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NEWSLETTER FALL 2012

*Welcome to the seventeenth edition of the newsletter of the New York Preservation Archive Project. The mission of the New York Preservation Archive Project is to protect and raise awareness of the narratives of historic preservation in New York. Through public programs, outreach, celebration, and the creation of public access to information, the Archive Project hopes to bring these stories to light.*



# BARD

## Save the Date!

*Join Us for the 9th Annual Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit*

The Ninth Annual Bard Birthday Breakfast Benefit is quickly approaching! Joining us this year to celebrate what would have been Albert Bard's 146th birthday is Ed McMahon, the Charles E. Fraser Chair on Sustainable Development at the Urban Land Institute in Washington, DC. Much of Bard's professional life was dedicated to finding a way to protect the aesthetic values of special places; following in that tradition, Ed McMahon has become one of the most compelling voices of our time, nationally advancing the case for protecting character of place. As a leading authority on the topic, Mr. McMahon will speak on the economic assets of community distinctiveness.

Before joining the Urban Land Institute in 2004, McMahon spent 14 years as vice president and director of land use planning for the Conservation Fund, where he helped protect more than five million acres of land of historic or natural significance. He is

also the co-founder and former president of Scenic America, a national not-for-profit organization devoted to protecting America's scenic landscapes. Prior to his work at the Conservation Fund, McMahon taught law and public policy at Georgetown University Law Center.

The author or co-author of 15 books and over 200 articles on such topics as better models for development, connecting landscape and communities, and preserving character of place, McMahon has drafted numerous local land use plans and ordinances during the past 20 years. He has organized successful efforts to acquire and protect urban parkland, wilderness areas, and other conservation properties. McMahon also serves on several advisory boards and commissions including the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation Maryland, the Governor's Institute for Community Design, and the Orton Family Foundation. ■

**Bard Birthday  
Breakfast  
Benefit 2012**

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**December 19, 2012**  
8:15am: Breakfast  
8:30-10:00am: Program

**Manhattan Penthouse**  
80 Fifth Avenue, at 14th Street  
New York City

**Tickets:**  
*Benefit Committee Tickets:* \$250  
*Benefit Tickets:* \$125  
*Student Tickets:* \$65

To purchase tickets or if you have any questions about the event, please contact Matthew Coody at the Archive Project office:  
mcoody@nypap.org  
or 212-988-8379.

Your support of our annual benefit will enable the Archive Project to continue its efforts to record and document the history of the preservation movement in New York City. We are very excited about this upcoming event and sincerely hope you will join us on December 19th!



Archive file register; Courtesy of the New York Preservation Archive Project

## Chairman's Column:

### Why Preservation Activists and Archivists Need Each Other

By Anthony C. Wood, Founder & Chair

History engages, empowers, instructs, and inspires. In order for a movement to benefit from its history, that history has to be known. For today's preservation activists to benefit from those who went before them, they need to know the history of the preservation movement. That history has grown beyond what can be passed down in story and legend. It needs historians to sort it out and write it down. To write that history, authors need a wide variety of sources, among them public and private documents, first person accounts, records, correspondence, the minutes of organizational board meetings, press accounts, and old photographs. That is where we at the Archive Project come in.

At the New York Preservation Archive Project, our focus is on gathering and preserving the widest range of material possible to help future scholars understand and write the history of preservation in New York City. We conduct oral histories (strategically when resources allow, opportunistically when they do not). We rescue personal and organizational papers, and find them secure homes at such permanent collecting institutions as the New York Public Library and the New-York Historical Society. We arrange programs that help capture memories, impressions, and attitudes about preservation events and we encourage other groups to do all of the above.

Our primary focus is gathering the raw material historians will need. We provide the grist for the historical mill. What we gather is usually raw and unprocessed. At best it represents a piece of the puzzle, a few tiles in the mosaic. It is not encyclopedic and ultimately some of it will be proven to

be inaccurate. Some of the oral histories we gather will conflict with others. People often experience the same events differently. Perceptions of the who, what, when, where, and why of events can radically differ. In addition to confusion over basic facts, there will be honest disagreements in opinions, analysis, and judgment. Sorting out history is a difficult business and it is not ours to do.

If the archival version of "Kill them all, let God sort them out," is "Gather all available material, let the historians sort it out," the challenge for preservation advocates is to make sure that they act as preservation archivists, documenting as fully as possible the preservation stories they feel are important. Preservation advocates are often too busy fighting the good fight to keep a chronology of the events in which they are essential participants. It is only in the rarest of instances (such as the Two Columbus Circle documentation project on [www.nypap.org](http://www.nypap.org) or the book *The Fight for City and Suburban Homes: A Model for Successful Community Action*) that an effort has been successfully made to document a preservation campaign shortly after its completion.

