

Boerum Hill Bulletin

The Boerum Hill Association is a volunteer organization of residents of Boerum Hill. We seek to preserve and enhance the unique qualities of our neighborhood through advocacy, education and community building. Go to www.boerumhillassociation.org

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(*non-board member)

Board meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month from September through June at 7:00pm in the Hopkins Center.

FILM AND TV PRODUCTION

At the recent General Meeting on October 30th, this topic received the most comments from attending residents. No one was a big fan of these productions.

While we have not seen much production activity in the past few years, recently we've been repeatedly visited by the weekly spy drama, "The Americans" and a new NBC series called "The Slap." Both projects have taken up multiple blocks when shooting on residential streets and "The Slap" took over Atlantic Avenue more than once.

The primary gripe: Neighbors complained about limited notice to move cars and the resulting limited parking space anywhere in the already challenged neighborhood. Noisy generators, late working hours, lights focused into many residences and a general lack of consideration for the people who live here were among the other grievances aired.

This is a \$7 billion industry that brings many jobs to New York City. While overall that's great, the direct impact to the community is inconvenience for the residents and lost income for the local businesses. Complaints to the NYC Film Office have resulted in earlier postings and some level of response from the production companies—but not to enough effect for many residents.

Both productions made contributions to the community. "The Americans" donated \$5000 to Gowanus in Unity Tutoring and "The Slap" gave \$1000 to the BHA.

The Atlantic Avenue BID has requested a production moratorium on the commercial stretch from Thanksgiving through Christmas which the BHA supports. The Film Office has not committed to this request.

When the BHA reached out to other brownstone neighborhoods we learned that most had more days of production than we've seen. The common opinion is that we're proud that Brooklyn is hot but repeated filming degrades our quality of life. Open and timely communications as well as some control over the permitting dates and locations are among the issues we would like to see addressed.



SAVE THE DATE!

**Annual
Pot Luck
Holiday Party
Saturday, Dec 6th**

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I love Boerum Hill but is it just me or does the traffic seem heavier, the horn honking more prevalent, and is there construction noise and debris on every block?

Preserving our quiet and friendly neighborhood gets more difficult every year. However with lots of new faces and families moving in I remain optimistic.

For instance, if you went through the neighborhood on Halloween you saw so many great things. There were free hot dogs on Pacific Street and crowds of kids there and on Dean, Bergen and other blocks. With nice weather almost every stoop was occupied by gleeful candy givers. We have arrived as a Halloween destination!



So are there other ways we can harness that energy? How can we connect neighbors around other activities? If you have ideas, we want to hear them. The BHA wants to support community efforts of all kinds.



The annual Pot Luck Holiday Party is another tradition that we faithfully support. Maybe we can conjure a summer barbeque event? Or how about a children's Olympics in the yard of PS 261?

Lets think about this and commit ourselves to community in 2015. Remember to reach out to a neighbor. Do something small but meaningful.

For now have a wonderful and happy holiday season filled with family and good times.

In community,
Howard Kolins, BHA President

SCHERMERHORN DEVELOPMENT

Last month there was a meeting of State Street residents with the development company, GFI Capital, regarding a hotel project at the corner of Schermerhorn and Bond Streets.

At issue, is the request for a variance to increase the bulk of this 13-story building that is rumored to be an Ace Hotel. The BHA wrote a letter to CB2 against granting the variance until more is known about the building and the operation of the hotel. Nearby residents are concerned about a noisy, club-like atmosphere literally in their backyards. The full board at CB2 voted against approving the variance but their role is advisory.

Since the building sits over a subway tunnel prohibiting basement construction, a variance that compensates for this is not unusual. If so, the number of hotels rooms would rise to about 285.

During the meeting the developers shared floor plans for each floor. The first controversial issue was the hotel entrance on Bond Street (The Bond Street Hotel) across from the Citibike station. Residents

strongly suggested moving the entrance from this narrow street and placing small retail on the side street. An entrance on Schermerhorn was already in the plan but mostly for the restaurant and access to the second floor meeting rooms. With the subway below, the elevators to the hotel floors will need to be located on the south corner of the building so the Bond Street entrance was the shortest distance to reception and the elevators. Residents at the meeting did not think moving the entrance to Schermerhorn Street was problematic.

