

BEVERLEY SQUARE WEST

Count Us ALL In!

the WEST HALF of BSW
Bid for Inclusion
in the Designated Historic District



Beverley Square West is one of New York City's most unique and surprising micro-neighborhoods, known collectively as Victorian Flatbush. This late 1890s-1910 historic urban suburb, a "garden within the city," built on and around the old Dutch farm and woodlands in the heart of Brooklyn, is the largest collection of residential freestanding wood frame houses in America. It's a hidden enclave, intersected in parts by old and new high rise residential buildings and bordered by commercial streets like Coney Island Avenue.

Yet it remains a NYC treasure; a delightful revelation for visitors; a location bonanza for filmmakers (and the City!) and the musicians and artists who use our open porches to perform and exhibit their work; while our gardens and trees are an environmental gift to all of Flatbush, with the lowest number of public green spaces in CB14 per resident in the City. We have been trying to preserve these micro- neighborhoods through landmarking for over 40 years. Only 5 of the 11 neighborhoods have been designated NYC LPC Historic Districts. 2025 looked like the year BSW would be 1 of 2 more communities to finally receive the recognition and protection our neighborhoods need and deserve, and that brought great joy- especially because additional zoning changes brought new concerns about preservation.

And then, to the stunning surprise and disappointment of the overwhelming majority of BSW residents, we learned that **half** of our 6 street neighborhood had been excluded. Why? We were informed that the west half of BSW (the west half of Beverley Road and 2 of the 5 the cross streets, Stratford and Westminster Roads), were not as meritorious as the others. We disagreed, but to no avail.

This presentation was designed to show that all of BSW is the same in every way and that both halves meet the same **LPC criteria for inclusion** in the designated Historic District:

1. **"At least one period or style of architecture typical of one or more eras in the City's history;**
2. **a distinct sense of place; and**
3. **a coherent streetscape."**

We hope it will inspire you to **Count Us ALL In!**



THE ISSUE:

Joining both
Halves of BSW
into One Coherent
Historic District

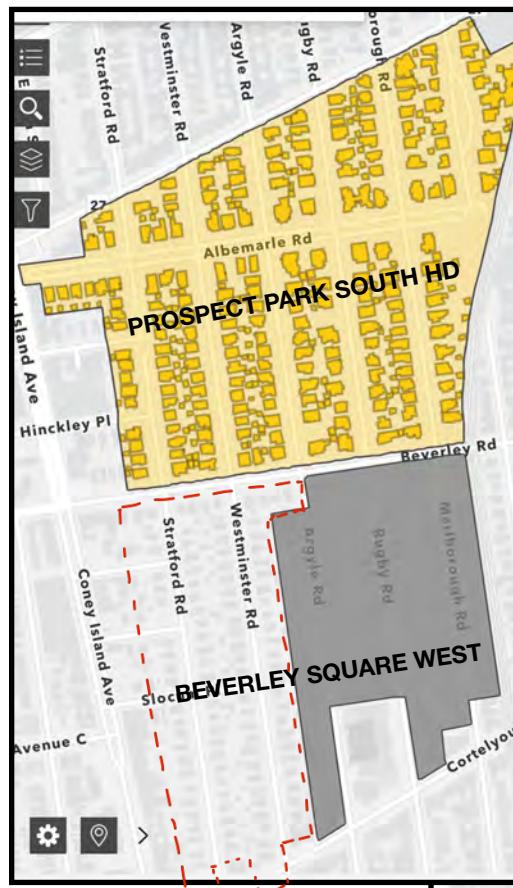
BSW & PPS are adjacent Victorian communities located in the north section of Victorian Flatbush, close to Prospect Park. They are both bordered by 2 commercial streets, the BMT subway tracks and the road they share, Beverley Road, the residential entrance to this historic area.

The N/S streets that flow through both neighborhoods bear the same British names- Stratford, Westminster, Argyle, Rugby and Marlborough Roads- and compose part of the scenic Victorian Flatbush “green way” that runs from Prospect Park to Brooklyn College.

While PPS was built with slightly larger lots and some grander houses, and many of the houses in the west and north section of BSW were built a few years earlier, both neighborhoods share the same eclectic Victorian style houses, constructed with the same methods and materials, with gardens and trees creating the same countrified ambiance and turn-of-the-20th century sense of place.

The LPC Landmark map (top right) shows that the BSW HD was drawn by taking a hefty bite out of Beverley Road and simply ignoring Stratford and Westminster Roads.

Our altered map (bottom) shows how we believe the historic district should be drawn- fusing both halves of BSW together, logically connecting the historic district to the entire BSW neighborhood and the adjacent PPS HD.

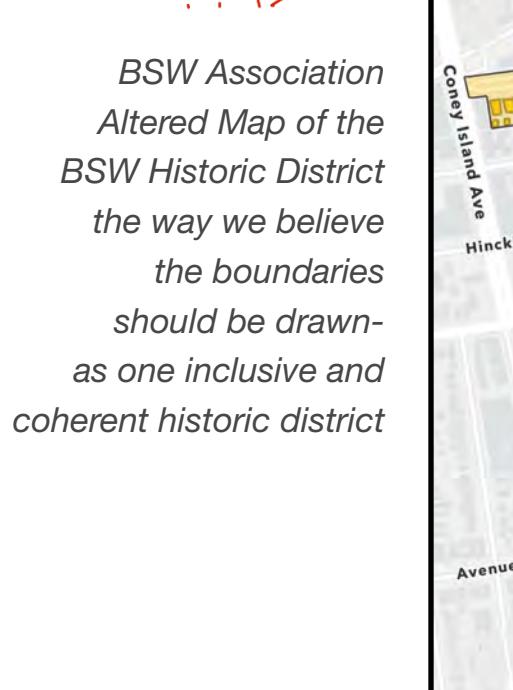


The NYC Landmark
Preservation
Commission
Landmarks Map

PPS Historic District
(yellow)

Designated (calendared)
BSW Historic District
(dark gray)

The excluded west half
of BSW (broken red line)



*BSW Association
Altered Map of the
BSW Historic District
the way we believe
the boundaries
should be drawn-
as one inclusive and
coherent historic district*

Our Commercial Boundaries

EXPANDING MIXED USE & RESIDENTIAL HOUSING



New residential building sites on CIA and Beverley

These buildings were erected after BSW agreed to rezone our commercial borders in 2009 to help increase housing in our area.



