

VAF members can register now and secure limited spots for tours. Registration is open to non-members beginning March 24. Take advantage of this opportunity and register today!

Vernacular Architecture Forum

New York City 2006
"City Building"
New York, New York:
Vernacular City

June 14-17, 2006

99 Orchard Street, now the Lower East Side Tenement Museum (photo c. 1939, New York City Municipal Archives)

VAF Conference Registration
26W540 Embden Lane
Wheaton, IL 60187 USA

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elcome to New York City, home to the largest concentration of vernacular buildings in the country. New Yorkers like to think they live in a city that has been home to many of the nation's leading architects and has streets lined with sophisticated, high-style buildings.

It is true that we have our share of architectural masterpieces designed by well-known architects, but these singular structures are only a small part of the city's architecture. Most of New York City has been built up with vernacular buildings commissioned by builders who often employed architects who specialized in the construction of profitable, speculative structures.

It is these little-known speculator architects (the designers whom snobbish critic Montgomery Schuyler dubbed "the speculative builders draughtsmen") who created the streetscapes of the city, not the more famous McKim, Mead & White, Delano & Aldrich, and their well-heeled colleagues.

During the conference, we will explore the speculative built landscape of New York City and, in particular, examine the rich and varied ethnic overlays of its ever-changing neighborhoods. We will walk through neighborhoods of nineteenth-century row houses and twentieth-century garden apartments; explore African-American and immigrant tenements and the vibrant neighborhoods that their residents created; and examine

the profitable commercial lofts and skyscrapers which have housed the businesses that created the city's economic and financial preeminence.

Geographically, New York City is located on one of the world's most promising sites for urban development—at the mouth of a wide, navigable river on an all-weather, deep-water, protected harbor. The city, however, was a minor colonial settlement initially established as a Dutch trading post. It was not until the early nineteenth century that the city's merchants harnessed the natural promise of the harbor and labor to transform their modest settlement into a great commercial city that would soon rival the cities of Europe in size, financial and industrial power, and cultural awareness. All this was accomplished as New York became (and remains) one of the most diverse cities in the world.

The VAF is grateful to the J. M. Kaplan Fund, Inc. for supporting the conference. Other conference sponsors include: The School of Architecture, Urban Design, and Landscape Architecture, City College of New York, CUNY; The Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, Columbia University; City Lore and its Place Matters project, cosponsored with the Municipal Art Society; Harlem Heights West Harlem Community Preservation; other community groups; students in the Historic Preservation Certificate program, Art History Department, Rutgers University and the Growth and Structures of Cities program at Bryn Mawr College.

Getting to and Enjoying New York City

Getting to and around NYC is convenient, with three major airports, 13,000 taxis and limousines, 4,500 buses, 500 subway stations, and countless feeder roads.

We'll take advantage of the extensive public transportation system as we travel between boroughs for tours and special events. We urge you to purchase a Metrocard on the registration form; it will give you unlimited use of buses and subways for seven days. (There will be lots of on-site assistance to navigate the easy-to-use system.) For details on how to get around the city, visit <www.nycvisit.com>, click on <Visitors> and then <Getting Around.>

For transportation options from the airports, visit <www.nycvisit.com> and follow the links to <Visitors>, <Planning Your Trip>, <Getting to NYC>.

June in NYC is the time between cool spring and hot, humid summer. The record low is 46°; the record high is 99°; the average is a comfortable 79°. Nights can be cool. Plan ahead with light-weight casual clothes (plus outer layers) and good walking shoes and you'll enjoy your adventure.

Tourists are everywhere in NYC, but you don't have to look like one. For tips on how to blend in and better protect yourself wherever you travel, go to <www.google.com> and key in "don't look like a tourist."



View of Lower Manhattan from Brooklyn, 2005, Floyd Gillis

Conference Program At A Glance

Wednesday, June 14, 2006

VAF Board Meeting – Holiday Inn-Downtown (Manhattan/SoHo)

Late Afternoon Tour

Hamilton Heights. Early arrivals may take a self-guided walking tour through Hamilton Heights, a late-nineteenth-century row house neighborhood adjoining the City College of New York that became a popular address for middle-class, African-American households in the 1920s and 1930s. Several houses and churches will be open for viewing.

Evening

Keynote Address: “New York: Vernacular City.”

