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NEWSLETTER

FALL/WINTER 2018

Welcome to the 29th 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.



NYPAP's board of directors and staff discuss the organization's future during its first strategic planning retreat. | Courtesy of Dina Posner

Lost-But For My Own Files

The Importance of Paper Hoarders, Dumpster Divers, and Archivists

By *Anthony W. Robins, Archive Project Board Member*

Anybody who conducts research on New York City buildings knows what a rich body of material is available—thanks to the city's libraries, archives, and collections of public records. Few cities can compete with New York's wealth of resources. But none of those records would exist were it not for the determined souls who saved them from destruction, and none would be of much use were it not for the librarians and archivists and civil servants who collect and sort and conserve the millions upon millions of pages—and who help researchers find their way through it all. Behind every good

historian stands a determined team of paper hoarders, dumpster divers, and archivists.

I first experienced archival immersion at the library of the Port Authority of New York, haunting it for months in search of material for a book on the original World Trade Center. In the PA's library on the 55th floor of Tower One, I pored over early plans and correspondence, papers related to the evolution of the project and its design, chronologies, "fact sheets," hundreds of magazine and newspaper clips, two fat volumes of the "World Trade Center

**Support Our Efforts
 2018 Year End Appeal**

Watch your inbox for our year end appeal! Your financial support allows the Archive Project to save important papers, conduct oral histories, and tell the story of preservation in New York City.

We could use your help to end 2018 with a bang and make 2019 our best year yet! We'll even accept year end donations in early 2019 because, in the end...

You make our work happen!

If you would like to send a check or donate via credit card, please contact us at (212) 988-8379.

Evaluation of Architectural Firms”—reams and reams of invaluable material, without which that book couldn’t have been written.

A cost-cutting Port Authority chairman later closed the library and stored its contents in a sub-basement. A group of librarians had planned to meet at the Center to divvy up the materials among various institutions, but by chance postponed the meeting—which had been scheduled for September 11th, 2001. Though the disaster destroyed the originals, some 600 pages of copies survived in my own files. It took some doing, but those pages are now scanned and posted on my web site—a digital archive.

I discovered the New York Transit Museum’s extraordinary archive while researching books on the art and architecture of the subway and Grand Central Terminal. I spent several weeks in a small office in the basement of a Transit Authority tower in downtown Brooklyn, looking at masses of material about those icons of New York transportation—documents brought to me from the surrounding library stacks. Two excellent archivists helped me find the most relevant material. Without them I would have needed months to do the work.

Anybody writing about the history of theater in New York must spend time at two extraordinary collections: the Billy Rose Theatre Division at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center, and the Shubert Archive housed at the Lyceum Theater on West 45th Street. The archive office is on the theater’s top floor, and millions of documents are in a loft building behind it. The Billy Rose Division is one of many research centers in the New York Public Library system, but the Shubert Archive is a private venture. The Shuberts have owned or operated hundreds of theaters around the country, many of them blessed with nooks and crannies into which, over the decades, theater managers and superintendents stuffed old plans, correspondence, and playbills, until the Shubert Organization pulled all the material together and created the archive in the 1980s. It’s amazing where documents lie unnoticed

until being rescued. Theater architect Herbert Krapp’s papers, now safely entrusted to the Shubert Archive, were once famously stored next to a movie theater’s ladies’ rest room. The Brooklyn Bridge drawings—the Brooklyn Bridge drawings!—languished in a carpentry shop beneath the Williamsburg Bridge until 1976, when they came under the protection of the New York City Municipal Archives.

Many architects’ papers had long gathered dust in vaults and warehouses, until inevitable bouts of cost-cutting led to a riot of dumpsters. Fortunately for architectural historians, in 1973 a determined group founded COPAR, the Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, which tracked down as many such records as possible, published guides to their whereabouts, and did their level best to find



The Archive Project’s Stewardship Society tours the Shubert Archives | Courtesy of the Archive Project

them loving homes. Fortunately for them, and for us, at about the same time the Avery Library at Columbia University began to accept architects’ papers (NYPAP honored Janet Parks, retiring Avery archivist, at last year’s Bard Breakfast). I still have my copy of COPAR’s *Architectural Research Materials in New York City: A Guide to Resources in All Five Boroughs*—several hundred sheets with reinforced edges, covered in blue type and collected into a three-ring binder.

And then—surprise! Live long enough, and stuff enough old papers into battered file cabinets, and you too may one day become an archive. I’m just one of many people who have stubbornly held on to crumbling

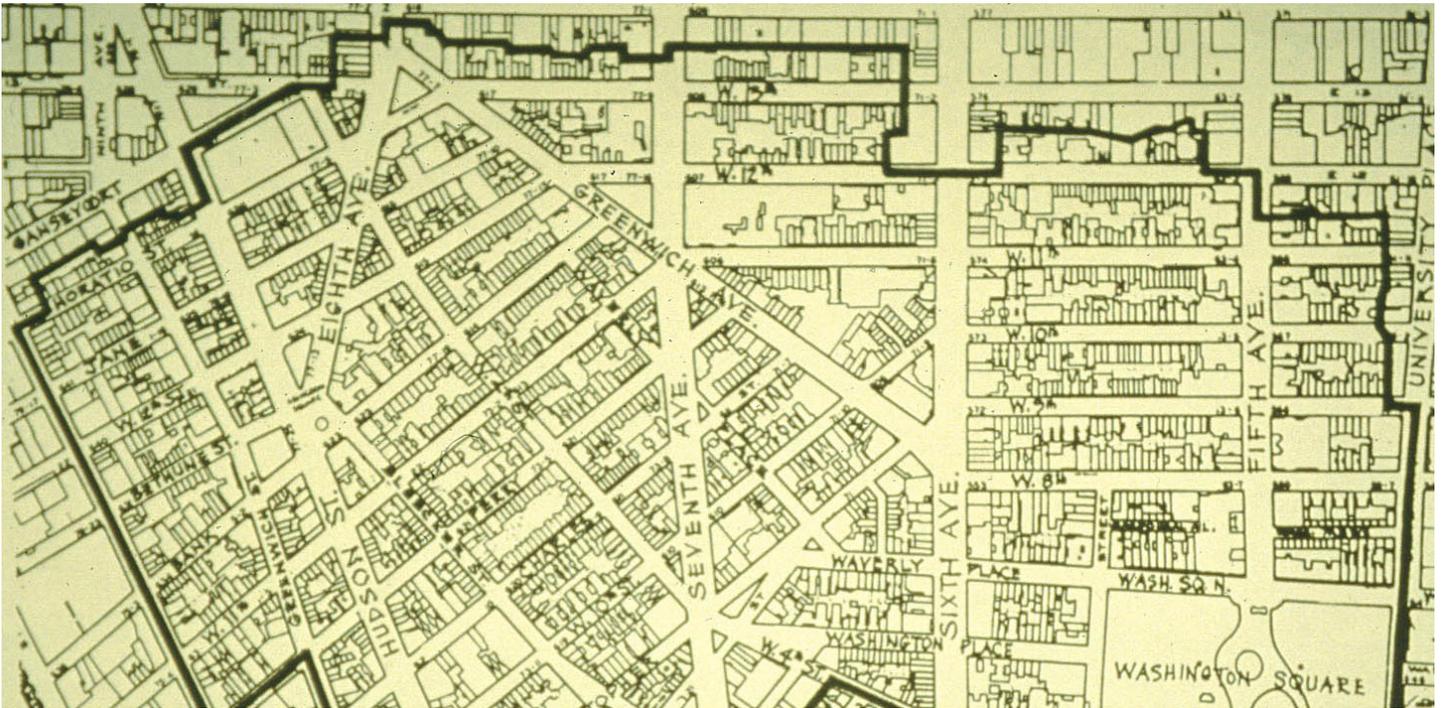
file folders, forgotten them, and then in a fit of downsizing discovered the value of their contents. My old papers from the 1970s, when I volunteered with Margot Gayle’s legendary Friends of Cast-Iron Architecture, have now found a cozy nest in the library of the New-York Historical Society, which is building an archive of materials related to historic preservation in New York City.

