

Linden Street Historic District

Borough of Brooklyn

Proposed Action: Propose for Calendaring, November 1, 2022



Linden Street, west side (top) and looking north toward Bushwick Avenue (Google Maps)

The proposed Linden Street Historic District is a remarkably intact group of 32 brick and brownstone row houses built between 1885 and 1901 when this area of Bushwick became more intensively urbanized. Designed by several Brooklyn architects, these distinctive row houses represent a variety of late-19th century styles resulting in a cohesive historic streetscape with a strong sense of place.

Bushwick is one of the original six Brooklyn towns chartered by the Dutch in 1661. During the 18th and the early-19th century, Brooklyn remained mostly undeveloped with early roadways serving small towns and farmland. The opening of the Broadway elevated train service in the late 1880s resulted in speculative row house development nearby, and in just over a decade, the neighborhood was almost completely developed, mostly with wood frame row houses. This section of Linden Street was one of the first areas that was developed with masonry houses, and it still retains the original rows along both sides of the narrow residential street.

Many of the row houses on Linden Street were developed by Samuel M. Meeker, a prominent lawyer and a founder of Williamsburgh Savings Bank. The ten Queen Anne-style row houses closest to Bushwick Avenue were designed by Brooklyn architect Frank Keith Irving in 1888. They are notable for the decorative terra cotta panels, stained glass transom windows, and the impressive end house with its mansard roof and pedimented attic windows. They were built alongside a row of neo-Grec-style row houses, designed by Edward F. Gaylor and built a few years earlier in 1885. These have typical neo-Grec styling of incised-lintel designs and tall stoops with decorative ironwork. At the end of this row nearest Broadway are three 1901 brownstone row houses with projecting bays, which were designed by Benjamin Finksieper with Renaissance Revival-style details. Across the street is an intact row of 11 Renaissance Revival-style houses built in 1894. These were developed by Charles E. Palmer who was also the architect and builder. The houses have striking rusticated brownstone façades with alternating angled bays and generously sized front yards.

The row houses exhibit different stylistic ornamentation, but all share common features such as height, materials, color, decorative cornices, slightly recessed entries, and fenestration pattern along the facades. Minor alterations over the years on some of the houses consist of replaced windows, doors, and metalwork. The row houses have very good integrity to their original construction, and they complement each other to create a harmonious historic streetscape.