Andrew S. Dolkart, the James Marston Fitch Associate Professor of Historic Preservation at Columbia University, will give the keynote address and will introduce us to New York City’s architectural vernaculars and development. The talk will be in the spectacular Great Hall, in Shepard Hall at the City College of New York, and will be followed by a reception. The lecture is co-sponsored by the School of Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Design at City College.

Dinner. On your own. A restaurant list will be provided.

Thursday, June 15, 2006

Daytime Tours

Lower East Side and the Lower East Side Tenement Museum. The focus of our day will be the Lower East Side, New York City’s most famous immigrant neighborhood, with its streets lined with tenements, housing projects, and the social service structures that have contributed to immigrant lives for more than 150 years. You may spend the entire day on the Lower East Side visiting churches and synagogues, housing projects, the Museum of Chinese in the Americas, and other sites, and sampling ethnic food. Alternatively, you may sign up for an afternoon tour of commercial vernacular in Lower Manhattan.

In the morning, all registrants will visit the Tenement Museum, the nation’s first museum to investigate the living conditions of the immigrant poor. The tenement, dating from 1862–63, has housed thousands of German, Irish, Jewish, Italian, and other immigrants. The stories of various residents are told by this extraordinary institution. Other Lower East Side sites may be visited on self-guided walking tours. A selection of additional sites will be open to conference participants. Tenement Museum tour capacity: 300 people.

Lower Manhattan Commercial Vernaculars. In the afternoon, you have the option to register for this guided tour. It will begin at the South Street Seaport, the oldest commercial venue in the city, and meander through the narrow streets of Lower Manhattan, stopping to discuss mid-nineteenth-century Italian Renaissance-inspired loft buildings, early skyscrapers, the slender speculative towers of the skyscraper boom of the 1920s, and the modern commercial vernacular of the late-twentieth-century office tower. Lower Manhattan tour capacity: 50 people (for the guided tour). A self-guided tour is also available.

Evening

Place Matters Plenary. City University Graduate Center.

The VAF, the Gotham Center for New York City History and City Lore are cosponsoring this evening plenary to discuss issues of place on the Lower East Side. Speakers will discuss the Chinese, Hispanic, and Jewish experiences, including contemporary immigrant and housing issues. Lecture hall capacity: 380 people, with 150 seats reserved for VAF members.

Dinner. On your own. A restaurant list will be provided.

Friday, June 16, 2006

Daytime Tours

Queens. This all day bus trip will explore the borough of Queens, the most ethnically diverse place in the world (school children in Queens speak more than 160 languages). We will focus on Sunnyside Gardens and Jackson Heights, two major mid-twentieth-century vernacular garden city developments (including the city's main South Asian commercial node). We will also stop at the Astoria Pool, a spectacular and spectacularly-sited 1930s swimming pool funded by the WPA. A vegetarian lunch will be at the magnificent Hindu Temple in Flushing.

NOTE: Visitors to the Hindu Temple must respect the dress code: shorts (on both men and women) *are not allowed*, and all who enter the temple must remove their shoes. (Shoes may be worn for the lunch in their Community Center.)

Harlem. This all day walking tour will explore two sections of Harlem and look at speculative row houses,

tenements, and apartment buildings, as well as churches, clubs, and commercial buildings, most built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We will also discuss the transformation of Harlem into America's most dynamic black community. Lunch will be at the United House of Prayer for All People. Harlem tour capacity: 100 people.

Evening

Bohemian Hall. All conference participants are invited to discuss their day over a beer at the Czech Bohemian Hall, the last of the city's beer gardens, in Astoria, Queens. Transportation from both tours to the Bohemian Hall will be provided, as will transportation from the Bohemian Hall to the Holiday Inn-Downtown.

Dinner. On your own. A restaurant list will be provided.

Saturday, June 17, 2006

Daytime Sessions

Paper Sessions. The Columbia University School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation will host the paper sessions, the Preservation Roundtable, and the Presidential Plenary. You may purchase a ticket for a boxed lunch on the registration form.

Evening

Banquet. The conference will conclude with a banquet at a Chinese banquet hall in Chinatown. You may purchase a ticket for the banquet on the registration form.