And that brings us to the New York Preservation Archive Project (NYPAP). The key to this kind of work is to get it done while there’s still time. Collect the papers before they’re shredded. Interview the key players while they’re still with us. It takes time, and curiosity, and ingenuity, and determination, and of course, money, but the results are there for all to see—especially now, in the digital age.

Although, once upon a time, archives lived brick-and-mortar lives, today more material than you might imagine has comfortably retired to the cloud. You can scroll through vast amounts of archival material from the privacy of your desktop, and all that material is not only accessible, it’s searchable. If you don’t believe me, take a few minutes to visit the NYPAP website—you’ll soon be reading transcripts of interviews, or, better yet, listening to the recordings themselves. It’s raw information, as all archival material must be, and it needs to be checked and confirmed and properly interpreted. But

it’s there—ready and waiting for the next historian or student or daydreamer curious to know how so many of our city’s wonders have evaded the bulldozers and how we have managed to preserve the best parts of New York from the whirlwind of redevelopment that continually uproots the old to make way for the new. And if you’re reading this column, then you’re part of the reason our collection survives and grows.

Please consider reaching out to NYPAP if you are aware of any papers or archives related to the story of preservation in New York City that are ready for donation. Thank you for your support! ■



A map of the proposed Greenwich Village Historic District (Proposal No. 1), December 1966. | Courtesy of the Archive Project

Preservation by the Numbers

Looking Back at the Designation Records of LPC Chairs

By Simeon Bankoff

Preservationists, like many philatelists, numismatists, and enthusiasts of every stripe, greatly enjoy analyzing, categorizing, and cataloging the objects of our fascination. In our case, especially among the New York breed, the coin of obsession is landmark designation. The questions, “Is that building a landmark?” “Which neighborhood will be designated next?” and “Has a building like that ever been designated?” are all perennial queries at any preservation gathering, repeated like those in a catechism class. To some extent, this makes sense. Landmark designation is the mile-marker at the end of the campaign to save a building or neighborhood. After designation is achieved, the difficult and never-ending work of stewarding that building or neighborhood into the future begins, but landmark designation sets the rules for that work. Combined with preservationists’ common belief that the future can be found in the patterns of the past, this can often lead to conversations comparing current concerns with the actions or inaction of previous landmarks commissions.

In September 2018, Mayor Bill de Blasio appointed Sarah Carroll as the new Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) chair, the 12th person to fill that role (if one counts the three interim acting appointments). To better understand the legacy Carroll has inherited, and to facilitate more robust cocktail conversations on the topic, the historic district designation records of the previous LPC chairs, from Harmon Goldstone to Meenakshi Srinivasan, have been gathered, analyzed, and presented below.

A few notes before diving into the data: while campaigns around individual landmarks are often more publically prominent than those in support of historic districts, historic districts encompass over 99% of the properties overseen by the LPC, making their designation more significant when considering citywide policy. Additionally, individual chairs are credited with the historic districts officially proposed (or “calendared,” in the common parlance) under their leadership rather than the chair under whom the district was designated. From a process

perspective, beginning the designation process is far more determinative than actually taking the vote, since, in 53 years, only two proposed historic districts were heard and not designated by the Landmarks Commission (both as part of the recent de Blasio backlog initiative). Therefore, in this instance, it seems fair to give credit to the initiator of what will almost certainly be a successful effort than to the person who closed the deal. Finally, recent interim Acting Chair Frederick Bland was not included in this data set, as his four-month tenure over the summer of 2018, while admirable in many ways, was brief enough to be statistically inconsequential from a strict historic district designation perspective.

There is value in describing the common beliefs of a community, especially if that community is as history-driven and long-remembered as the preservationist community. Received wisdom amongst New York City preservationists about the various LPC chairs goes something like this: Harmon

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2018 Bard Birthday – A Breakfast Benefit Blast!

J.M. Kaplan Fund President Emeritus Joan K. Davidson Accepts the Archive Project's Preservation Award to Wide Acclaim

The Bowery Boys of Podcast Fame Entertain the Audience

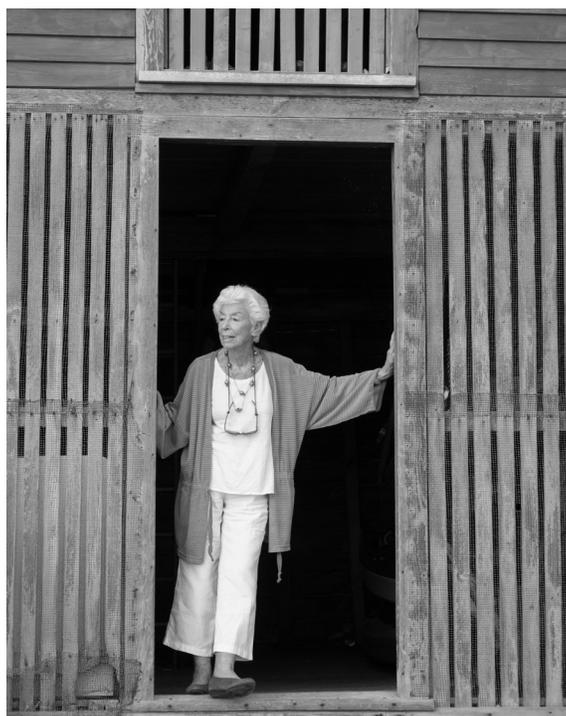
It has become a holiday tradition: as snowflakes begin to swirl, historic preservationists and allies from around the city gather to celebrate efforts to tell the story of historic preservation. The holiday season kicked off in similar fashion this year, as the Archive Project hosted its 15th annual **Bard Birthday Benefit Breakfast** at the Yale Club on the morning of Thursday, December 13th. The occasion provided a chance to honor the event's namesake, Albert Bard, the indefatigable preservationist without whom New York City would not have a landmarks law today.

Bard would no doubt be proud of the honoree who graciously accepted the Archive Project's Preservation Award at this year's Bard Breakfast, someone who has helped form the bedrock of the preservation movement over the decades and helped to tell that formation story: **Joan K. Davidson**. And there's a good chance Bard would have genuinely enjoyed the speakers who enlivened the morning in the ballroom, one of the best tag teams at work in the city today: **The Bowery Boys**, Greg Young and Tom Meyers, known for their monthly New York City history podcasts.