CONEY ISLAND AVENUE (CIA), at the western edge of BSW and PPS, is a large commercial street in a state of transition. Multiple high rise residential and mixed-use buildings are replacing auto body shops, gas stations and construction suppliers who have been there for decades.

But when you turn the corner...



onto **BEVERLEY ROAD** you take a step back in time to another transitional moment in NYC history - the development of one of the earliest suburbs in the US, a bucolic enclave of historic Victorian era homes and gardens which remains one of the City's most unique and surprising neighborhoods...

PROSPECT PARK
SOUTH
HISTORIC DISTRICT
(PPS)

BEVERLEY
SQUARE WEST
(BSW)

BEVERLEY ROAD

The Gateway to Victorian Flatbush



between STRATFORD ROAD and CONEY ISLAND AVENUE

BSW

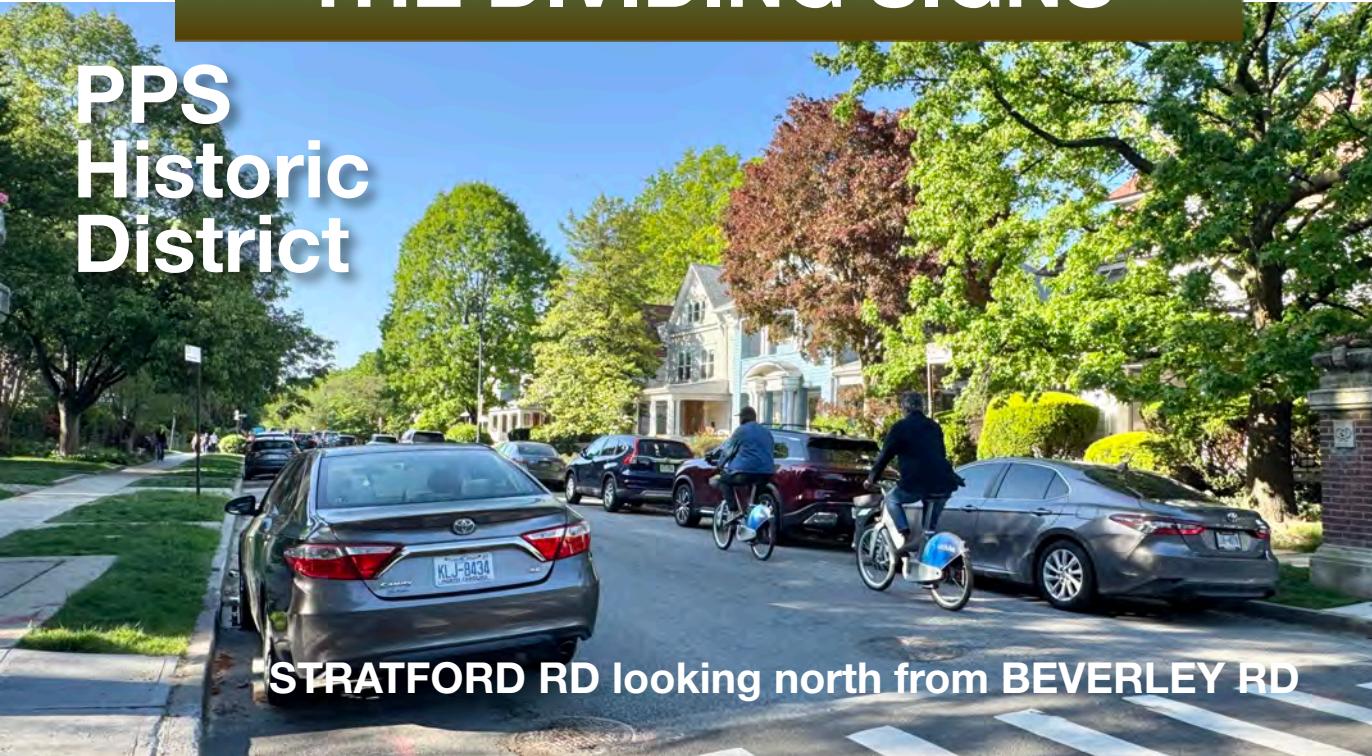
BEVERLEY RD looking south to STRATFORD RD

EXCLUDED



THE DIVIDING SIGNS

PPS
Historic
District



STRATFORD RD looking north from BEVERLEY RD



"Whenever I take a group on a tour of Victorian Flatbush, I always start in Beverley Square West and point out how the signs change from standard green to historic brown when we cross Beverley Road and enter the PPS Historic District.



And always, without fail, everyone asks the same question- 'Why aren't they both historic districts?' And I always give the same answer - We're trying!" —Ron Schweiger,
Brooklyn Borough Historian

After more than 40 years of trying, we're almost half way there. Just a few more blocks to finish job and turn all our BSW signs BROWN!



WELCOME to the West half of
BEVERLEY SQUARE WEST

EXCLUDED

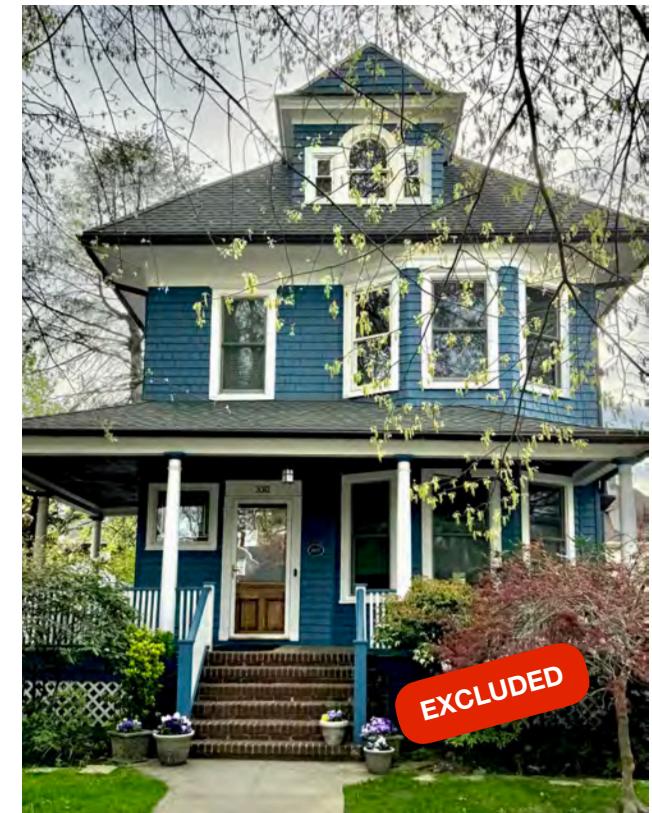
1. Where our
houses share the
same **Victorian**
ARCHITECTURAL
STYLES
as houses in the designated
Historic District