At times, preservation advocates have been disappointed in what preservation archivists have been able to gather. Why didn't the oral history with Preservationist X reveal that although he or she was a preservation hero in the escapades they chose to talk about, that same Preservationist X was an obstacle to preservation in episodes they chose not to recount? Why was one person interviewed and not another? Why does the obituary of a fallen preservationist call out their pro-preservation activities but fail to expose their actions—or inactions—that were hostile

to preservation? What if the preserved personal papers of a preservationist only tell the story of their involvement in saving a landmark and not those of the others involved? Sadly, such are the limits of such raw resources.

As Churchill noted, "History is written from the evidence that is available and accessible." The preservation archivist needs the help of the preservation activist to make sure that the greatest possible amount of evidence is available and accessible. If the full history of preservation is to be accurately known, your memories, your documents, your activities need to be fully documented and those documents preserved. If future generations of preservationists are to be inspired and instructed by your efforts and those of your organization, then in addition to fighting the good fight you need to document that good fight! Conduct oral histories with those involved in your efforts, treat your files as an archive, develop an archival mindset consciously documenting your activities, and remember that an archival mindset does not demand a hefty archival budget.

The only way we can truly achieve our mission of documenting, preserving, and celebrating the history of preservation is by turning preservation activists into archivists. To help in this transformation, this fall the Archive Project is providing workshop opportunities to empower individual preservationists and preservation organizations to become better curators of their own archives. Please see the related story in this newsletter and contact us if we can be of help.

Remember: It's your memory. It's our history. It's worth saving. ■

# New to the Archive

## *Bungalows of Far Rockaway! Diamonstein-Spielvogel! SoHo! Ladies' Mile!*

Preservationist Richard George recently donated materials associated with Far Rockaway to the Queens Library Archives. The Rockaways are the various communities that make up the 11-mile long Rockaway Peninsula on the southern border of Queens. With the Atlantic Ocean to the south and Jamaica Bay to the north, a vital middle class beachfront community developed here in the early-twentieth-century, characterized by small bungalows constructed for rental and sale primarily to summer residents of Jewish and Irish heritage. With the advent of inexpensive travel and air-conditioning, the Rockaways ceased to be a popular destination for vacationers after World War II. The development of nursing homes and public housing projects created a burden for the local economy, and with budget cuts to city services, the neighborhood became blighted over the subsequent decades. Although at one point there were over 7,000 bungalows in the area, fewer than 500 now survive. Neighborhood residents Betzie Parker White, Roger White, and Carole Lewis formed the Beachside Bungalow Preservation Association of Far Rockaway (BBPA) in September 1984. The

purpose of the organization is to improve the quality of life in Far Rockaway through neighborhood improvements, educational and cultural programs, and preservation of the bungalows as a reminder of the area's history.

Richard George initially became involved with BBPA when he purchased one of these bungalows in 1986 and viewed firsthand the degradation of the community. He joined the BBPA to help combat many of the issues plaguing the area and to preserve the rare and endangered bungalow structures. He became chairman of BBPA in 1990 and with the help of concerned residents secured a \$30,000 grant from the New York Foundation, a supporter of community-initiated resolutions to solve local problems in New York City neighborhoods. This grant helped BBPA to set up an office, hire two employees, and organize programs for the community. The activities of this more formalized BBPA have included the production of a quarterly newsletter, area cleanup, the establishment of a community garden, an annual art and culture street fair, a summer fine arts course, a youth baseball

league, emergency food programs, and a neighborhood watch. A notable achievement was the 2008 rezoning of the neighborhood to match the height and scale of the original bungalows. More recently, much attention has been garnered for the preservation of the area's historic architecture with the help of a 2010 independent documentary entitled *The Bungalows of Rockaway*. In 2012 the Far Rockaway beachside bungalows were selected by the Historic Districts Council as part of their "Six to Celebrate" program, which identifies six historic New York City neighborhoods that merit preservation. With this annual initiative, the Historic Districts Council provides these neighborhoods with strategic help throughout the year to accomplish preservation goals.

The BBPA records donated by Richard George are varied and include artwork, correspondence, DVDs, financial records, maps, newspaper clippings, photographs, and advocacy posters. Together these materials tell the 30-year history of a small neighborhood organization that continues to fight for the preservation of the buildings that make its area special. The Archive Project is delighted that this collection has been successfully archived at Queens Library, where the records will be available in perpetuity to researchers and other interested parties. If you have questions about this collection, please contact the Queens Library Archives at 718-990-0770.