This year's Bard Breakfast was truly a joy, a wonderful "conclave of the preservationists" providing a chance for old friends to meet and new friends to be discovered. But the main attractions at this annual celebratory affair were the primary focus.

While Joan Davidson is known locally and beyond for her charitable and civic works, mainly through her association with the J.M. Kaplan Fund, the Archive Project honored her this year for a different reason. Specifically, Davidson was chosen to receive

its Preservation Award for her decades of efforts helping to capture and disseminate the story of the historic preservation movement in New York City. Because of Davidson's enthusiasm, conscience, and funding, more people have come to know how Gotham's greatest landmarks and neighborhoods were saved through a variety of different methods. She seems to understand keenly



Honoree Joan K. Davidson stands in the doorway of the repurposed corn crib that serves as a boathouse at her home, Midwood, along the Hudson River. | Courtesy of The J.M. Kaplan Fund

what Albert Bard himself came to realize in 1956 when he witnessed the passage of state legislation permitting New York cities to enact laws regulating historic structures after decades of effort: one must "be in it" for the long haul, though it's crucial to decide at the outset to "be in it" in the first place.

For one, Davidson oversaw the Kaplan Fund's grant of seed money in 1993 to start

the Archive Project, seeing value in some of the Archive Project's early oral history efforts when she served as president of the Fund. Without this initial vote of confidence, Archive Project founder Anthony C. Wood may not have had the resources necessary to start the nascent organization on a path to the present as he worked independently to gather stories from preservation pioneers.

As Wood has noted: "Joan provided me with personal encouragement." Davidson's time as president of the Fund was also replete with projects relating to preservation, history, and archives. For example, the Fund supported oral histories regarding the creation and preservation of Westbeth and helped fund the preservation of the Frederick Law Olmsted Archives.

Davidson's efforts following her term as Fund president have been especially crucial to documenting preservation history. Her support of publications via the Fund's *Furthermore* grants in publishing program has built a lasting bulwark to ensure that historic preservation stories are not lost. From 1995 through the present, *Furthermore*, founded by Davidson, has provided grants that helped fund publication of over 150 books, pamphlets, maps and other printed educational materials—a number of which capture parts of the story of historic preservation in New York City. The staggering list of titles

includes seminal works like Andrew Dolkart's *Guide to New York City Landmarks*, Anthony C. Wood's book, *Preserving New York: Winning the Right to Protect a City's Landmarks*, and the monumental *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* by Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace. Still other *Furthermore* projects are a pamphlet called *A Young People's Guide to East Harlem*, a walking guide called *Six Heritage Tours of the Lower East Side*, and the book *In*

the South Bronx of America by Mel Rosenthal. Preservation classics like *The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1900-1940*, and *Saving Place: 50 Years of New York City Landmarks* also appear on the list. All told, *Furthermore* has funded more than 1,000 projects with grants totaling nearly \$5 million since its inception.

In introducing Davidson at the Bard Breakfast, Anthony C. Wood noted her “passionate and personal unceasing dedication to the cause of historic preservation.” Davidson’s gracious acceptance remarks “spun the table” and focused on Wood’s preservation efforts over the years.

And what about our speakers, The Bowery Boys? This award-winning duo has, for years, dusted off history and served it up via podcast, garnering thousands of loyal followers in the process. With monthly, in-depth shows about New York City historical topics, how do they prepare, factually, for each fun romp into the past? They use archives! And both Young and Meyers focused on this element of their work in their remarks at the Bard Breakfast. Attendees came away with a behind-the-scenes sense of how archives are used to make contemporary storytelling come to life. This notion is near and dear to the mission of the Archive Project; it’s of utmost importance for historic preservationists and preservation organizations to maintain and find long term homes for their papers and other archival materials lest the story of preservation be forgotten. As The Bowery Boys made clear, if there’s nothing in an archive about a fight to save, say, a musician’s home in Queens or a neighborhood in Staten Island, what will a future author or researcher have to go on when telling the full story of New York?

In particular, the Archive Project has been impressed with the Bowery Boys’ perspective in a number of podcast shows on the history of preservation. One episode focused not only on the history of Grand Central Terminal, but specifically on how Grand Central—and the city’s Landmarks Law—came to be saved for future generations in the face of extreme



Bard Breakfast speakers The Bowery Boys provided attendees with a look behind the scenes at how they use archives to conjure up their popular history podcast show | Courtesy of The Bowery Boys

development pressures. The inspiring podcast featured a guest appearance from Kent Barwick, who was involved in that fight alongside Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. With their trademark mix of humor, storytelling, and research, The Bowery Boys continue to enlarge the audience interested in stories of preservation.

The Bowery Boys—who were introduced at the Bard Breakfast by Joan K. Davidson’s granddaughter Sarah Davidson, Co-Chair of the S.S. Columbia Project—have been recording their free podcast since 2007. As of the summer of 2018, they have released more than 250 episodes. Both Meyers and Young started the series “on a whim” after different experiences in amateur radio. The duo also published a book in recent years: *Adventures in Old New York*, which highlights “Manhattan’s historic neighborhoods, secret spots and colorful characters.” Donations from patrons, fans, and advertising sponsors keep the show running.

Like The Bowery Boys and their podcasts, the Archive Project relies heavily on individual donations from supporters. And the Bard Breakfast is our chief fundraiser each year. We are grateful for all of you who took the wonderful opportunity on December 13th to support our efforts while enjoying convivial conversation with friends and colleagues, as well as informative banter from The Bowery Boys as we honored Joan K. Davidson for her inimitable efforts to preserve the story of preservation in New York City. ■



2018 Year End Appeal Underway

As the year rolls to a close, the Archive Project is looking forward to 2019. We are eager to expand our programming and services—but we need your help to make it happen!

As a small not-for-profit organization, the Archive Project relies on donors like you. That’s why we would be most grateful for your support of our 2018 Year End Appeal. As a special exception, we will even accept 2018 Annual Appeal donations in early 2019!

To support our oral histories, rescue of important papers, oral history trainings, preservation film festival, and programming on the landmarks law, as well as research on key NYC preservationists and preservation groups. Please donate today.

Donations can be made online at our website, www.nypap.org, via PayPal.

Checks can be sent to NYPAP, 174 East 80th St., New York, NY 10075. Contact Executive Director Brad Vogel at bvogel@nypap.org or 212-988-8379 if you have any questions or would like to donate via credit card.

Your support will directly enable the Archive Project to continue to celebrate, preserve, and document the history of preservation in New York City. Our profuse thanks!



Scene from *The Pattern at Pendarvis* by Dean Gray, presented by New Dog Theatre Company and Streetsigns Center for Literature and Performance | Courtesy of Dennis Cahlo, photographer

Art Imitates Life

A Review of *The Pattern at Pendarvis*

By Anthony C. Wood, Archive Project Founder & Chair

It must be a sign of something that once again preservation has made its way to the New York stage. Last December it was *Bulldozer: The Ballad of Robert Moses*, featuring the somewhat jarring sight of a singing and dancing Jane Jacobs. This August, New York theatergoers were treated to a new play, the subject of which was the conducting of an oral history with a 91-year old preservationist. Since gathering oral histories is a critical part of what the New York Preservation Archive Project does, it will come as no surprise that the play strikes a chord with the Archive Project's mission.