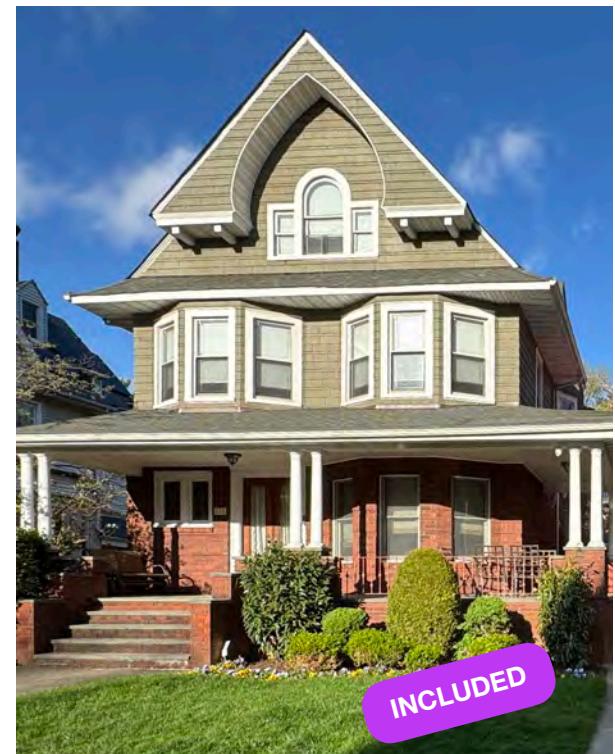
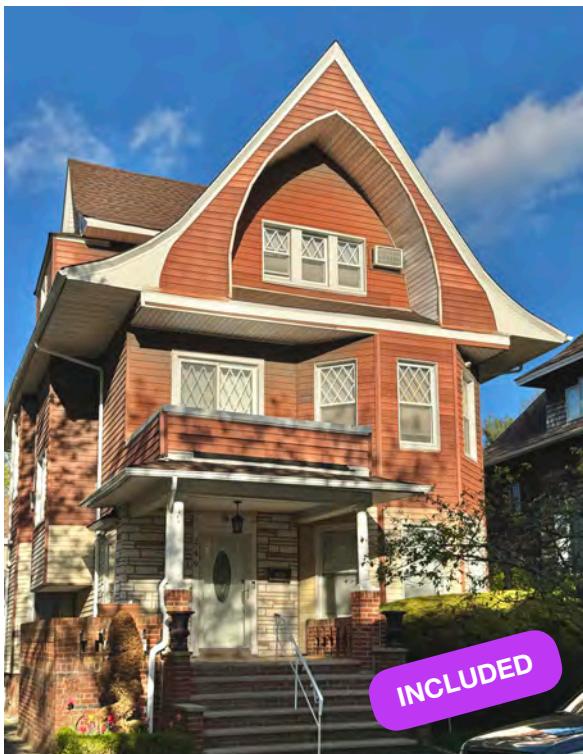
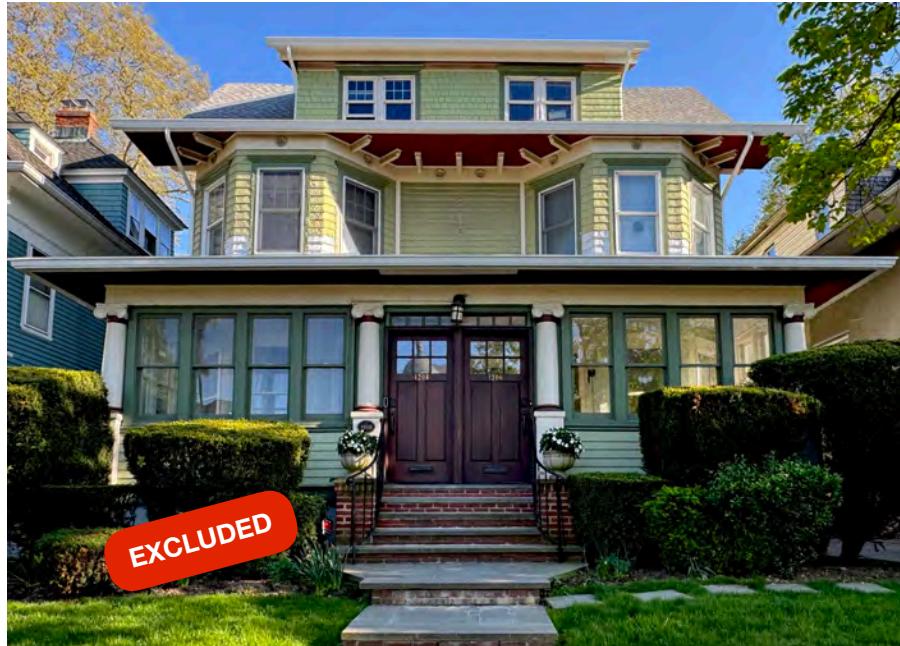