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The Neighborhood Preservation Center (NPC) recently contacted the Archive Project for assistance in placing three boxes of significant materials at the proper archival repository. These boxes, filled with papers from two noteworthy New York City preservationists, were acquired by the NPC years ago and have since been held there until an appropriate home could be found. Two of these boxes contain papers from Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel's term as a Landmarks Preservation Commissioner (1972-87). This collection includes a vast array of internal documents, personal notes, and correspondence, with information on public hearings, drafts of designation



Porches and Front Lawns of Row of Bungalows, Rockaway, NY, date unknown;  
Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division



Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel;  
Courtesy of Joyce Ravid

reports, documentation on prospective landmarks, maps, articles, and calendars. The third box holds papers from Adriana Kleiman, who received her master's degree in city planning from the University of Pennsylvania in 1962 and was employed soon after by the New York City Planning Commission. The Kleiman materials include documentation on the rezoning of SoHo and the promotion of the neighborhood as a cultural district. Included are newspaper clippings, notes, letters of support from various organizations, correspondence, maps, plans, and residential statistics. Most provocative is the first-hand rezoning data collected from the artists and residents inhabiting the repurposed SoHo loft spaces. The Diamonstein-Spielvogel collection is



"Congested Street in SoHo Where More than a Thousand Artists Live and Work in Huge Lofts";  
Courtesy of John Dominis/LIFE

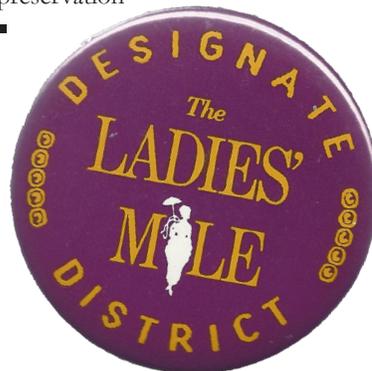
*Images in the column to the right were scanned from items in the Peg Moore Ladies' Mile Archives, the contents of which consist mainly of photographs by Truman Moore and historic research pertaining to the businesses and buildings of the neighborhood.*

now housed at the Landmarks Preservation Commission's on-site archives and the Kleiman materials found a home at the venerable New York Public Library, joining other materials on the history of SoHo in the library's archives.

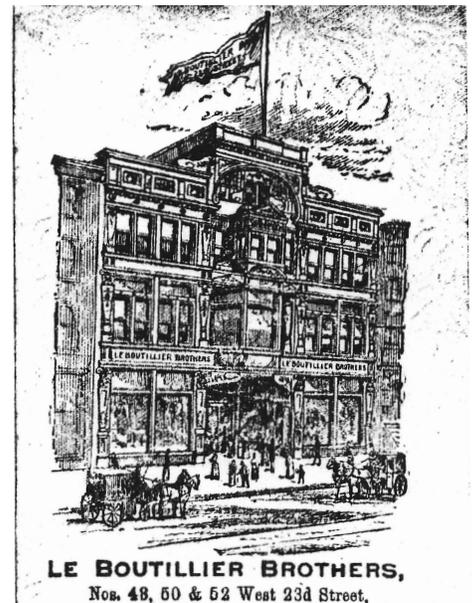
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Another fortunate archival union has been created for Jack Taylor's and Peg Moore's collections on the battle to protect Ladies' Mile. The Ladies' Mile Historic District was designated in May 1989, but only after a concerted campaign by these two figures and others. Fortunately, both preservationists maintained impressive personal collections on the effort, including slideshows, advocacy buttons, pamphlets, photographs, historic research, letters of support from influential New Yorkers, and much more. The New York Historical Society, which is actively expanding its 20th century collections, was thrilled to acquire these important historical records to enhance their current holdings.

Gathering and preserving papers such as these and finding them secure homes at permanent collecting institutions is an indispensable part of the Archive Project's mission. Even small pieces of New York City's preservation story, when collected and made accessible, have the power to educate and inspire those engaged in the preservation arena. ■



Advocacy button from the campaign to designate the Ladies' Mile Historic District, mid-1980s;  
Courtesy of the Jack Taylor Ladies' Mile Archives





2012 LECTURE SERIES  
**THE  
 NEW  
 HISTORIC  
 HOUSE**



Flyer from "The New Historic House" Lecture Series;  
 Courtesy of the Historic House Trust

# NYPAP Events

*Our Public Programs Continue to Celebrate, Educate & Inspire*

This past spring the Archive Project was honored to co-sponsor **"The New Historic House" Lecture Series** with the Historic House Trust (HHT). This series featured "An Anarchist's Guide to Historic House Museums: Thoughts on Houses," "The Great Houses of Havana: A Century of Cuban Style," and "The Russel Wright Design Center: More Than a House Museum." The first lecture, featuring HHT executive director Franklin D. Vagnone, analyzed the role of historic house museums in today's society and how these spaces have come to exist between the "real and the ideal" within architectural history and interpretation. This thought-provoking talk was inspired by Vagnone's manuscript, *The Flattening of History*, a visual and conceptual manifesto derived from decades of experience relating to historic sites and historic house museums. Vagnone teased out the complexities of the visitor experience and made tangible suggestions for ways in which historic sites can transform themselves to become relevant today.