The play, entitled *The Pattern of Pendarvis* and penned by Dean Gray, is based on an actual oral history conducted by Will Fellows for his book: *A Passion to Preserve: Gay Men as Keepers of Culture*. Fellows interviewed Edgar Hellum, the surviving member of a gay couple who beginning in the 1930s began restoring a collection of derelict 19th century Cornish workers cottages in Mineral Point, Wisconsin. Their pioneering preservation

efforts, originally derided by the local community, became so successful that ultimately the buildings became a historic site owned and operated by the Wisconsin Historical Society. The play beautifully tells the story of Edgar's personal and preservation journey. It also confronts the reluctance of certain historic sites to include in their interpretation the stories of the gay preservationists who saved them.

It is a testimony to the richness of the preservation story and the skill of the playwright and cast that a 70-minute, one-act play consisting solely of three men sitting and talking in a living room could be so engaging—and not just to the preservation historians in the audience. This play, though about a preservation effort in Wisconsin, is a reminder of the powerful narratives that have been captured through the oral histories conducted by the New York Preservation Archive Project. Is it too farfetched to imagine that someday there will be plays that have been inspired by some of

the compelling narratives in the New York Preservation Archive Project's oral history collection? Perhaps *Margot Gayle and the Case of the Curious Clocktower* based on the Margot Gayle oral history?

Preservationists are so close to their own work that at times they fail to recognize the power of preservation narratives. The triumph of the underdog, the eleventh hour rescue, and the successfully completed "Hail Mary" pass are themes that have always captured the public imagination. They recur frequently enough in preservation's history to keep a future Shakespeare at his or her computer for years. What better way to bring preservation stories to a wider audience? What better way to spread the preservation ethic? Is it possible that one day we might hear, "And the Tony Award for the best preservation play goes to....?" Hope, we must remember, springs eternal (which is yet another recurring preservation theme). ■



Love & Preservation, Perfectly Entwined

Pennsylvania Station by Patrick E. Horrigan

By Matthew Owen Coody, Archive Project Board Member

Like the tale of McKim, Mead & White's legendary station itself, Patrick E. Horrigan's new novel *Pennsylvania Station* is a bruising story of heartache and transformation. Set primarily in New York City between 1962 and 1965, the building's slow demolition over the course of those years is woven throughout the narrative and deftly parallels the dismantling of Frederick Bailey, the novel's protagonist. Change comes for Frederick, but as with the changes wrought with the eventual passage of New York City's Landmarks Law, it is too late to reverse some great losses.

A private, straight-laced architect, Frederick is mired in tradition (think a penchant for baroque music and Walt Whitman). As a middle-aged, closeted gay man, however, this charming traditionalism begins to veer towards pre-Stonewall era repression. But when Frederick meets the much-younger, impetuous Curt (via a bit of impromptu cruising in the Theater District during intermission at *My Fair Lady*, naturally), he becomes enmeshed in a conflicted relationship that tests his traditional notions. Curt's youthful passion also draws Frederick into the activist movements springing forth during these years of change, including the nascent gay rights movement and the emerging historic preservation movement.

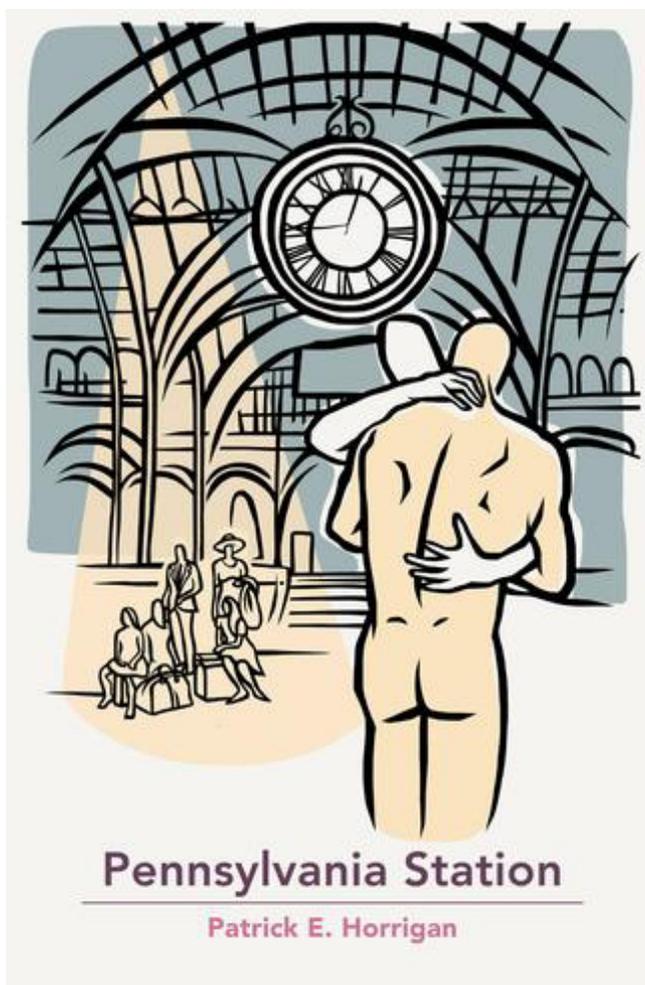
The reader might think that the theme of old guard meeting new sounds familiar, but the novel does not prove to be so tidily categorized and it is the more powerful for it. Horrigan's characters are far from two-dimensional, and the situations,

conversations, and thought processes are realistic and ring true. Horrigan also paints a fascinating portrait of mid-20th-century New York City, filled with delightfully obscure details and settings that breathe life into the narrative.

evolution both personally and as a budding preservationist. Anachronistically, despite being attuned to art, architecture, and beauty, Frederick is initially a reluctant participant in the movement that is emerging around him to protect historic structures. When we are introduced to Frederick he does not "believe in causes" and refers to the now-legendary rally staged by the Action Group for Better Architecture in New York (AGBANY) to protest the demolition of Pennsylvania Station as a "nuisance." In a somewhat unexpected opinion for an architect, Frederick also describes Pennsylvania Station as a "sooty, baggy, ill-kept monster of a building, a confusing mix of styles—faux classicism, Crystal Palace ostentation... McKim, Mead, White at their excessive, pretentious, derivative worst..." As one might expect, his viewpoint changes.

Many readers know that the demolition of Pennsylvania Station was not the sole crux of the preservation movement, and Horrigan also mentions other key losses such as the Brokaw Mansions on Fifth Avenue and the Rhinelander Houses in Greenwich Village. Their appearance in the text will give a thrill to any New York City preservationist, a refreshing feeling as the field has such minimal representation in popular culture. Some of these locations push Frederick on his journey towards

a stronger preservationist mentality. For example, Frederick initially questions the significance of the Rhinelander Houses. Frederick ponders: "What, really, was their historical importance? Just the dwellings of another wealthy New York family...if



Cover of *Pennsylvania Station* | Courtesy of Lethe Press

As the novel's title suggests, Pennsylvania Station features heavily as one of these settings, the process of its demolition providing a symbolic parallel to key moments in the narrative, as well as providing touchstones in Frederick's

George Washington never slept there, what was the point of saving the building?” But reflecting later upon the apartment building that replaced the houses, he bemoans “another bland apartment tower, another historic building razed to dust, a lazy design solution to appease everyone but please no one...great nineteenth-century architecture had been sacrificed for mediocre modern architecture.”