*Sunnyside Gardens,
Reform Housing in
Queens, 2005, Marta
Gutman*



Paper Sessions

Saturday, June 17

First Morning Session

Session 1: New York, New York

The “Ideal City” of New Amsterdam, Plan and Execution: Seventeenth-Century Netherlandic Planning in North America

Jeroen van den Hurk, University of Delaware

New York City’s Oyster Barges: Architecture’s Threshold Role Along the Urban Waterfront

Michael J. Chiarappa, Washington College

James B. Kirk, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey

Downtown Sideways: Paper Streetscapes of Nineteenth-Century Lower Manhattan and the Commercial Vernacular

Jeffrey Cohen, Bryn Mawr College

Session 2: Preservation Methods and Lessons

Drawing Standards: A Western Approach

Thomas Carter, University of Utah

Improving from the Inside Out and the Outside In: The Historic Chicago Bungalow Initiative

Anne Stephenson, University of Chicago

Lessons of History, Questions of Preservation: The Timothy Knapp House, Rye, New York

Shelley Smith, Fordham University

Session 3: Making and Appropriating Urban Spaces

Leapers, Perverts, and Tramps: Vernacular Appropriation of a Planned Urban Space

Tim Davis, National Park Service

Inventar: Struggles and Inventions in the Economics and Aesthetics of Housing in Cuban Cities

Patricia Del Real, Clemson University

Anna Cristina Pertierra, University College London

Protest and Performance in Public Space: Miami, Florida in the 1950s

Gray Read, Florida International University

Sessions 4: Architecture and Identity

Philadelphia’s Lazaretto Quarantine Station: The Architecture of Public Health in Early Nineteenth-Century Urban America

Catherine Lavoie, National Park Service

Urban Cigar Stores: Where Men Could be Men

Heather Boyd, University of Delaware

Behind the Screens: A History of Postwar Architectural Screens, Slipcovers, and Skins

Chad Randl, National Park Service

Session 5: Reinterpreting the City from the Ground Up

The Circle and the City: How a Place in Indianapolis Became Its Center

John Beeler, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis

Race Time: The Indianapolis Speed Way

Anne Coleman, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis

Six Tin Can: Landscape, Golf, and Race in the Midwest

Stephanie Seawell, Indiana State Museum

Mid-Morning Session

Session 6: Making a Home

Quadrominium 1970: Real-Estate Vernacular in the in the Age of Vietnam

Matt Lasner, Harvard University

Apartments in Disguise: Small Multiple Dwellings in the “City of Homes,” 1907-1930

Todd Gish, University of Southern California

The Duplex and the Small, Multi-Family House: Alternative Strategies for Fulfilling the American Dream 1900-30

Thomas Hubka, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Batey, Stoop and Veranda: Building “Thresholds” Between Realms in Dwellings: The Puerto Rican Example

Jorge Colom, Instituto de Cultura Puertorriquena

continued ...

Session 7: The Urban Landscape of the Nineteenth Century

Libraries in Public before the Age of Public Libraries: Interpreting the Furnishings and Designs of "Social Libraries," 1800-1860

Adam Arrenson, Yale University

Adaptation and Urbanism in Port City Boardinghouses: Wilmington, NC, 1850-1890

Glenn Perkins, Historic Hope Foundation

Promotional Fiction? Late Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia as a "City of Homes"

James Jacobs, National Park Service

Civic Order on Beacon Hill, 1800 - 1850

Jeffrey E. Klee, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Session 8: Making and Unmaking Place

Shack Architecture: Embedded Poetry and The Surrounding Politics

Reena Tiwari, Curtin University of Technology

A Landscape of Enclaves: Making of Sarasota, Florida

Matthew Hyland, GAI Consultants, Inc.

Deutschland Recreated: Post-World War II Place Making and the Neo-American Vernacular

Caroline Swope, Seattle Central Community College

Skyscraper Girls: Clerical Workers and City Spaces at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

Midori Green, University of Minnesota

Session 9: Ethnic Vernaculars

"It's More Than Just the Tree": Christmas House Displays Among Italian Americans in New York City

Joseph Sciorra, Queens College

Playing Crazy: Dressed Yards and the Performance of Community in an African-American Neighborhood

Kim Tanzer, University of Florida

Architectural Expression of Cultural Identity in Tribal Museums and Cultural Centers

Anne Marshall, University of Idaho

Session 10: Cultural Symbolism and Civic Identity

The Tourist as City Builder

Phil Gruen, Washington State University, Pullman

Totems of Modernity: The 1922 Uproar Over the Milwaukee Public Museum's Haida Totem Pole

Victoria Cain, Columbia University

Religious Pavilions at the NY World's Fair 1964: Melding the Vernacular and the Modern

Julie Nicoletta, University of Washington, Tacoma

Death in the Capital City: Congressional Cemetery's National Landscape

Julia Sienkewicz, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Lunch Break: Presidential Plenary

Vernacular Architecture and Public History, or Why Does Everyday Historic Landscapes Matter? (working title)
Information on speakers will be posted on the conference website.