In his "Great Houses of Havana" presentation, architect and author Hermes Mallea spoke on his recently published book that gives readers an insider's look at some of Havana's most significant historic residences. Using interviews and obscure archives to construct these houses' stories, Mallea explored the myriad personal and architectural histories that unfolded behind the walls of these dwellings between the years 1850 and 1960.

The co-sponsored lecture series culminated with a lecture by David M. McAlpin, director of the Russel Wright Design Center, who spoke on the history of Wright's Manitoga, the site's restoration projects, and the evolving responsibilities of a house museum.

The Archive Project enjoys sharing with the public exciting collaborations that explore the boundaries of preservation and incorporate the use of archives to reconstruct histories. If you have any ideas for future event collaborations, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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On November 14th the Archive Project will offer the first of its series of **Archival Outreach, Education, and Technical Assistance Public Education Workshops** geared towards educating New York City not-for-profit preservation organizations on proper records management (see workshop sidebar, page 10, for more details). Using the professional knowledge of archival experts, this Archive Project initiative will give members of the preservation community basic training on how to appropriately care for their records as well as assistance in identifying and maintaining their archival resources, with the ultimate goal of creating an enduring archival mindset in the New York City preservation civic sector. Financial or technical help may be available to selected organizations that participate in these workshops. If you are interested in participating, please contact Matthew Coody at [mcoody@nypap.org](mailto:mcoody@nypap.org) or 212-988-8379. ■

## Stewardship Society

The Archive Project is delighted to continue its series of special events honoring the Stewardship Society, which consists of our most devoted benefactors who annually contribute \$500 or more in general support to our organization, in addition to attending the Bard Benefit.

After its official launch at the delightfully pet-friendly Leash Club, the Society has visited the archives of two great New York City institutions: the Century Association Archives Foundation and the Seventh Regiment Armory Archives Collection. Professional archivists at these two landmark-designated buildings rolled out the red carpet for Stewardship Society guests, hosting intimate viewings of their exceptional treasures. The visits concluded with cocktails in gracious historical settings.

This fall our Stewardship Society is being honored at the Central Park West apartment of Betsy Barlow Rogers. Ms. Rogers holds a fascinating personal collection of books, prints, and other materials relating to the history and preservation of landscape design. These archives have influenced Ms. Rogers' work, both in restoring Central Park and in writing about the history of landscape design and the cultural meaning of place. The Archive Project is pleased to offer such inimitable experiences to our most generous supporters!

*We hope that you will consider becoming a Steward of the New York Preservation Archive Project, and thus become a steward of the history of New York City's preservation movement. To join the Stewardship Society, please contact Matthew Coody at [mcoody@nypap.org](mailto:mcoody@nypap.org) or 212-988-8379.*

# The Dvořák House, the Dvořák Room, and a “Historical Memory Bank”

By Elizabeth Rohn Jeffe, Vice-Chair

In 1989, Beth Israel Medical Center announced plans to buy and raze an 1852 Italianate row house at 327 East 17th Street near Stuyvesant Square to make way for the creation of an AIDS hospice. The 19th century house had lost its exterior entry stairs, as had many row houses in the City, and the interiors had been partitioned, causing the house to be viewed by some as lacking in architectural merit. But preservationists reacted to the proposed demolition with alarm: the structure had once been the home of renowned Czech composer Antonín

Dvořák, who rented the first two floors for himself and his family from 1892 to 1895 when he lived in New York City as the director of the National Conservatory of Music of America. Now, Dvořák’s house, with a plaque on its exterior testifying to his residency and his accomplishments while living there, was in danger of being lost forever. (Unfortunately, 327 East 17th Street lay just outside the Stuyvesant Square Historic District.)

The battle to save the Dvořák House, destined to be filled with twists and turns, remains today a case study in differing perceptions about what is worth saving and why. Dvořák came to New York at the invitation of Jeannette Meyer Thurber, the driving force behind the creation of the National Conservatory of Music of America, which was located near the house that Dvořák rented. (Please see sidebar, facing page) During his three-year tenure as director, Dvořák composed two of his masterpieces: his cello concerto in B Minor and his Symphony No. 9, “From the New World.” The latter occupies a special place in both American and international music canons because Dvořák drew heavily on Native American music and Negro spirituals for inspiration. Dvořák’s students at the Conservatory, in turn, would influence George Gershwin, Aaron Copland, and Duke Ellington.

Viewing the cultural legacy of the Dvořák House as reason enough to save it from the wrecker’s ball, preservationists immediately set about fighting for landmark designation for the house. Longtime local resident and ardent preservationist Jack Taylor, who has lived on East 18th Street at Third Avenue for many years, had already fought to save Lüchow’s restaurant and now saw this proposed demolition as yet another threat to his neighborhood’s history. Jack immediately set about enlisting members of the Czech-American community, neighborhood residents, including the Stuyvesant Park Neighborhood Association, and well-known musicians to join in the battle to

save the Dvořák House. The response was gratifying: in addition to local supporters, noted Czech-born architect Jan Hird Pokorny, later a member of the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), cellist Yo-Yo Ma, theater producer Joseph Papp, and the Czech president and the archbishop of Prague spoke out against the demolition. In 1991, the LPC did indeed designate the house.