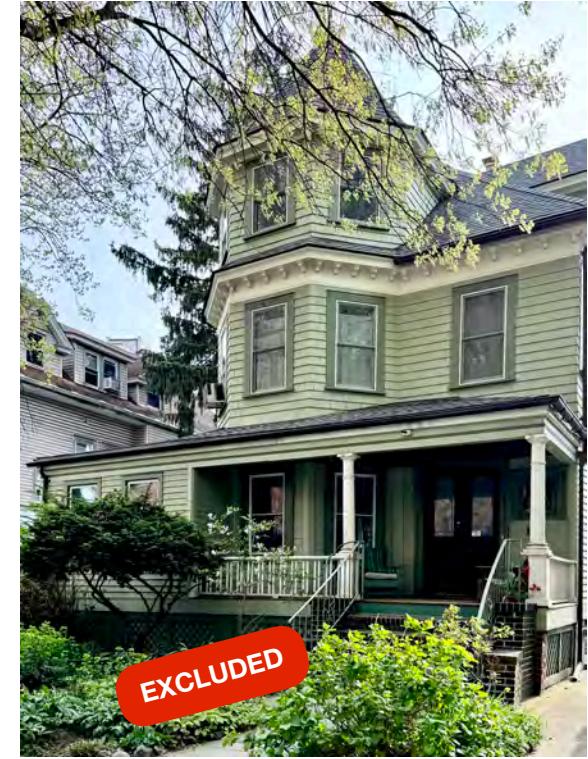
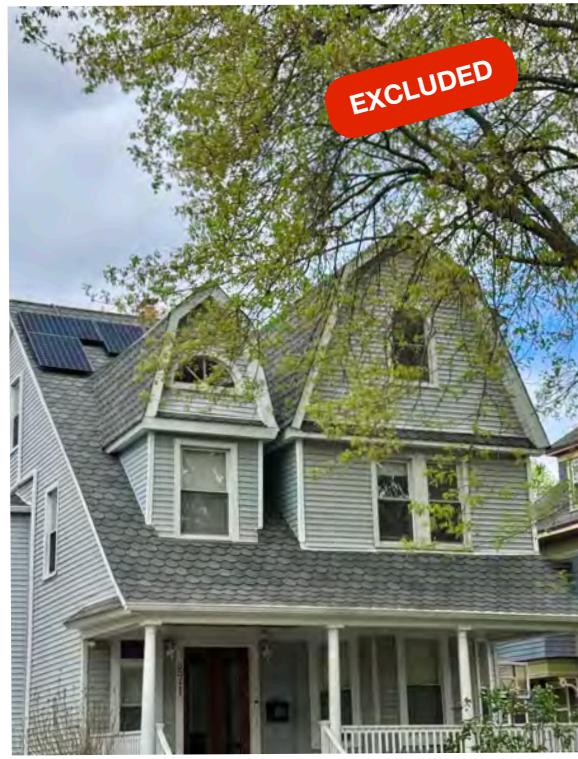
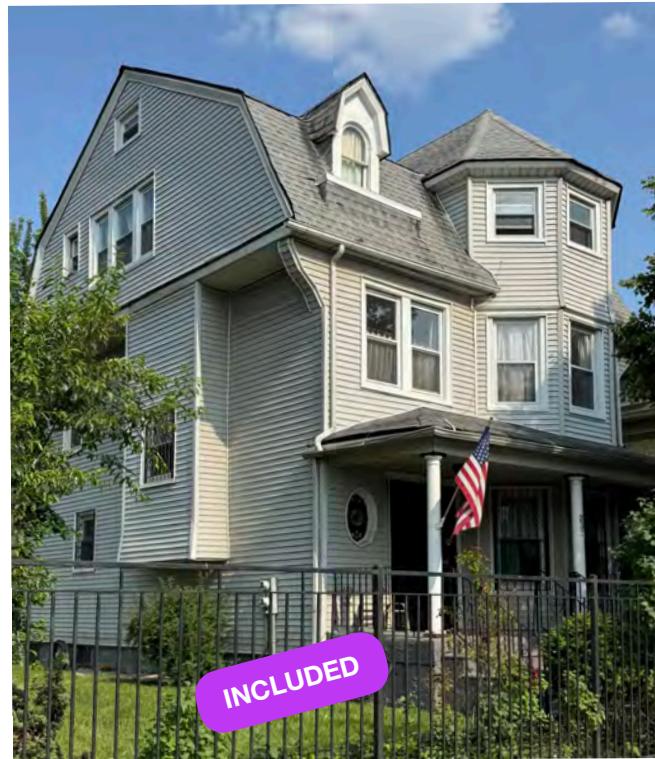
We believe there's little to distinguish the collection of houses throughout BSW.

TAKE the HOUSE CHALLENGE

Half of the 14 houses pictured here are from the LPC designated BSW Historic District; Half are from the excluded section. Do you see any distinctions? Which do you think belong in the Historic District?







VICTORIAN DETAILS



ALL EXCLUDED

You can discover these and more of the Victorian details that make each house so unique in the excluded west half of BSW, and similar ones in the designated Historic District.

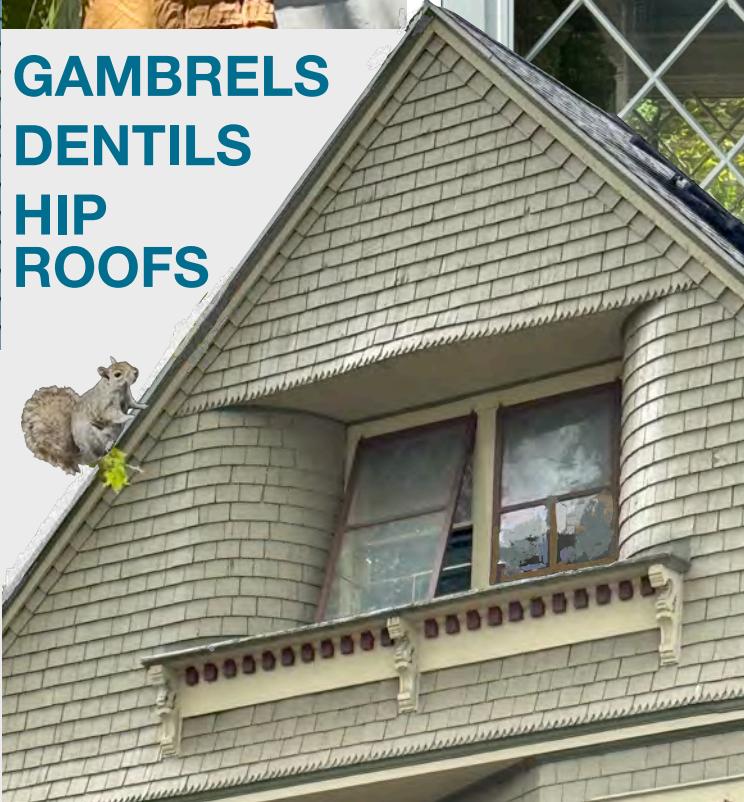
**STAINED
GLASS
ORNAMENTAL
WINDOWS
& BAYS
DORMERS
GABLES
TURRETS**



**CLAPBOARD
SHINGLES
PEDIMENTS
BRACKETS
COLUMNS &
CAPITALS**



**GAMBRELS
DENTILS
HIP
ROOFS**



Integrity



LPC Integrity Map
of the designated
BSW Historic District
presented at the
Calendaring Hearing
June 17, 2025



BSW INCLUSIVE Integrity Map

Includes both
halves- all 6
streets-of BSW.
It demonstrates
the similarity of
the integrity
ratings
throughout BSW
and brings both
halves together
as **ONE**
COHERENT
HISTORIC
DISTRICT.



ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY

The LPC Integrity Map (top) represents the Commission's architectural integrity ratings for each of the 119 houses in the designated BSW Historic District (1/2 of Beverley plus Argyle, Rugby and Marlborough Roads). LPC added the number of Intact and Minor Alterations houses together and gave the area an integrity rating of 85%.

The BSW INCLUSIVE Integrity Map (bottom) combines our ratings of the 105 houses on the west half of BSW excluded from the historic district (1/2 of Beverley, plus Stratford and Westminster Roads) with the 119 included houses that appear on the LPC Integrity map. (The broken red line indicates the division.) Using the same criteria, the integrity rating of the west half came to 83%- virtually the same as the designated district, adding support to our bid for its inclusion in the Historic District.

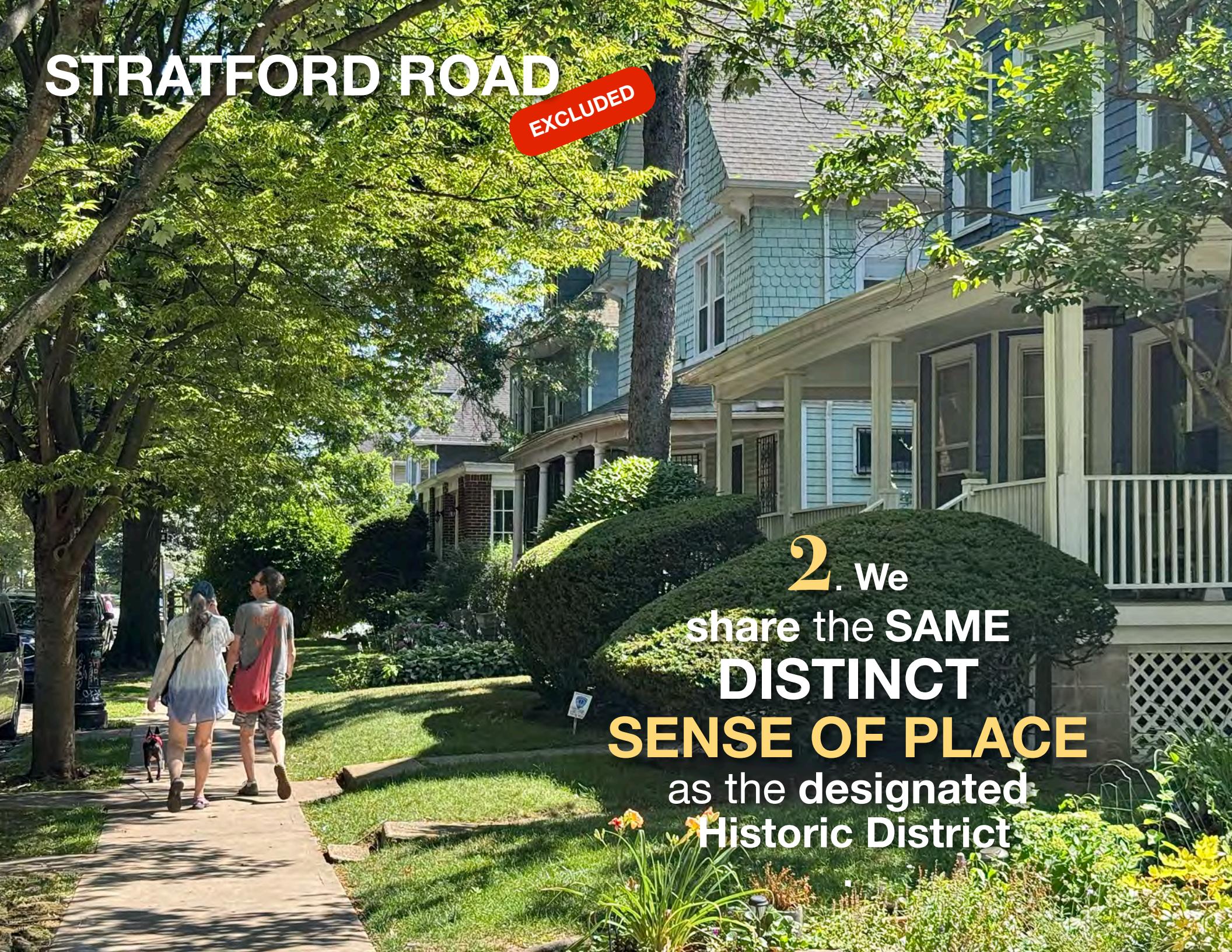
To understand the LPC integrity criteria and apply it to the houses on the excluded streets, we:

1. Attended and reviewed the LPC calendaring presentation of the designated BSW Historic District.
2. Surveyed the designated district and excluded streets with the Brooklyn Borough Historian and Executive Director of the Historic District Council and analyzed a selection of houses based on their LPC ratings.
3. Applied those findings to rate the 105 houses in the excluded west half of BSW.
4. In addition, we compared houses to their photographs in the 1940s NYC Tax photos archive.

STRATFORD ROAD

EXCLUDED

2. We
share the **SAME**
DISTINCT
SENSE OF PLACE
as the **designated**
Historic District



PRESERVING Our DISTINCT SENSE of PLACE

The developers of Victorian Flatbush understood the appeal of the Victorian cottage style of living when they created one of America's earliest suburbs; a collection of small garden communities, "a realm of light and air" which pervaded these freestanding houses with windows all around, open porches to watch and welcome neighbors, gardens front and back to tend to, relax or party, and shady tree lined streets with planted sidewalk strips that added to the countrified ambiance.



The eclectic Victorian architecture, playful details and garden settings which made each of these "artistic" houses unique gave these neighborhoods their character. This urban suburb was a fresh alternative to apartment, row house and brownstone living. By the very nature of its planning and design, it established a new and distinct sense of place which defined Victorian Flatbush. The kind of place where you could smell the roses and hear birds singing and children playing outside. It's still the same today throughout BSW. And it's precisely that sense of place we are trying to preserve for our excluded west half.