Afternoon Session

Session 11: Prescriptive Architectures

American Grids: Policies of Inclusion/Exclusion in the Southwest

Karen Noreiga, Binghamton University

Re-tooling the Modern Indian Home: Architectural Pattern Books in Early Twentieth-Century South Asia

Will Glover, University of Michigan

Federal Parochialism: Post Office Design Guidelines and the Production of the Local

Jesse Vogler, Texas Tech University

Where Nature Meets Culture: The Summerhouse

Kerry Carso, State University of New York at New Paltz

Session 12: Vernacular Nationalism

Understanding Chinese Modernity through Lilong Housing Typology

Bing Wang, Harvard University

Bodies and Buildings: Colonial Heritage and the Building of New Delhi

Mrinalini Rajagopalan, University of California, Berkeley

The Mediterranean Architectural Formula: Building Block for the Colonial City

Eliana Perotti, Geschichte des Stadtebaus, Institut

ID: Identity -- Inclusive Diversity in African Architecture

Lawson Katiza, Sydney, Australia

Session 13: Transportation and the 20th Century Urban Landscape

Building a Modern Vernacular: Bush Terminal and the Evolution of an Urban Industrial Landscape

Malka Simon, Brooklyn College

De-constructing the Big Dig: A Modernist Story in Images

Amy Finstein, University of Virginia

Would Jesus Drive a Peterbilt? Encountering Contemporary Christianity at the Truck Stop Chapel

Ethel Goodstein-Murphree, University of Arkansas

Automobile at Rest and Its Interactions with the Twentieth-Century American City

Shannon McDonald, Shannon Sanders McDonald, Principal/Designer

continued ...

Session 14: Urban Design and the Working Class

A Nation that Bathes Together: Structuring Morality and Class in New York City's Progressive-Era Public Baths

Andrea Renner, University of Delaware

The Other Side of the Tracks: The Laboring Class Landscape of Cooperstown, NY, 1900-10

Kierman Lannon, Cooperstown Graduate Program

The Boston Cooperative Building Company and Tenement Reform in the Late Nineteenth Century

Amy Johnson, Otterbein College

Designing for Race and Class in Company Towns: Worthland Village and Hickman Row in Claymont, DE

Robin Bodo, Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

Rebecca J. Sheppard, University of Delaware

Session 15: Preservation Roundtable

Topic: The Designation of Cultural Properties

*Laura Hansen, Program Officer, J. M. Kaplan, Fund
Kathy Howe, Historic Preservation Specialist, New York State Historic Preservation Office
And other government representatives*

Conference Housing

Option 1:

Holiday Inn-Downtown (Manhattan/SoHo)

**138 Lafayette Street
New York, NY 10013**

For reservations call 212-966-8898.

Rate: \$190 for one or two people in a room with two double beds. Mention that you are with the Vernacular Architecture Forum to receive the group rate.

Cut off date: Reservations must be made by May 16, 2006, to receive the discounted rate.

Location: The Holiday Inn is the host hotel for sleeping rooms and the VAF Registration Desk. It is located in the heart of Chinatown, near Canal Street, SoHo, Little Italy, the Lower East Side, and Tribeca, and is near Thursday's walking tours and the Saturday banquet with easy access to public transportation.

Option 2:

St. John's University dormitory

**101 Murray Street
New York, NY 10007**

For reservations call: 212-284-7003

Rate: \$50 for a single room without linens/\$55 for a single with linens; \$35 per person for a double room without linens/\$40 per person with linens.

Cut off date: There is no cut-off date, but use your discretion.

Location: Situated across from the Hudson River, St. John's University offers housing in the university's dormitory with great views, a gym, pool table, and TV lounge. Double rooms are in bunk-bed style. All rooms have communal bathrooms with private shower stalls.

