You Will, a lively and gender friendly adaptation of The Taming of the Shrew directed by Deborah Houston. It runs March 8 through 19, call 718-398-0546 for performance schedule or go to www.kingscountyshakespeare.org.

- American Opera Projects take over the Great Room on March 30 and 31 presenting a first look at scenes from the new operas The Summer King and The Walled Up Wife. Call 718-398-4024 or visit www.operaprojects.org for more information.

- American Theatre of Harlem begins its Wednesday night spring acting workshop in Studio B at South Oxford Space on April 4. Call 718-857-2783. (Don't let the name fool you - American Theatre of Harlem is all about the spirit of Harlem and is based right here in Fort Greene.)