Some locations have a history of preservation activism that is lesser known, making their inclusion in the narrative feel like a subtle nod to anyone with a deeper knowledge of the field. The Mark Hellinger Theater, for example, where Frederick meets Curt during *My Fair Lady*, was one of the first theaters to be designated a New York City landmark after the demolition of the Morosco and Helen Hayes theaters in the early 1980s over the objections of preservationists. The Statler Hotel, more commonly known as the Hotel Pennsylvania, serves as the physical embodiment of a passionate night with Frederick’s former lover. Although the famed hotel has been threatened with redevelopment proposals since 1997, the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission has denied activists’ calls for designation.

In addition to buildings, key figures involved in the early preservation movement make cameos throughout. Writer and critic Ada Louise Huxtable’s now-famous editorial on the demolition of Pennsylvania Station becomes a dramatic turning point for Frederick. Architect Philip Johnson’s personal life is cattily skewered in a conversation overheard during the AGBANY rally. Frederick also volunteers to draft entries on buildings for Alan Burnham’s book *New York Landmarks*. Horrigan also namedrops Harmon Goldstone, Alan Burnham, Lewis Mumford, Norval White, Mayor Robert Wagner, and, of course, Jane Jacobs and Robert Moses. Organizations and institutions are not left out either, from the activism of the Municipal Art Society of New York to the newly-founded historic preservation program at Columbia University.

Many of these key figures, places, and organizations are featured in the Preservation History Database on the New York Preservation Archive Project’s website. It is not a surprise, in fact, that Patrick Horrigan gives thanks in his afterword to the organization’s founder Anthony C. Wood and his book *Preserving New York: Winning the Right to Protect a City’s Landmarks*, which helped him understand the history of the preservation movement and the role that Pennsylvania Station played in it. Horrigan also gained access to the Archive Project’s collections to view rare documents from the early 1960s, research that shines through in his writing.

Overall, *Pennsylvania Station* is a well-crafted, emotional novel that depicts the complicated, and often melancholy, inner landscape of a closeted gay man in the 1960s. The “tearing down” of these confines and the introduction

of a bold new world is expertly paralleled with the changing architectural character of New York City at the time, subtly underlining architecture’s larger reflection of society as a whole. In fact, architecture and persona become inextricably intertwined. We know all too well what replaced Pennsylvania Station. But as the mighty edifice crumbles, and Frederick along with it, we are left to hope, perhaps naively, that his reconstruction will lead to something more beautiful. ■

Matthew Owen Coody manages development and communications at the Historic House Trust of New York City and serves on the board of directors of the New York Preservation Archive Project and the Historic Districts Council.



Servicemen outside Pennsylvania Railroad Station, photographed by Marjory Collins in 1942 | Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division

Notes from the Board

Paul Onyx Lozito

The following is an installment in a series highlighting members of our Board of Directors

I grew up surrounded by physical and cultural landmarks. I was born in Atlantic City, New Jersey at a hospital located between the historic boardwalk and United States Route 30, one of the original transcontinental motorways which wound through the Pineland National Reserve (the Pine Barrens) to Philadelphia, and then onward to Astoria, Oregon.

My home was just off Route 30 in an area which had grown blueberries for a century and where iron was smelted for the Revolutionary War. My local post office, six miles away, was in Egg Harbor City, an 1850s planned community for Germans seeking relief from anti-immigrant persecution during the Know-Nothing movement. Egg Harbor still welcomes immigrants today to a community built on perfectly square blocks. I grew up on land preserved in 1978 by the United States as the first national Biosphere Reserve. Because of

preservation, I grew up in a historic forest near a historic planned town, and in a community with heritage land uses and economy.

I came to appreciate historic communities, landscapes, landmarks, and culture when my community chose to fight a trash transfer station at a location formerly used as farmland. A trash transfer station would have destroyed the land, perhaps scattered refuse into adjacent forests, and would have been a blemish on the character of the community. I saw my community and institutions, such as the New Jersey Pinelands Commission, fight to preserve the land and culture in

place. This and an interest behind how United States Route 30 came to be, led me to an interest in planning. Ultimately, this led to a decision to study planning at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University.

At Rutgers, I met professors who fought hard to preserve historic but underinvested

After my work in Jersey City and after time with AmeriCorps, I attended the Urban Policy and Planning program at Hunter College of the City University of New York. I also became involved with the American Planning Association New York Metropolitan Chapter where I eventually served as an Executive Committee Member.

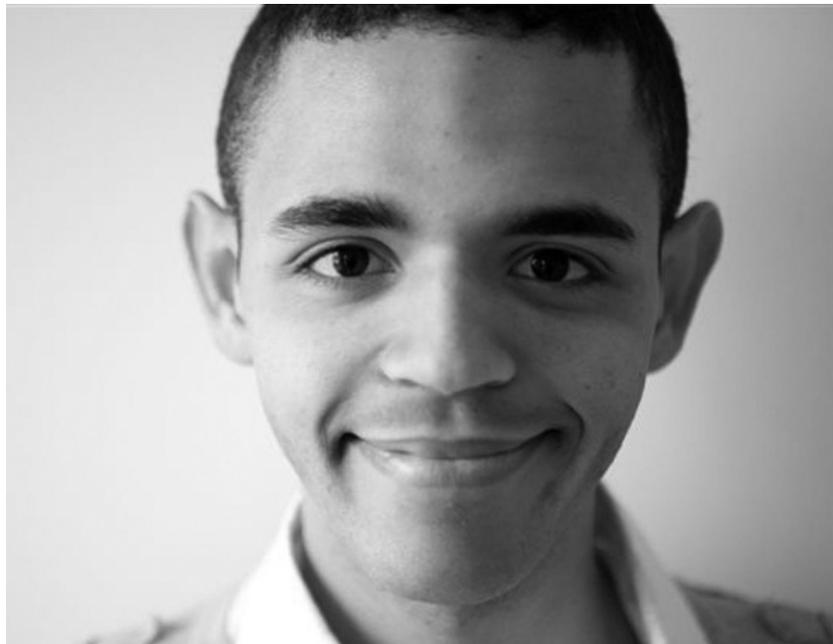
In graduate school, I became interested in comprehensively planned, historic communities such as Sunnyside Gardens, Jackson Heights, Forest Hills, and the Grand Concourse. I also became interested in sustainability.

My interest in sustainability and my experience in affordable housing led me to the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery, an office tasked with support for communities impacted by Hurricane Irene, Tropical Storm Lee, and Superstorm Sandy. At GOSR, I serve as Director of Housing Policy and Affordable Housing. Some of my most interesting projects include providing

support to advance adaptive reuse projects in the Southern Tier and near Albany, and new construction to fill the gaps in historic main streets on Long Island.