However, this success was short-lived. The battle raged on and the fate of the Dvořák House was once again in play because several parties—not just Beth Israel—did not share the viewpoint of preservationists. For one thing, the idea that the building would become an AIDS hospice resonated with many during an era when such facilities were sorely needed, although other buildings nearby were available as alternative sites. Yet another aspect of the debate focused on whether the City should designate a structure simply because a famous person lived in it for a number of years; in other words, does a building without a compelling *architectural* identity merit preservation?

In “Dvořák Doesn’t Live Here Anymore,” an editorial now infamous among many preservationists, *The New York Times* opined that, “(t)he commissioners made the building a landmark not for its physical attributes but as a kind of historical memory bank.” The paper backed those wishing to overturn the LPC designation. Among those who eloquently defended the idea that the Dvořák House indeed merited saving was Brendan Gill, a dedicated preservationist and a longtime critic for the *New Yorker*. In a letter to the *Times*, Gill argued that saving the house was a worthy endeavor precisely *because* it was a “historical memory bank.” (He satirically asked if Mozart’s house in Salzburg should be torn down because he didn’t live there anymore.) In the end, however, the Council voted to reverse the LPC designation, and the Dvořák House was razed in 1992. According to Jack Taylor, who was present at the hearing, the vote was a close one—20 to 16—and when William



Antonín Dvořák with his Family in the U.S.A., 1892; Courtesy of the Antonín Dvořák Museum



327 East 17th Street, New York City; Courtesy of www.nyc-architecture.com

Warfield sang “Goin’ Home,” the popular version of the refrain from Dvořák’s “New World” symphony, many members of the City Council were visibly moved.

Fortunately, architect Jan Hird Pokorny managed to salvage something of the composer’s daily life in the row house by saving sections of mantelpieces from the front and back parlors. Although both mantelpieces were damaged, it was possible



Bronze plaque once located on the exterior of the Dvořák House; Courtesy of the Dvořák American Heritage Association

to join them together to create a single complete unit, thus rescuing at least one element of the home that Dvořák had lived in. The plaque on the exterior of the House was also saved, but it seemed that the Dvořák House might otherwise be lost to public memory. Would the gifted composer so inspired by the “New World” that he lived and worked in be erased from the City’s physical landscape?

Happily, this would not be



Bohemian National Hall, 321 East 73rd Street, New York City; Courtesy of Kenyh Krokodyl

the case. The Dvořák American Heritage Association (DAHA), founded in 1990 in response to the proposed demolition of the Dvořák House, was determined to keep Dvořák’s memory alive. Immediately after the loss of the Dvořák House, with the support of the DAHA board, Jan Hird Pokorny advocated a two-pronged mission to safeguard the great musician’s rightful place in the City’s “historical memory bank.” The first initiative was to create a room in Dvořák’s memory; the second was to move Croatian-American sculptor Ivan Meštrović’s statue of Dvořák from the roof of Philharmonic Hall (now Avery Fisher Hall) to Stuyvesant Square Park. Although it would take many years to complete the Dvořák Room, Dvořák’s statue, which now stands on a pedestal created by Pokorny, was placed in Stuyvesant Square Park in a public ceremony in 1997.

The site for the memorial room would be at Bohemian National Hall (BNH), a landmarked structure at 321 East 73rd Street. Built in 1896, BNH was created as a gathering place for the substantial community of New Yorkers with Czech and Slovak roots; its umbrella organization, the Bohemian Benevolent & Literary Association, comprises a number of entities, including the DAHA. While Dvořák was living in New York, plans were underway to build the Hall, and the composer gave concerts to raise funds for this endeavor. In recent years, BNH has undergone a significant restoration. Jan Hird Pokorny renovated the building’s beautiful façade, and other architects and designers have provided the Hall



Jeannette M. Thurber; Courtesy of Indiana University’s Lilly Library

## The Woman Behind Dvořák’s Sojourn in America

Jeannette Meyer Thurber (1850-1946), the founder and driving force behind the National Conservatory of Music of America at 126-128 East 17th Street, is hardly a household name today, but she was once a key figure in American musical education. A woman who moved successfully in powerful circles, Thurber possessed both passion for music and a keen eye for talent; it was she who invited Antonín Dvořák to direct the National Conservatory of Music of America. The rest is musical history.

The conservatory, begun in 1885 but defunct by the 1920s, attracted other famous faculty members such as Victor Herbert, the cellist and composer. But Dvořák’s arrival in 1892 for a three-year sojourn would produce a unique marriage of the gifts of the European master composer with the music and culture of America, resulting in two of Dvořák’s master works, his Symphony No. 9 in E Minor, “From the New World,” and his Cello Concerto in B Minor, both of which remain perennial favorites around the world.