All EXCLUDED





TAKE the SENSE of PLACE CHALLENGE

We think you can walk down any street in BSW and get the same country-in-city vibe.

3 of these north/south streets are from the designated BSW Historic District;
2 are from the excluded west half.

Do you see any difference in ambience or appearance?

Which do you think belong in the Historic District?

Find more photos of our excluded streets next.



BEVERLEY ROAD

BSW-West Half

EXCLUDED

PPS*HD



WESTMINSTER
ROAD

EXCLUDED



ART•MUSIC•HALLOWEEN!

Our houses, with their open porches, lawns and driveways lend themselves to hosting these types of events and we love sharing them with the entire community.

Operation Gig, the porch concerts that began during Covid on

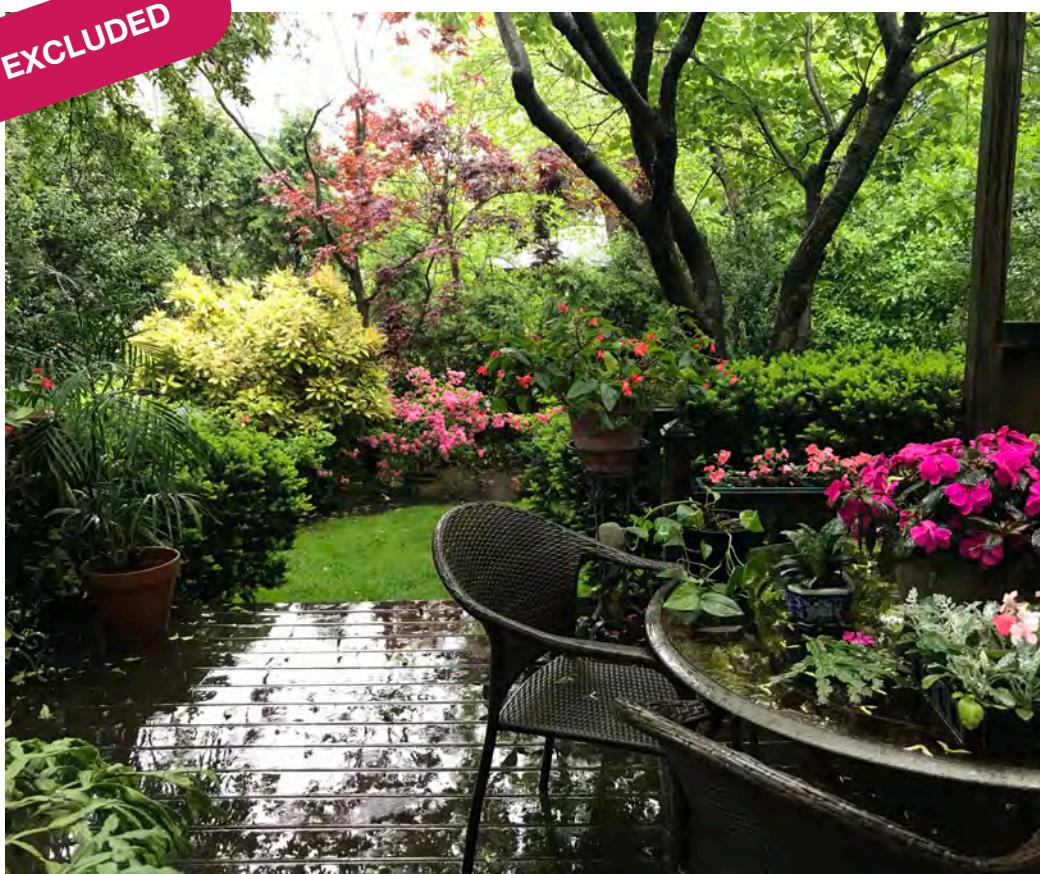
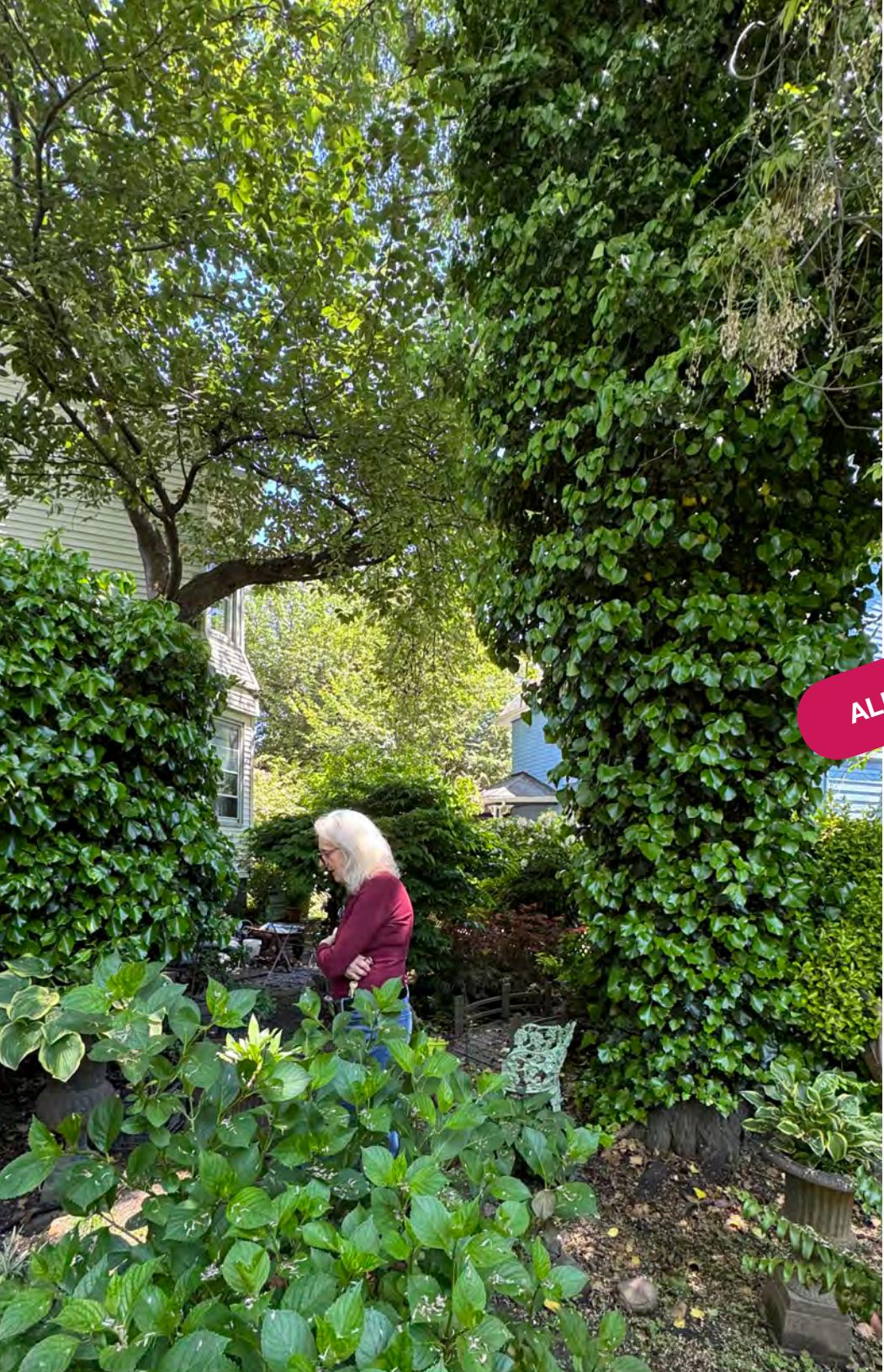
Westminster Road, has become a Victorian Flatbush staple, which helps support NYC musicians, and our 2 big annual studio tours at the homes of our many local artists; the open house tours and our unrivaled decked out Halloween houses, which bring overflow crowds of all kinds of monsters trick or treating through our spooky neighborhoods are all part of those unique characteristics that give our historic community, including BSW and our excluded west half, the distinct sense of place that IS Victorian Flatbush.