The building will be glass and metal with an outside staircase on Schermerhorn Street that leads to the second floor as a design feature. This staircase leads to the two meeting rooms and small ballroom. The building is set back on the southern side beginning on the second floor so the drawings showed a rear patio adjacent to the ballroom. Residents immediately saw the potential for noise affecting the entire block if this feature remained and it use was not regulated. Again, the request was made to move, or remove, this feature. State Street residents at the meeting told of similar noise issues from State Renaissance Court,

OUR SUPPORTERS

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Barrett Design and Development, LLC
Kim Soule, James Crow & Sue Wolfe, *The Corcoran Group*

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61 Local
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Trezza Management
Hope Veterinary Clinic
The Sterling School
Lone Star Construction

MORE FRIENDS

Exit 9
Gumbo
Sterling Place

Sottocasa
Sahadi's
Sterling Wines
The Invisible Dog

DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)

The developers listened and left with the promise of another meeting after Thanksgiving. While the many projects along Schermerhorn Street are a welcome addition to downtown Brooklyn, this project is the first to show considerable negative impacts on the quality of life for State Street residents. The BHA will continue to support changes to the design and operation of the building especially if it will include a downtown club.



Looking east from Bond Street toward the Holiday Inn yet to open. Residential towers will be completed across from the Holiday Inn and the 55-story Steiner tower will be across from 16 Scycamores Playground.



Looking north from Bond Street to Schermerhorn Street. The parking lot is being demolished to accommodate constructions of 700+ units with ground floor retail.

CHURCH SEEKS DEVELOPER



The **New Baptist Temple**, alternately known as the Recovery House of Worship, was constructed in 1893 and rebuilt after a fire in 1917.

According to "Curbed" in February: *The oldest Baptist church in Brooklyn hit the market in 2011 after a three-alarm fire the previous year left it badly damaged. The church never did end up selling, but in the meantime property values have skyrocketed. The church is not actually for sale - it is instead looking for a partner. There is no official asking price. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic places, which does not preclude it from being demolished, added to, or otherwise altered (unlike with city landmarks). The one thing that might dissuade developers, however, is the fact that the church plans to strike a deal that would allow it to remain on the lower level of whatever ends up getting built at the site. It also wants to take the opportunity to expand its total amount of space from 30,000 to 45,000*

square feet. The buyer would be able to deduct the cost of that expansion from the sale price and built 55,000 square feet of residential space above it.

At our October General Meeting, Pastor Edwin Colon spoke about a vision for the future of this building. By partnering with a developer, the Recovery House of Worship looks to continue functioning with a smaller sanctuary on the second floor with meeting rooms and offices on the third floor. The church would have space to continue its mission that includes a food pantry, Al-Anon and other social programs.

To accomplish this, the current building would rise to 12 stories with ground floor retail and an outdoor community space. Rehearsal and art studios would occupy the fourth floor while the upper floors could accommodate a college dormitory or boutique hotel. The conceptual design uses much of the existing brick and some of the undamaged stained glass within its modern design.

This remaking of an historic building was met with questions but support by those in attendance. Someone pointed out the dark and lonely feeling at this intersection that might be well served by a transformation that included more foot traffic. BHHA President Howard Kolins reminded the attendees that the 55-story Steiner building rising across the street will certainly create street life.

The BHA expects to have more public meetings about this proposal if it moves forward. For now, these are dreams until a developer is found. The Community Board and Council Member Levin will also need to review and comment.

A CRIME STOPPING REMINDER

Our neighborhood is never crime free and we occasional incidents of robbery and muggings.

Please remember to be aware of your surroundings on the street. This can be at any time of day. Put away the cell phone and take out the ear buds. When going out for the day lock your first floor windows. Do NOT leave your car unlocked or have items visible in the back seat. All these things encourage crime. Most importantly, **call 911 to report suspicious people or**

activity. Don't wait for a crime to be committed! Keep your eyes open.

The 84th Precinct Community Council meeting takes place the third Tuesday of each month from September through June (except December). The meeting moves to a different location each month but notices are sent out or contact the precinct at 718-875-6811. This is your opportunity to speak directly to the precinct commander, Captain Sergio Centa.

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE BOERUM HILL ASSOCIATION

Name(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Your contact info will never be shared or sold, and you may opt out of any communications at any time.

Yearly Membership (open to all residents of Boerum Hill) **\$10 – NEW MEMBERS ONLY**

\$25 – Individual \$15 – Individual Senior/Student/Low-income

\$40 – Family \$25 – Family* Senior/Student/Low-income

Business Supporters (listed on BHA website, newsletters, and other publications)

\$125 – Business Donor \$250 – Business Sponsor

Contributions (Not a resident or business owner? Or checked a box above but still want to do more? Contributions of any size are always welcome and help support the important work of the BHA)

+ \$100 “Good Neighbor” + \$250 “Neighborhood Hero!” + \$ _____ Other

The BHA membership year is from January 1 to December 31. Members in good standing as of June 1 may vote in the June board election. All others, including business supporters, may not vote but are welcome at all BHA events and activities.

