

## PROPOSED PARK SLOPE HISTORIC DISTRICT EXTENSION II BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN

The Park Slope Historic District Extension II includes approximately 287 buildings located adjacent to the northern part of the Park Slope Historic District, which was designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1973. The Park Slope neighborhood is located west of Prospect Park and is bounded by Flatbush Avenue to the north, 15th Street to the south, Fourth Avenue to the west, and Prospect Park West to the east.

The area was occupied by the Lenape Indians at the time of European contact. It was still predominately farm and wood lands until well into the 19th century. If the land in the Historic District Extension II was farmed prior to the abolition of slavery in New York State it is likely that enslaved persons were used as laborers. By the early 19th century the land had been divided in long rectangular lots that were owned by a number of different owners. These land holdings were divided into urban sized lots between the 1830s and 1860s.

The two most important factors in the growth of Park Slope were transportation improvements and the development of Prospect Park. These transportation improvements included new links between Park Slope and the ferries along Brooklyn's waterfront. Construction began on Prospect Park in 1866 and the park opened to the public in 1871, although it was not yet complete. Wide-scale development started in the 1860s close to Flatbush Avenue, which was an early transportation artery through the area. This is reflected by the many rows of Italianate style row houses found in the historic district extension II, such as 44 to 62 St. Mark's Avenue. In the 1870s and early 1880s, mansions were built on Prospect Park West, 8th Avenue and Plaza Street and additional row houses for less affluent people built along the side streets; many of these mansion were replaced by apartment houses in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In addition to Italianate, many other late 19th and early 20th century architectural styles are found in the Park Slope Historic District Extension II, including Gothic Revival, neo-Grec, Second Empire, Romanesque Revival, Queen Anne, Renaissance Revival, and Medieval Revival. In addition to row houses, the historic extension II includes a number of carriage houses or garages, a clubhouse, several apartment houses, and three churches, one of which includes a school, convent, parish hall, and rectory.

The oldest buildings in the Park Slope Historic District Extension II appear to be the altered, wood-frame house at 22 Berkeley Place and the unusual masonry, Gothic Revival style row house at 7 St. Mark's Avenue, which features an elaborate pointed-arch portico supported by paired columns, pointed arch windows with continuous label moldings, and a wood cornice decorated with blind arches, brackets, and a bead molding. Both houses appear to have been built in the mid-19th century. By the mid-1870s the simpler neo-Grec style supplanted the rounded, ornate Italianate style. Neo-Grec style rows houses include 56 to 66 Berkeley Place, built in 1881 from the designs of architect John Magilligan; 33 to 41 Prospect Place, built in 1879 from the designs of G.L. Morse; and 52 to 62 Sterling Place, built in 1883 from the designs of C.B. Sheldon. Sometimes, styles were combined, such as the Italianate/Neo-Grec style row at 44 to 52 Prospect Place (1878-79, Robert Dixon); the Italianate/ Second Empire style houses at 10 to 32 St. Marks Avenue (c.1870); and the neo-Grec/Second Empire style house at 95 6th Avenue (c.1876).

In the 1880s, the more picturesque Queen Anne style became popular for row houses and apartment buildings in the Park Slope neighborhood. Fine examples include 76 to 82 St. Mark's Avenue (1885, Montrose Morris) and 56 to 64 Prospect Place (1887, C.P.H. Gilbert). These buildings feature an array of buildings materials, textures, and rich ornamentation. At the same time, the somewhat less exuberant Romanesque Revival style, using solid forms and textured surfaces, also increased in popularity, and would remain in favor well into the 20th century. Examples of the style within the Park Slope Historic District Extension II include the row

houses at 66 to 70 Berkeley Place (1888, W.M. Coots); the apartment houses at 9 to 15 St. Mark's Avenue (1889, E.B. Sturges); and the parish house of St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church Park Place and 6th Avenue (1905, A.E. Parfitt).

The restrained, classically-inspired Renaissance Revival style, popular from about 1880 to 1910, is also well represented in the district, including the Carlton Club (85 6th Avenue, 1889-90, Mercein Thomas), 164 to 180 Sterling Place (1906, Henry Pohlman), and the apartment house at 39 Plaza Street West (c.1910). In addition to the mid-19th century house at 7 St. Mark's Avenue, the Park Slope Historic District Extension II has several other Gothic Revival style buildings. The St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church at 6th Avenue and Sterling Place was built in 1899 from the designs of architect A.E. Parfitt. The church complex includes a school building with an original Gothic Revival style wing built in 1878, designed by Robert Dixon, and additions built between 1903 and 1908 from designs by A.E. Parfitt, also in the Gothic Revival style. Also designed in the Gothic Revival style is the Church of God at 42 Prospect Place, built in 1905-06 from the designs of C.C. Wagner.

Although the district was substantially built prior to 1910, it does have some fine examples of styles that were popular in the early 20th century. These include two Medieval Revival style apartment buildings at 1 and 47 Plaza Street West, both built around 1920 and the neo-Classical style Church of Christ Scientist on Sterling Place (1936, A.W. Laurie).

After the Second World War, the Park Slope neighborhood began experiencing the deterioration of its building stock, abandonment of buildings, and intensifying social problems, including rising unemployment and crime rates, as did many other neighborhoods in New York City at that time. However, in the 1960s Park Slope began to attract people who were looking for affordable housing and larger living spaces. Gentrification continued in the 1980s as Park Slope started to attract residents with higher-incomes; as a result, housing and retail space costs started to increase dramatically.

Today, the Park Slope Historic District Extension II remains one of Brooklyn's most architecturally distinguished areas, retaining some of the borough's most beautiful and well-preserved residential streets, featuring a broad array of outstanding residential, institutional and ecclesiastical architecture. The neighborhood retains its cohesiveness due to the tree-lined streets, consistent scale, predominantly residential character, and its architectural integrity.