Original mantelpiece from the Dvořák House being reinstalled in the Bohemian National Hall's Dvořák Room; Courtesy of Radio Prague

with a full interior refurbishment.

Fortunately, Majda Kallab Whitaker stood ready and willing to make the Dvořák Room come to life. Having come to the United States from Prague as an infant, Majda shared her Czech heritage with Dvořák. She had been active in raising funds to preserve Bohemian National Hall and joined the DAHA board in 2006. With a degree from the Bard Graduate Center, Majda was fully qualified as a design and cultural historian with particular expertise in interiors of the 1890s. Once the Dvořák Room's "bones" were in place, Majda was delighted to undertake what she describes as "a great project to develop a furnishings plan for the space."

Describing herself as "a preservationist

at heart," Majda used the archival skills necessary for this endeavor, poring over old photographs and reading materials about Dvořák for a year. Although no photographs of the interior of Dvořák's apartment exist, Majda was able to attain a sense of what the interior of the row house of a man who lived modestly would look like in the early 1890s through her research. The essential mission was to find what Majda calls "iconic" items for a Victorian parlor and to be sure that the room reflected the physical proportions of the times, which dictated high ceilings typical of an 1850s row house.

Using what would be "representative" as her compass, Majda installed an 1890s lighting fixture, noting that the Stuyvesant Square area still had only gas lighting at the time of Dvořák. The room has the red velvet curtains that would have been de rigueur for the period, but Majda decided against using wallpaper, another late Victorian mainstay, because the room is also used as an exhibition space. The marble mantelpiece saved by Jan Hird Pokorny is now installed in the Dvořák Room, as is an 1893 "imperial-sized" signed photographic portrait of the composer. A period desk sits beneath the portrait, and to the right of the desk is a turn-of-the-century birdcage, evoking the recollections of Harry T. Burleigh, one of Dvořák's famous African American students, who said that Dvořák liked to open his birdcages and let the occupants fly freely

about the room. What is missing from the room is a Steinway piano. Steinway & Sons, whose showroom was nearby on East 14th Street for many years, had given a piano to the composer as a present, but whether it was an upright or a grand remains a mystery. (In correspondence, Dvořák described the piano as the "one good piece of furniture" in his parlor.)

A large plaster cast of the statue of Dvořák now in Stuyvesant Square Park also graces one corner of the room. Majda saved this item in a dramatic fashion. Having located the plaster cast at the Manhattan School of Music, Majda indicated her interest in obtaining it. Disaster nearly struck, however, before Majda could get to the school and claim her prize: because of the statue's poor condition at the time, it was just about to be placed in a dumpster when a quick thinking librarian at the school called Majda to effect a rescue.

Since the Dvořák Room is also an exhibition space, Majda integrated other elements to make the space useful for meetings and to showcase memorabilia associated with Dvořák. A 19th-century inspired modern conference table with chairs and a row of old display cases, on long-term loan from the New York Public Library, grace the room, and a period mirror donated by Jack Taylor hangs above the mantelpiece.

The Dvořák Room opened to the public on October 12, 2011 with a special exhibition, "Dvořák's 'New World' Symphony and the New York Philharmonic." This event culminated years of remarkable effort on the part of those dedicated to preserving Dvořák's heritage in America. The creation of a room evoking Dvořák's daily life in the City dramatically contradicts the argument offered by the *Times* in 1991 that a "historical memory bank" is not worth saving. As Jack Taylor so aptly observed in an interview for this article, "the loss of the Dvořák House was a blow to preservation. But the current state of memorializing the composer reflects the power of the landmarks law in keeping alive both the debate and Dvořák's legacy. In many ways we, the preservation community, have caused people who otherwise might not care about classical music to appreciate it through the story of Dvořák, and the Dvořák Room is a fitting place in which to



View of the Dvořák Room showing the mantelpiece salvaged from Dvořák House and the statue, in plaster, of Dvořák by Ivan Meštrović; Photo by Roman Franc

recognize the composer's legacy in the City."

Indeed, the New York Preservation Archive Project recognizes this "coda" of remembrance of Antonín Dvořák as a notable element of the preservation battle for his home. The story contains many of the threads of the preservation tapestry: the battle to save a site (in this case unsuccessful but instructive historically); the efforts to salvage what could be saved; the use of archives to recapture historical facts and images; the dedication to find a new path of historic expression of person and place; and the donation by Jack Taylor of his papers dealing with the Dvořák House battle to the DAHA. In fact, Majda is now in touch with the Archive Project for advice on how to organize and save these papers, and Jack hopes that they may someday be used to create an exhibition in the Dvořák Room telling the story of the lost battle to save the composer's house.