* Family memberships (2+ adults in the same household), are entitled to two votes. Individual members receive one vote.

Contribute Your Talent and Energy

Join your neighbors who volunteer to work on BHA activities and community priorities. Identify your areas of interest.

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| <p><input type="checkbox"/> Atlantic Yards</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Block Captain (help distribute BHA notices on your block)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Boerum Hill History</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Community Events (meetings, holiday party, house tour)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Greening & Neighborhood Beautification</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Land Use (development, zoning, building noise)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Land marking</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Membership (recruitment, member services)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations and Communication (neighborhood calendar, block associations, press releases, etc.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Parks and Playgrounds (improving Douglass/Greene Park)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Quality of Life (public safety, sanitation, recycling, noise)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Technology (website, email, online tools)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Traffic and Transportation (transit, parking, etc.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tutoring (homework help to neighborhood youth)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> |
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Make your check payable to the **Boerum Hill Association.**

Mail this form and the check to the:

Boerum Hill Association, P.O. Box 020583, Brooklyn, NY 11202

RECENT DEVELOPMENT

These are some of the projects under construction in Boerum Hill. Almost all the undeveloped lots are now filled in. We are gaining many new residents but what are we gaining? The BHA successfully down-zoned much of the neighborhood several years ago which preserves the low-rise character of our brownstone blocks but issues of height and bulk still remain. Some examples, pro and con, are on these pages.



This large, weed overgrown lot has sprouted a bulky residential building on Pacific Street just off Court Street. A renovation of an older building across the street is nearly the same height



This new modern residential building on Atlantic Avenue near Bond Street is allowed under the current zoning. Residents of State Street lose backyard light and views. Should we push for lower heights?



The corner of Boerum Place and Pacific Street long home to Heights Auto Repair will become rental units soon.



This building at Boerum Place and Atlantic Avenue will be residential with ground floor retail. The windows in the background will be blocked.

RECENT DEVELOPMENT



*New brownstones nearing completion on State Street near Bond Street. They feature traditional brownstone facades that attempt to match the classis block.
How much do you think these will sell for?*

*The beginning of four brownstones on Pacific Street near Hoyt Street. This was a muddy parking lot used by many of the teachers of PS 261. (Remember John and later Johnny?) Each of these will have a garage resulting in the loss of some parking.
The current construction adds to the chaos of the street at the beginning and end of the school day. Only temporary...two years?*



This modern residence has just completed its façade. Located at Boerum Place and Pacific Street, this was the holding lot for cars repaired at Height Auto Repair (see facing page). The building to the right was built on the lot a few years ago.

These are some of the buildings just opened or under construction. Remember that to our north, the downtown area is expected to add 7500 units over the next three to five years.



Boerum Hill Association
P.O. Box 020583
Brooklyn, NY 11202-0583
www.boerumhillassociation.org

Growing a better Boerum Hill

C H E C K I T O U T

Red Star Sandwich Shop, 176 Smith Street

Asian-inspired sandwiches with unique twists. Gourmet sides, salads, beer and wine. Try the made-to-order sandwiches where highlights include lemon-grass brisket, Korean fried chicken, Five-spice pulled pork and miso BLT. Have some apple slaw or tater tots on the side.

Boomtown, "Brooklyn Heroes," 311 Atlantic Avenue

Young, cool vibe run by nice staff. Warm sandwiches on fresh pretzel buns with interesting and tasty combinations on their Dr. Cubano, Reubenese, Cheese Steak and Camarone Po' Boy among many. Also sides and soup. Open 11am–5pm.

Ugly Duckling, 166 Smith Street

The name is a tip-of-the-hat to the ugly Transit bunker that used to be on this site. They serve American food including burgers, chicken and waffles, seafood

and more. Lunch, brunch, dinner and a kids menu. Nice bar and warm atmosphere. Live music on Fridays.

White Oak, 138 Smith

French-American for lunch, brunch and dinner with backyard dining in warm weather. Duck leg confit, New York Strip steak, oysters, Artic char, chicken roulade, burgers, fresh pasta and a selection of local beers. A welcoming place trying to be a neighborhood mainstay.

Marsala Grill, 501B Atlantic Avenue

Curries, kabobs, tandoori and vegetarian dishes. Lunch specials are also available.

Ganso Yakatori, 515 Atlantic

Soon to open. Ganso Ramen on Bond is fabulous so this restaurant is greatly anticipated!

JOIN THE BHA

Help us advocate for Boerum Hill by becoming a member. Join us on the web at www.boerumhillassociation.org