Registration Information

To register for the conference, complete the registration form and send with check or money order to the VAF Conference Registrar:

**Barbara Morris
VAF Conference Registration
26W540 Embden Lane
Wheaton, IL 60187 USA**

Take heed: The cut-off date for early registration is May 1, 2006, but please send in your registration early. Remember: VAF policy is first come first served (and space is limited on some of the tours).

Questions? Call at Barbara Morris at 630-668-6168 or email bkmorris27@yahoo.com.



Hotel Theresa, Harlem, 2005, Floyd Gillis

continued ...

Learning More About New York City

NYC & Company (formerly the New York Convention & Visitors Bureau) is the city's official tourism marketing organization. You'll find everything you need to plan your visit at its comprehensive web site <www.nycvisit.com>.

A Short (Considering It's New York) List of Readings, Films, and Websites

Books

- Blackmar, Elizabeth. *Manhattan For Rent, 1785-1850*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.
- Burroughs, Edwin G., and Mike Wallace. *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Cromley, Elizabeth. *Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Dolkart, Andrew S., and Matthew Postal. *The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission's Guide to New York City Landmarks*. 3rd edition. NY: John Wiley, 2003.
- Gabaccia, Donna. *From Sicily to Elizabeth Street: Housing and Social Change Among Italian Immigrants, 1880-1930*. Albany: State University of New York, 1984.
- Henkin, David. *City Reading: Written Words and Public Spaces in Antebellum New York*. NY: Columbia University Press, 1998.
- Lockwood, Charles. *Bricks and Brownstone*. NY: McGraw-Hill, 1972; reprint, NY: Rizzoli, 2003.
- Osofsky, Gilbert. *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto: Negro New York, 1890-1930*. NY: Harper and Row, 1966.
- Plunz, Richard. *A History of Housing in New York City: Dwelling Type and Social Change in the American Metropolis*. NY: Columbia University Press, 1990.
- Scobey, David M. *Empire City: The Making and Meaning of the New York City Landscape*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002.
- Voorsanger, Catherine Hoover, and John K. Howat, eds. *Art and the Empire City: New York, 1825-1861*. NY: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000 (see esp. Dell Upton's essay).
- Ward, David, and Olivier Zunz. *The Landscapes of Modernity: New York City, 1900-1940*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.
- White, Norval, and Elliott Willensky. *AIA Guide to New York City*. NY: Three Rivers Press, 2000.
- Willis, Carol. *Form Follows Finance: Skyscrapers and Skylines in New York and Chicago*. NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995.
- *WPA Guide to New York City*. NY: 1939; reprinted, Pantheon, 1982; New Press, 1992.
- Yamin, Rebecca, ed. "Becoming New York: The Five Points Neighborhood (Special Issue)." *Historical Archaeology* 35.3 (2001).

Novels

- Doctorow, E.L. *Ragtime*. 1997.
- Ellison, Ralph. *The Invisible Man*. 1947.
- Finney, Jack. *Time and Again*. 1970
- Foer, Jonathan Safran. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*. 2005.
- Morrison, Toni. *Jazz*. 1992.
- Roth, Henry. *Call It Sleep*. 1934
- Selby, Hugh. *Last Exit to Brooklyn*. 1988.
- Wharton, Edith. *The House of Mirth*. 1905.
- Yeziarska, Anzia. *Bread Givers*. 1925.

Films

- Agrelo, Marylin. *Mad Hot Ballroom*. 2005.
- Allen, Woody. *Manhattan*. 1979.
- Lee, Spike. *Jungle Fever*. 1991 (Lee has made a number of excellent New York-centered films)
- Micklin Silver, Joan. *Crossing Delancey*. 1988
- Wyler, William. *Dead End*. 1937.

Websites

- Place Matters: <www.placematters.net>
- City Lore: <www.citylore.org>
- The Gotham Center: <www.gothamcenter.org>
- The New York Public Library Digital Gallery: <www.digitalgallery.nypl.org>
- The Five Points Site: <www.r2.gsa.gov/fivept/fphome.htm>
- Folk Songs for Five Points: <<http://www.tenement.org/folksongs/client/>>
- The Tenement Museum: <www.tenement.org>
- New York City Architecture: <www.nycarchitecture.column>Outside cover—on self mailer side or front