In this and beyond, I continue to serve as an advocate to preserve historic facilities and sustain historic communities. ■

Paul has an affinity for historic communities that follow a comprehensive plan, such as the Queens neighborhoods of Sunnyside, Jackson Heights, and Forest Hills, as well as the Grand Concourse, where he lives, in the South Bronx.



Paul Onyx Lozito | Courtesy of Paul Onyx Lozito

communities like my own Egg Harbor. Through work with them, I helped to advance the conversation about how to preserve and make improvements on the historic main street in East Orange, in New Brunswick, and in downtown Newark. After graduating, I was led consequently to a role providing support to the County of Hudson, New Jersey by managing historic preservation grants, and to a job which furthered community planning and preservation in the Greenville community of Jersey City. In tandem, I worked in affordable housing development, which ultimately taught me the financial mechanisms behind much of community preservation.

Chair	Years	# of Years	Total Proposed HDs	Total Proposed HDs outside of Manhattan	Total # of Buildings in Districts	Average Size of HD	Average Yearly Rate of Proposed HD Designation
Harmon Goldstone	April 1965 - December 1973	8	27	9	9,306	344	3.375
Beverly Moss Spatt	January 1974- March 1978	4	9	5	2,200	244	2.25
Kent Barwick	March 1978- August 1983	6	17	10	3,743	220	2.833
Gene Norman	August 1983 - February 1989	5	9	2	2,637	293	1.8
David F.M. Todd	February 1989- May 1990	1	4	0	3,605	901	4
Laurie Beckelman	May 1990 - September 1994	4	9	6	2,025	225	2.25
Jennifer Raab	September 1994 - May 2001	5	11	4	1,718	156	2.2
Sherida Paulsen	May 2001 - January 2003	2	6	0	363	60	3
Robert Tierney	January 2003 - June 2014	11	47	27	10,477	223	4.27
Meenakshi Srinivasan	June 2014 - June 2018	4	6	2	1,018	170	1.5
Totals			145	65	37,092		

Table 1. Full data of proposed historic district designation by NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission chairs.

Preservation by the Numbers, Continued from page 3

Goldstone started everything off with a bang, but designation activities chilled under Beverly Moss Spatt due to fears around the then-undecided Penn Central Case. Once the case was won, the agency was empowered under Kent Barwick to designate many large areas within the core of Manhattan. Designation activity slowed immensely under Gene Norman but started up again under David Todd with a number of enormous historic districts. Laurie Beckelman tried with uneven success to expand

LPC's reach into the outer boroughs, which Jennifer Raab continued, to the exclusion of Manhattan designations. Robert Tierney designated many historic districts, either none

of them outside of Manhattan or all of them, depending on whom you ask. And Meenakshi Srinivasan focused on designating underserved neighborhoods, when anything was designated at all.

That's the received wisdom; whether the data actually supports this series of generalizations, is another story. Enough with the preface—let's take a look!

Given the volume of these numbers, in an effort to tease out some patterns, some of the data have been isolated and the chairs have been ranked in order of their relative position within the data set. To begin with, let's look at the overall number of historic districts proposed by each chair (with a specific eye towards non-Manhattan historic districts). Tierney comes out the clear leader in terms of the overall number of historic districts proposed during his term, as well as the overall number of non-Manhattan HDs. Even given Tierney's unprecedented term as chair (37.5% longer than that of Goldstone's, the next longest-serving chair), the sheer number of historic districts proposed were an all-time high

for LPC, a fact that supports his staff's oft-stated desire "to get as many stakes in the ground as possible." Tierney's tenure at LPC was characterized by enhanced designation activity which, by and large, responded

Ranking	Chair	Total HDs	Total HDs outside of Manhattan
1.	Robert Tierney	47	27
2.	Harmon Goldstone	27	9
3.	Kent Barwick	17	10
4.	Laurie Beckelman	13	6
5.	Jennifer Raab	11	4
6.	Beverly Moss Spatt	9	5
7.	Gene Norman	9	2
8.	Meenakshi Srinivasan	6	2
9.	Sherida Paulsen	6	0
10.	David F.M. Todd	4	0

Table 2. Total number of historic districts proposed by LPC chairs with non-Manhattan historic districts isolated.

Ranking	Chair	Total # of Buildings in Proposed Districts
1.	Robert Tierney	10,477
2.	Harmon Goldstone	9,306
3.	Kent Barwick	3,743
4.	David F.M. Todd	3,605
5.	Gene Norman	2,637
6.	Beverly Moss Spatt	2,200
7.	Laurie Beckelman	2,025
8.	Jennifer Raab	1,718
9.	Meenakshi Srinivasan	1,018
10.	Sherida Paulsen	363

Table 3. Total number of buildings in proposed historic districts.

Ranking	Chair	average size of HD (properties)
1.	David F.M. Todd	901
2.	Harmon Goldstone	344
3.	Gene Norman	293
4.	Beverly Moss Spatt	244
5.	Laurie Beckelman	225
6.	Robert Tierney	222
7.	Kent Barwick	220
8.	Meenakshi Srinivasan	170
9.	Jennifer Raab	156
10.	Sherida Paulsen	60

Table 4. Average number of buildings in proposed historic districts.

to well-organized neighborhood-based preservation campaigns. This resulted in a remarkable number of historic district extensions during this period, as organized neighborhood activists who saw the benefits of historic district designation firsthand sought to expand protections. Greenwich Village, Brooklyn Heights, the Upper West Side, the Upper East Side, Park Slope, Bedford-Stuyvesant and Douglaston all saw proposed extensions to existing historic districts at this time. Additionally, multi-phase designations, such as Crown Heights North and West End Avenue, were accomplished. These multi-phase actions were an innovation of Raab, who as chair used this strategy in Hamilton Heights.

Another interesting trend emerges from the data. The majority of LPC chairs (six out of ten) designated a substantial number of non-Manhattan historic districts compared

to Manhattan historic districts (33% - 57%). While not completely equivalent, it belies the persistent claim that the other boroughs have been entirely overlooked for designation. This is not to say major improvement does not still need to be made, but it does give added weight to evaluating the parade of LPC chairs who have made “designations in underserved areas” a commitment (i.e., all of them). Some of them have lived up to their words, and some of them have not.

Here’s where the numbers start to diverge from the accepted wisdom: while Harmon Goldstone is shown to be the dynamo of designation commonly imagined, Gene Norman is shown to have proposed many more buildings than usually reported and larger historic districts than most (likewise for Beverly Moss Spatt). Robert Tierney and Kent Barwick, both proposers of many historic districts, seem to have kept their

proposals on the smaller side, an odd detail for the chairs who proposed the Upper East Side Historic District and the Sunnyside Gardens Historic District. Both Sherida Paulsen and David Todd, owing to their short terms as acting chairs, are statistical outliers based on their relatively small sets of proposed designations. On the other hand, Jennifer Raab and Meenakshi Srinivasan, two chairs seen to be more concerned with regulation and policy, are shown not to have focused on proposing new historic districts.

When it comes to preservation data, as Yogi Berra said, “You can observe a lot by just watching.” ■

Simeon Bankoff is the Executive Director of the Historic Districts Council.