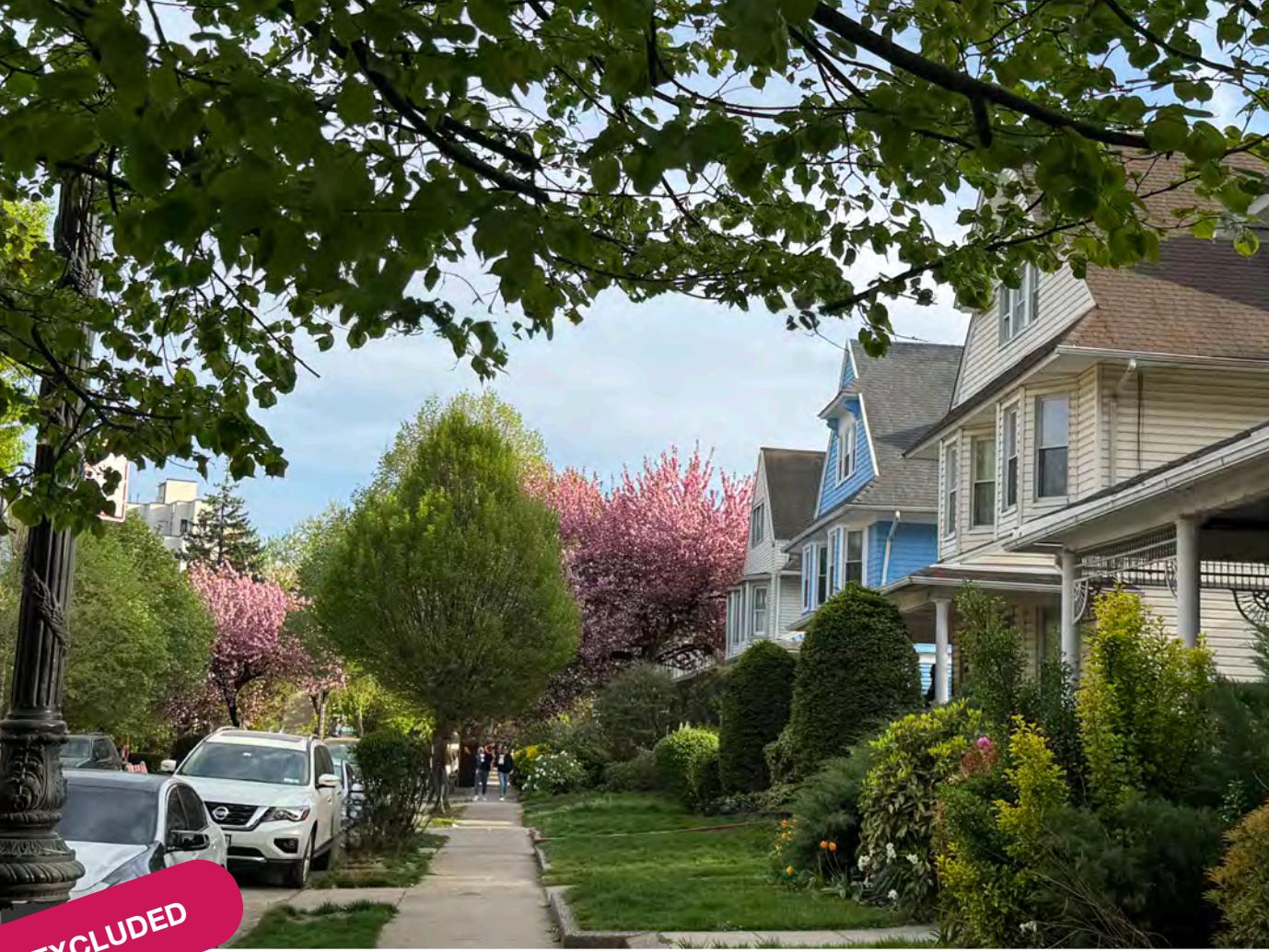
With
No green parks
in the entire **district**, Our
GARDENS & TREES
are an **essential part** of the
Lungs of Flatbush
and Our **Distinct**
Sense of Place



ALL EXCLUDED







No other neighborhood in NYC looks like Victorian Flatbush. No other city in the United States has a larger concentration of freestanding wood frame homes. It's a NYC historic and architectural treasure that can only be preserved by landmarking, which is why it's so important to include ALL of BSW in the designated historic district.





BEVERLEY ROAD

BSW-West Half

EXCLUDED

PPS-HD

3. We share a
**COHERENT
STREETSCAPE**
with the adjacent
PPS Historic District
and the designated
BSW Historic District

WESTMINSTER ROAD

EXCLUDED



Take the Streetscape Challenge

Do you see any difference between the 6 streetscapes pictured in this section?

