

Ocean on the Park Historic District  
189 to 211 Ocean Avenue  
Borough of Brooklyn

Centrally located on the long block front of Ocean Avenue between Lincoln Road and Parkside Avenue, the proposed Ocean on the Park Historic District consists of twelve early-twentieth century row houses.

Charles G. Reynolds, a well known Brooklyn developer, purchased property between 1905 and 1909 on a block that was partially developed with free-standing residences. In 1909 he hired architect Axel S. Hedman, with whom he had previously worked in Crown Heights, to design a row of fourteen dwellings. Ten houses, Nos. 193 to 211 Ocean Avenue, were completed c. 1910.

Axel S. Hedman was a prolific designer of speculative row houses in the Renaissance and Classical Revival styles a number of which are found in the Park Slope and Stuyvesant Heights as well as Crown Heights North Historic Districts. Hedman's Renaissance Revival-style row on Ocean Avenue features limestone facades, deep galvanized-iron cornices and raised, balustraded terraces above unusually deep front yards which are interconnected by a common walkway. To provide visual interest Hedman randomly alternated three basic designs. Nos. 193, 199 and 211 with full-height angular bays have egg-and-dart moldings, entrances with arcaded lintels and band courses above the first story that are decorated with rosettes. Nos. 195, 197, 203, 205 and 207 feature rounded bays. Four of the five have bellflower-decorated entrance surrounds with ornamental lintels, bead-and-reel moldings on the first story windows, carved spandrel panels and rosette-decorated window surrounds with decorative pediments. Rather than having three identically decorated houses together, Hedman created a unique design for No. 205 featuring fluted pilasters, and foliate keystones, spandrels and entrance surround. Nos. 201 and 209 with shorter angular bays have entrance surrounds with egg-and-dart molding and elaborately carved lintels. Although the general patterns were repeated, the carved ornament at each house is unique.

The northernmost lots remained undeveloped until around 1915 when Philip A. Faribault, an architect, purchased part of the property from Reynolds and erected a Federal Revival-style house at No. 191 Ocean Avenue. The brick house features an arched entrance with Ionic columns in antis (now partially covered by an awning), stone lintels and sills and a triple window at the second story with brick and stone surround and iron balconette.

Circa 1917, the last of the lots were developed by Reynolds who hired Eric O. Holmgren, a Brooklyn architect, to design two brick houses with a shared driveway and garage. No. 189, a brick row house in the Arts and Crafts style features a bracketed cornice surmounted by a clay-tiled hipped roof and brick window surrounds with stone sills. The other dwelling, a free-standing brick house, at 185 Ocean Avenue was recently demolished.

This row of houses, with their uniform 30-foot setback, reflects an earlier age of development in Brooklyn and forms a unique enclave within a block densely occupied by apartment houses.