Archive Project Executive Director Brad Vogel speaks at the *Penn Central* Day event organized by Adrian Untermeyer | Courtesy of Helen Chin

NYPAP Events

A Host of Programs & Events Celebrate Preservation Stories

The Archive Project has been rolling right along over the past six months! From commemorations and tours to its first board retreat, the Archive Project has been immersed in activities centered on our mission to find ways to capture and tell the story of historic preservation in New York City. And we tell that story to inspire future historic preservation efforts!

In June, the Archive Project co-sponsored the *Penn Central* Day Celebration created by preservationist Adrian Untermeyer. Executive Director Brad Vogel joined speakers, including Untermeyer, Kent Barwick, Elizabeth Goldstein, Kelly Carroll, Laurie Beckelman, and Professor Samuel Albert, in sharing remarks commemorating the 40th anniversary of *Penn Central v. City of New York*, the U.S. Supreme Court case that helped save Grand Central Terminal. The decision also upheld the constitutionality of New York City's groundbreaking landmarks law. Olivia K, Brooklyn's "soul-

fusion powerhouse" led those gathered in song, and the group later retired to the terminal's famous Oyster Bar for cocktails and conversation.

June also witnessed a first for the Archive Project: a board retreat. With generous support from the New York Community Trust, the board of the Archive Project spent a day at South Street Seaport formulating plans for the organization's future. Susan Coleman led the group in a variety of exercises that ultimately spurred a robust set of conversations about priorities, strategy, and long-term mission. A series of task forces were created following the meeting that continue to advance the findings from the retreat.

In September, the Archive Project celebrated the contributions of the many narrators who have participated in oral histories in recent years. In an intimate gathering, Oral History Program Manager Liz Strong shared stories

of the many efforts to capture aspects of neighborhood preservation stories. Special thanks to the New York State Council on the Arts and Humanities New York for their support.

On October 1, the Archive Project sent multiple speakers to present at the Historic Districts Council's cultural sites symposium, including a panel on how to use oral histories to determine cultural sites. Executive Director Brad Vogel provided the crowd with an overview of earlier efforts to recognize and landmark cultural sites. Chairman Anthony C. Wood moderated the plenary session focused on the African Burial Ground and the Stonewall Inn. And Oral History Program Manager Liz Strong made a presentation on how to use oral histories as tools to uncover sites of cultural significance.

In the fall, members of the Archive Project's Stewardship Society toured India House at One Hanover Square, learning about the brownstone edifice's survival through various iterations (bank, cotton exchange, private club) across a century and a half. Manager Bruce Godfrey elaborated on the details of the Marine Room and building operations. Nicholas Opinsky, descendant of one of India House's founders, highlighted various works of art in the members' lounge and provided access to the rare book collection.

Members of the Archive Project's Columns Club toured the Financial District's many Art Deco gems with board member Tony Robins, author of *New York Art Deco*. Meandering from the old customhouse on Bowling Green, the group visited lobbies and learned the essentials of Art Deco style. A visit to the vestibule of the enigmatic 29 Broadway just after dusk was a favorite for several Columnists. ■



The Columns Club searches for Art Deco architecture. | Courtesy of the Archive Project



Harmon Goldstone being sworn in as chair of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission by Mayor John Lindsay | Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

Preservation History in Quotes: “I say designate.”

By *Anthony C. Wood, Founder & Chair*

“I don’t interfere with the designation of landmarks any more than I do with teachers and policemen. But when in any doubt on landmarks, I say designate.” These words of Mayor Lindsay, delivered at the October 21, 1968 swearing in of Harmon Goldstone as the second chair of the Landmarks Preservation Commission and captured in *The New York Times*, are a reminder of a moment in preservation’s history very different from our own.

Although the LPC has been a mayoral agency since the passage of the Landmarks Law in 1965, the extent of the Commission’s independence from the mayor’s office has varied greatly over time. Some insights into this can be found in the series of oral histories the Archive Project has conducted with the former chairs of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, with additional

insights provided by many of the other preservation figures whose memories have been captured through the Archive Project’s oral history program. Preservation’s history instructs us that things were not always as they are today and that what is today’s reality may not be tomorrow’s. Change, for better or worse, is always a possibility and thus a cause for hope as well as constant vigilance.

For more about Harmon Goldstone, visit the Archive Project’s website at www.nypap.org for a transcript of an interview conducted with him by the organization’s founder, Anthony C. Wood, in 1987. To hear Goldstone’s voice on a WNYC 1969 radio interview, visit the NYPR Archive Collection at www.wnyc.org. To listen to his February 3, 1971 talk, “How the Landmarks Law Happened” contact the Century Association Archives Foundation. ■

NYPAP News

Congratulations to Archive Project Board Member Elizabeth R. Jeffe and her husband Robert A. Jeffe. The Jeffe Foundation recently received an award from the Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York for Outstanding Support of Archives.

Numerous individuals and organizations worked with the Archive Project to find permanent homes for important historic papers in recent months, including archives and documents relating to the history of the South Street Seaport Museum and Greenwich Village.

The Archive Project participated in LGBTQ History Month, with Executive Director Brad Vogel holding an “in conversation” interview with Ken Lustbader of the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project regarding early efforts in the 1990s to recognize and advocate for LGBT historic sites. Law firm Thompson Hine LLP hosted the event and announced a donation to the Archive Project to facilitate oral histories capturing the early stories of LGBT site preservation in 2019.

In anticipation of the sesquicentennial of preservationist George McAneny’s birth, the Archive Project has joined with a “Friends of McAneny” group to begin planning ways to commemorate McAneny in 2019. McAneny was instrumental in saving City Hall, Castle Clinton, and Federal Hall from demolition. Thanks to a donation from Patrick Reisinger, the Archive Project has hired a Reisinger Scholar to assist with these efforts.

In Memoriam



The late Tom Wolfe and the late Margot Gayle outside 2 Columbus Circle in 2003 during the fight to preserve its facade | Courtesy of the Archive Project

Since author **Tom Wolfe** passed away on May 14, 2018, preservationists have been reminded of, or in some cases discovered for the first time, his epic Op-Eds, wonderfully titled “The Building That Isn’t There, Parts 1 and 2” (*The New York Times*, 2003), “The 2 Columbus Circle Game” (*New York Magazine*, 2005), and “The (Naked) City and the Undead” (*The New York Times*, 2006). Wolfe—memorably, repeatedly, inimitably—gave the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) a deserved public flogging for its cozy relationships with real-estate developers and the irreversible destruction New York City has faced as a result.

As advocates, preservationists rejoice when a celebrity signs even the most boilerplate statement of support for a beloved cause. Tom Wolfe did so much more. Besides taking the initiative to write some of the most remarkable public diatribes in preservation history, he showed up in person to support preservation—in white sartorial splendor, fire in his eyes—on the windy,

chilly steps of City Hall with a stalwart band of preservationists. Together they would head to a shabby, stuffy, inglorious, over-packed hearing room where Wolfe would then wait more patiently than most for his two minutes to speak. He came to rallies and press conferences, appearing proudly beside the great Margot Gayle for an unforgettable photo. He joined the group of advocates who sat down with *The New York Times* editorial board to explain the case of 2 Columbus Circle, the tragic “Penn Station” of mid-century Modernism, threatened and ultimately altered just when its significance was coming into focus. After that meeting, the *Times* concluded, “...dooming this building without a hearing is an enormous mistake, one that seriously erodes the Landmarks Preservation Commission’s purpose and whatever political independence it has managed to attain since it was first created.”