Which ones would you include in the BSW Historic District?

MARLBOROUGH ROAD

INCLUDED



Beautiful, coherent and harmonious in every season perfectly describes the historic streetscapes throughout BSW. From the tree-lined streets, landscaped lawns, planted strips between the roads and sidewalks to the Victorian-style lampposts, all 6 of the streets that comprise BSW retain the same countrified ambiance their developers intended. In fact, they've even more gracious today under their canopies of full grown trees than when they were developed more than a century ago.

STRATFORD ROAD

EXCLUDED



A TALE of TWO HARRYS

Both handsome Harrys were developers of the older sections of BSW, and both lived in the houses they built in the neighborhood.

In fact, Harry B. Hawkins (bottom) and his father were among the very first speculative builders in Flatbush. Harry B. built and lived in 2 houses in the area. The 2nd one, at 221 Stratford Road, which also included his office, proudly stands today, meticulously restored by its current owner, and flanked by 3 other historically restored houses on Stratford Road, which is excluded from the designated BSW Historic District. How ironic!

From the commemorative book Flatbush of To-Day V2-1908



Stroll down any street in BSW and you'll feel the same warm and welcoming ambiance their late 19th century developers had in mind when they built these free standing houses as an alternative to apartment and brownstone living. With no two just alike, there was plenty of opportunity for buyers to express their taste and more than enough architectural details to delight the eye of residents and passersby. The lush green lawns, gardens and open porches encouraged healthy outdoor living and the kind of neighborly get togethers still going on today.

It was "country-in-the-city" living, almost as Victorian cottage nostalgic then, 50 years after the British Victorian-style of building had ended, as it is today. And yet, it was more forward thinking too, because these early Flatbush urban suburbs planted the seeds for the suburbs that would begin to spread far beyond this City and change the American way of living in the new century.

Constructed of wood and shaded by the maples and sycamores that lined the streets, this collection of almost indistinguishable developments, built by men like the 2 Harrys and TB Ackerson, who created the largest collection of houses south and east of the earlier developments and gave BSW its name, were eventually joined together to become the Beverley Square West neighborhood we know today - an irreplaceable reminder of NYC's more bucolic past at the moment it began to transition to the modern era. There's no discernible difference between our houses, streets or distinct sense of place. There's no logical reason to break off a few blocks rather than landmark our neighborhood intact, seamlessly connecting all the same named streets we share with the Historic District of PPS. **Designating ALL of BSW a NYC Historic District will preserve the integrity and character of both historic neighborhoods, protect the environment and save a bit more of Victorian Flatbush. Its a win-win all around.**

Many supporters wrote letters to the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission. Many others sent this one:

As residents of Beverley Square West (BSW), one of the turn-of-the-century micro-neighborhoods that compose Victorian Flatbush, we were delighted to learn that the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission was considering our designation as its 6th Historic District, which will protect and preserve our historic neighborhood and more of Victorian Flatbush.



Developed and marketed as “country living in the city,” at the turn of the 20th century, Victorian Flatbush is really a suburb within an urban environment. It was a unique concept then and remains unique to NYC more than 125 years later. No other neighborhood in NYC looks like Victorian Flatbush. No other city in the United States has a larger concentration of freestanding wood frame homes. Victorian Flatbush is an historic and architectural treasure, and those of us who live here think every effort should be made to keep it intact and thriving.

Which is why it was so shocking, puzzling and extremely disappointing to learn that the LPC plan to landmark BSW as an historic district included only half of our neighborhood!

All the streets within BSW borders (Beverley and Cortelyou Roads, from Marlborough to Stratford/Coney Island Ave) share the same type of Victorian era houses, constructed in the same way, with the same array of architectural styles and details; the same countrified ambiance of graceful trees and lovingly tended gardens; the same tony British names and even the same Victorian style lampposts!

Like the streets in every other VF neighborhood, landmarked or not, some of our houses retain more original details; others have been restored or changed to varying degrees. There's nothing to distinguish between the two halves of BSW except, perhaps, the invisible and little known fact that the houses on Beverley, Stratford and Westminster roads, were not, for the most part, built by TB Ackerson, the developer who built most of the homes being considered for landmarking on Marlborough, Rugby and Argyle roads. That's because many of those houses were already there, dotting the perimeter of Ackerson's development before it was built. So if age counts for historic preservation, all the more reason to include our older houses in the proposed BSW Historic District!

There are other significant factors for inclusion. BSW and the Historic District of PPS, from Stratford to Marlborough Roads, share Beverley Road. Turning onto Beverley from the commercial Coney Island Avenue is a striking step back to a more bucolic period in NYC history. The first 3 blocks on Beverley- Stratford, Westminster and Argyle- create this dramatic entrance to Victorian Flatbush. But this tree-lined residential gateway is likely to disappear if they are not included in the proposed BSW historic district.

This is not hyperbole. It's a plea for preservation protection. The new COY zoning rules give developers the legal right to tear down historic BSW corner and adjacent houses and replace them with 5-6 story buildings, with no setbacks or architectural restrictions. With 4 houses on each block- 2 corners and 2 adjacent ones - it's reasonable to predict a 3 block wall of 6 story apartment buildings rising opposite the Historic District of PPS, and high rises punctuating the small cross streets within Westminster and Stratford Roads. Our trees and gardens, which function as the only parks in the entire area, would also disappear, along with the environmental benefits the original developers lauded-clean air, light and the beauty of flowers and gardens everyone can enjoy. The character of the neighborhood we cherish would be lost forever. Landmarking is the only way to prevent this. We believe these endangered streets, along with the rest of BSW, fit all the criteria for historic designation as defined by LPC, particularly the coherent streetscape and distinct sense of place we have and share with PPS.

BSW has always supported increased housing for New Yorkers. High rise buildings exist within and along our boundaries, with new (and very large) ones in progress on our commercial corridors. But we also want to save our community's important contribution to NYC's social and architectural history. Including these few blocks in the proposed Historic District of BSW is essential. It will also prevent inappropriate development from impacting our PPS neighbors and preserve more of Victorian Flatbush, NYC's most unique and surprising historic neighborhood.

We emphatically urge you to reconsider the LPC proposed boundaries for BSW and landmark all of it. Thank you.