Through the efforts of Jan Hird Pokorny (now deceased), DAHA board members Jack Taylor, Majda Kallab Whitaker, Susan Lucak, conductor Maurice Peress, NYU music professor Michael Beckerman, and others, Dvořák is once again honored in a space that recognizes him as an important part of the City's history. The plaque placed in 1941 on the Dvořák House by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia now greets visitors coming to visit the Dvořák Room, encouraging them to pause and think of a great composer's creative sojourn in the City and the efforts of generations of New Yorkers who worked so hard to commemorate the remarkable opus resulting from that three year visit. ■

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*This article is based on a series of conversations with Jack Taylor and Majda Kallab Whitaker; a tour of the Dvořák Room; relevant background materials on the Archive Project's website; and newspaper articles in The New York Times. For those interested in reading more about the Dvořák House, the New York Preservation Archive Project's website contains two interviews with Jack Taylor on his preservation activities, one of which deals in depth with the battle to save the Dvořák House. The Archive Project's website has also posted a separate history of the Dvořák House.*



## In Memoriam

*The preservation community recently mourned the loss of three longtime members. Please share your memories of these figures online at the Memory Collection Project: [www.nypap.org/content/memory-collection-project](http://www.nypap.org/content/memory-collection-project).*

**Everett Ortner**, and his wife Evelyn Ortner, became dedicated advocates of the historic architecture of Park Slope, Brooklyn, when they moved to the neighborhood in 1963. At a time when brownstones and row houses in Brooklyn were receiving very little preservation attention, Everett and Evelyn founded the Brownstone Revival Coalition in 1968. They were heavily involved in the successful campaign to designate the Park Slope Historic District, achieved in 1973. In 1998, the Ortners founded Preservation Volunteers, an annual exchange program that brings French volunteers to work on American preservation projects and vice versa. The couple was the subject of a New York Preservation Archive Project oral history in 2003, which explored their lasting legacy on the revitalization of Park Slope. Evelyn passed away in 2006 at the age of 82, followed by Everett in May 2012 at the age of 92. At the time of his death, Everett was still living in the 1886 brownstone he and his wife purchased on Berkeley Place almost 50 years ago.

**Ivan Karp**—perhaps best known as a New York gallery owner who helped discover, promote, and market the Pop artists of the 1960s—was also renowned for foraging through buildings as they were being demolished, collecting architectural artifacts. As president of the Anonymous Arts Recovery Society, Karp traversed New York City in a battered Jeep looking for gargoyles, capitals, cornices, and other ornamental features from buildings undergoing demolition. He was a particular fan of the idiosyncratic carved portraits that immigrant craftsmen made of one another and incorporated into façades. Karp, a self-

described "rubble-rouser," would often bribe workers on a building site. "For anywhere between \$5 to \$25, they'll take the trouble not to smash something," he said. Today, thousands of the remnants that Karp saved continue to be displayed in the museums to which he donated his salvage items. Karp died in June 2012 at his home in Charlotteville, New York. He was 86.

**Tony Goldman** did not consider himself a real estate developer, but rather a long-term investor in the revitalization of neighborhoods. Goldman began his real estate career renovating properties on Manhattan's Upper West Side. In the late-1970s Goldman recognized the appeal of SoHo's decaying cast-iron architecture and vast loft spaces, eventually purchasing and renovating 18 buildings in the neighborhood. His investment in SoHo's powerful sense of place helped to add vibrancy to the neighborhood, ensuring its survival. In the mid-1980s Goldman saw similar potential in the vacant, dilapidated Art Deco hotels of Miami Beach. Buying and restoring many of these properties, Goldman endeared himself to preservationists by saving these buildings' historic interiors along with their exteriors. From the 1990s until recent years Goldman's attention has focused on Philadelphia's Midtown Village, Manhattan's Wall Street, and Wynwood, an arts warehouse district in Miami. In 2010, Goldman won the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Louise du Pont Crowninshield Award for more than four decades of engineering the renaissance of neighborhoods while honoring their distinctive historic qualities. Goldman died in September 2012 in New York City. He was 68.

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# Save the Date First Archival Workshop

*Outreach, Education &  
Technical Assistance Initiative*

On Wednesday, November 14th, the Archive Project will be hosting the first in an interactive workshop series for preservation organizations. The goal of these workshops is to educate local preservation not-for-profits on the importance of their organizational records, including assistance in the identification and management of their archival resources. The first workshop will offer the opportunity to speak with an archival professional about specific needs for your organization, network with similarly-sized groups from across the five boroughs, understand how other groups have begun to implement the archival process, and learn the basics of proper records management. Participation in the workshop will qualify your organization as a potential recipient of financial or technical assistance to help implement archival initiatives.

In preparation for this series the Archive Project has begun outreach to the city's preservation not-for-profits via an online survey. The results will help us tailor these workshops to address specific organizational needs, such as how to care for different types of archive material, whether or not to invest in digitization, and how to secure funding for such endeavors. Please look forward to more announcements on dates, times, and speakers for these workshops on our website, [www.nypap.org](http://www.nypap.org) or via our email blasts. For more information on participating in these programs, please contact Matthew Coody at [mcoody@nypap.org](mailto:mcoody@nypap.org) or 212-988-8379.

# Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

While the story of Isaac Stern's contribution to the rescue of Carnegie Hall in the [spring 2012] issue of the NYPAP newsletter is a perfectly legitimate one, some of us feel it should have also addressed the downside of Stern's preservation sympathies.

**He was complicit in the destruction of the landmarked Dvořák House in that he fell victim to the contention of its owner, Beth Israel Hospital, that no other site existed for the hospital's proposed AIDS hospice.**

**Stern's reputation as a prominent musician, and his position in favor of a dubious claim by a medical institution, played a significant role in the over-turning of the Dvořák House's landmark designation by the New York City Council.**

**It was also the forerunner of several subsequent similar actions by the Council that have cast unreasonable doubt upon the decisions of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.**

**Yours truly,  
Jack Taylor**

*Member, Board of Directors of  
the Dvořák American Heritage Association*

## Editor's Note:

In the Archive Project's spring 2012 newsletter, an article featured the newly-accessible audio recording of an oral history between Roberta Brandes Gratz and Isaac Stern. An internationally-renowned violinist, Stern used his connections and reputation to help save Carnegie Hall from the wrecking ball. Gratz's interview with Stern highlights his involvement, including his work to obtain a large grant from philanthropist Jacob Kaplan to fund the preservation effort, vigorously rallying support among musicians, civic leaders, and the public, and ultimately convincing the mayor and Board of Estimate to purchase the building for the City. While Stern's contribution to this battle was significant, the above letter has revealed that Stern was also surprisingly complicit in the demolition of the landmark-designated Dvořák House.

Interviews and oral histories are useful resources but they suffer from the reality that they reflect only the interviewee's point of view and cover only the topics that person wants to discuss (see *Chairman's Column* on page 2). Hence the Archive Project endeavors to undertake oral histories with a diverse array of figures so that several perspectives on important topics can be captured. This is also why the organization is interested in saving the papers of individuals involved with the many different facets of the preservation field. Our newsletter article highlighted an oral history with Isaac Stern and hence suffered from the limits of that interview—its singular focus on Carnegie Hall. By printing this follow-up the Archive Project by no way wishes to undermine Stern's reputation, but rather wishes to capture a more complete picture of Stern's preservation record. This helps illustrate the true limits of oral histories and underscores the need to gather multiple sources to capture the full preservation story.

# NYPAP News

The Archive Project would like to welcome its newest board member, Gina Pollara. Gina is executive director of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Four Freedoms Park, a memorial to Roosevelt and his Four Freedoms on the southern tip of Roosevelt Island. The park, which will soon be completed, was designed by Louis Kahn in 1972-74 and executed by Mitchell | Giurgola Architects. Gina's zeal and savvy will be a wonderful addition to the board.

Joseph M. Ciccone, an immeasurably helpful supporter of our organization, has announced that he will be stepping down from the board of the Archive Project. Although his archival expertise will be greatly missed, Mr. Ciccone will continue to assist the Archive Project in the future.

Stay tuned for a special announcement memorializing the remarkable Albert S. Bard. Bard is noted for the passage of the Bard Act, the piece of legislation that enabled the creation of the New York City Landmarks Law in 1965. To celebrate his work, the Archive Project is planning a special commemoration in 2013, which will be the 50th anniversary of his death. Details to follow!

NYPAP would like to thank the New York Community Trust's Windie Knowe Fund, the Robert A. and Elizabeth R. Jeffe Foundation, and the J.M. Kaplan Fund for their generous grants. Our work here at the Archive Project could not be accomplished without their—and your—financial support.

The New York Preservation Archive Project is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to documenting, preserving, and celebrating the history of historic preservation in New York City. Recognizing the instructive and inspirational importance of this history to the continued health, success and growth of preservation in our city, NYPAP hopes to bring these stories to light through public programs, oral histories, and the creation of public access to information. NYPAP is devoted to celebrating neglected narratives of New York historic preservation, as well as the canon, using the archives that hold these stories.

NYPAP thanks the following supporters for their generous contributions in 2011:

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The New York Preservation Archive Project is a not-for-profit organization, and we depend on contributions to continue our work. We hope you will consider making a donation to support the documentation and celebration of the history of preservation in New York City.

Donations can be made in the form of checks mailed to our office (174 East 80th Street, New York, NY 10075), securely online via PayPal on our website ([www.nypap.org](http://www.nypap.org)), or by credit card over the phone at 212-988-8379.

As always, NYPAP welcomes any thoughts, comments and suggestions from our supporters. Please feel free to contact Matthew Coody at [mcoody@nypap.org](mailto:mcoody@nypap.org) or 212-988-8379.