Wolfe’s defense of 2 Columbus Circle and its architect, Edward Durrell Stone, began decades earlier in, “The Apostates,” Chapter Five of his book *From Bauhaus to Our House*.

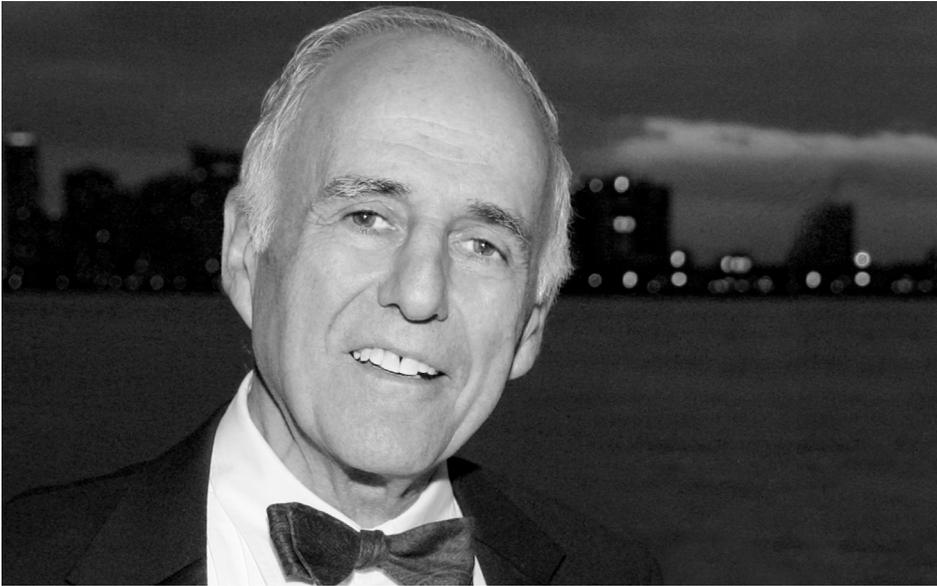
In the 1950s and 1960s, the architecture establishment struggled with Stone’s abrupt shift from orthodox Modernism to design that evoked historical and classical motifs. There were legitimate reasons to wrestle with 2 Columbus Circle’s significance when it hit the 30-year eligibility mark for landmark designation in 1994. Wolfe’s voice was a strong factor in keeping the debate alive through what is often a building’s most vulnerable period—when it is technically eligible for protection but not yet considered truly “historic” or important. This debate until lasted until 2006, when the façade was stripped and replaced with terra-cotta and glass.

Wolfe also recognized that 2 Columbus Circle represented more than just an abstract architectural debate—and that it was hardly an isolated case. East Side, West Side, all around the town, even conventionally “historic” buildings were being jackhammered with barely a wince from the LPC. Were the commissioners, as Wolfe inquired, “brain dead,” “taking direct orders,” or “in flagrante cahoots” with real-estate lobbyists?

Preservationists who dare to challenge the status quo of constant, too often short-sighted change in our city are easy targets for name-callers using the labels of NIMBY, crank, elitist, and worse. When it came to landmarks, Tom Wolfe stood up for the “apostates.” He put the process of saving—and assiduously not saving—New York’s history under his meticulous microscope and then issued a trumpet blast. Best known as an author, Wolfe should also be remembered for one of the other suits he donned—that of the preservationist.

Contributed by Kate Wood. As Executive Director of LANDMARK WEST! from 2001 to 2012, Wood shared Tom Wolfe’s zeal and commitment to preserving 2 Columbus Circle and the integrity of New York City’s landmarks process.

Bob Silman and I met in late 1995, just as I was beginning to find my way into the New York City market. As we became friends, Bob and his wife Roberta (it is very difficult



Bob Silman | Courtesy of Silman

to talk about one without the other) were very supportive of my efforts and were also interested in my entire family and always asked after my children, one of whom, Hannah, eventually worked one summer in the old RSA office on University Place while she was in high school. For Bob and Roberta, work was important and rewarding, but family was always first. Bob and Roberta were a down-to-earth, elegant couple who could readily finish each other's sentences without ever speaking over each other. They both exhibited a deep sense of curiosity with an autodidactic sensibility combined with warmth, grace, and elegance.

Bob was diagnosed with multiple myeloma years before we met and he lived every day with gusto and purpose. He was one of the most purposeful and "present" people I have ever met, and he was unfailingly respectful and kind to everyone. He was particularly interested in developing the careers of younger people and was instrumental in launching the careers of many recent college graduates. His interests and activities were broad and deep and included, among many other things, his garden. Bob was both an urbane New Yorker and a man of the soil.

Bob was a natural engineer, grounded in the humanities, whose life serves as an exemplar of the value of a liberal arts education. This rare combination of backgrounds and interest made him an extraordinary problem-solver with a gift for explaining his solutions in clear, lucid terms accessible to all. The

same combination led him to and enabled his interest in the philosophy of technology, which he lectured on widely, at conferences and in classes he taught at Columbia, Yale and Harvard.

Bob was considered a dean of preservation engineering, and his highly regarded opinions were widely sought and often followed. Arguments in favor of a project were based on technical viability and constructability, framed by the humanistic grounds for saving, renovating, or re-purposing historic buildings in place. It is fair to say that without Bob's considered opinions on the Corbin Building in lower Manhattan, the TWA terminal at JFK, and the Survivor's Staircase at the World Trade Center site, they would likely have been lost to future generations.

Bob's legacy and soul live on through his family and friends and the many lives he touched as a mentor and gifted teacher in his consulting business. There is a poster in the Silman office with a black and white photo of a grinning Bob associated with the phrase WWBD? "What Would Bob Do?" is a question that many of us whose lives Bob graced will continue to ask ourselves in our professional and personal lives. Thank you from all of us, Bob and Roberta, for your generous spirit, your friendship and support. ■

Contributed by Kent Diebolt, founding partner of Vertical Access and former Archive Project board member.

From the Vault



The Bogardus Building, the first cast iron building in New York City, May of 1969 | Courtesy of the Margot Gayle Photo Archive



Vacant lots in an urban renewal site near the Brooklyn Bridge in 1968 | Courtesy of the Margot Gayle Photo Archive



Mayor Wagner's inauguration, January 1, 1954 | Courtesy of the Margot Gayle Photo Archive



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YOUR FALL/WINTER 2018 NEWSLETTER HAS ARRIVED!

The Archive Project would like to thank the J.M. Kaplan Fund, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, Humanities New York, the New York Community Trust, the New York State Council on the Arts, The Gerry Charitable Trust, The Drive to Protect the Ladies' Mile District, Patrick Reisinger, and the Robert A. & Elizabeth R. Jeffe Foundation for their generous support.

Our work could not be accomplished without their—and your—contributions.

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 via the enclosed remittance envelope, securely online via PayPal on our website (www.nypap.org), or by credit card over the phone at 212-988-8379.

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