

PROPOSED WALLABOUT HISTORIC DISTRICT

Borough of Brooklyn

The proposed Wallabout Historic District, consisting of approximately 55 buildings on Vanderbilt Avenue between Myrtle and Park Avenues in Brooklyn, is an architecturally significant collection of pre-Civil War buildings. The structures that comprise the study area, many of them frame houses erected in the early- to mid-1800s, retain numerous original details that lend a cohesive quality to the memorable streetscape.

Wallabout takes its name from a group of Walloons who settled on a modest bay on Brooklyn's East River waterfront in 1624, calling it Waal-bogt. The area remained rural throughout much of the 18th century. Residential development began in the early 19th century and accelerated with expansion of the Brooklyn Navy Yard along Wallabout Bay in the middle of the century.



Since the flatlands along the river were not considered to be as prestigious for residential development as the uplands several blocks inland, much of the construction in Wallabout was of wood houses rather than the more expensive brick or stone dwellings that typify the adjacent Fort Greene and Clinton Hill neighborhoods. Most of the buildings were single-family dwellings of modest scale, although several may have been inhabited by two or more households. Vanderbilt Avenue retains a significant number of houses that were erected in the 1830s, '40s, and early 1850s; a significant number appear on the fire insurance maps prepared by William Perris in 1855.

A variety of architectural styles are present in the proposed Wallabout Historic District. Many of the earliest houses display elements of the Greek Revival style, while those from the mid-19th century possess characteristics of the Italianate and Gothic Revival styles. A row of neo-Grec brownstones erected in 1878 are amongst the earliest known residences built on speculation by the Pratt family.

While some of the houses have undergone alterations in subsequent years, the buildings within the proposed Wallabout Historic District on the whole retain an exceptional level of integrity. This architecturally significant collection of early wood and masonry houses represents an important part of the history of the neighborhood and of Brooklyn in general.