

The Douglaston Little Neck Historical Society

THE DOUGLASTON AND LITTLE NECK HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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SUMMER 2018**



*The Historical Society hosted our first **Annual Neighborhood Architecture Day** event on April 29. An event for all ages, we even had two newborns because no one is too young to learn about **architecture!***

*After the tour, the kids met with arts educator **Karen Fitzgerald** who showed them how to design their own buildings. Whether it was a collage, a 3D construction, or a simple sketch, each created their own masterpiece to take home.*



*Trustee **Pamela Broderick** led tours of the many architectural styles found in our towns. Whether it was Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, or a house that reflects the time of Henry VIII, there was much to see, and everyone found a favorite style.*



*We thank the **Queens Council on the Arts** who made this event possible, with public funds from the **New York Department of Cultural Affairs** and in partnership with the **City Council**. Thanks also to the **Douglaston Local Development Corporation** and the **Community Church of Douglaston**.*

**WALKIN' THE WALK AND
TALKIN' THE TALK:
CROWDS THRILL TO NYC'S LARGEST
COLLECTION OF ARTS & CRAFTS
HOUSES FOR JANE'S WALK 2018!**

A record 70 people from all over the City gathered at the Douglaston station on May 5th for *Jane's Walk 2018*. The group took a two-hour walk up and down some of Douglaston's hilliest streets to see and discuss buildings that make up the largest collection of Arts & Crafts style houses in any neighborhood in New York City.

The walk culminated with a garden reception and house tour at Don and Leela Fiorino's exquisite Arts & Crafts style gem of house at 315 Hollywood Avenue in Douglas Manor, where guests were treated to Prosecco, cheeses, sweets and other refreshments.

For the third year, Jane's Walk was as a joint effort of the Douglaston Local Development Corporation (DLDC) and the Douglaston & Little Neck Historical Society (DLNHS), and led by local architects Robert Dadras, Victor Dadras and Kevin Wolfe.

Victor Dadras, a board member of the DLDC and DLNHS, started the tour off with a brief history of the railroad's arrival at Douglaston, and a few words about the current station house, a "mid-century Modern" building that was built in 1962, replacing an 1882 Queen Anne style station building. The DLDC has been working steadily to improve the station area for the past 9 years.

From the station, the group walked a few minutes into the borders of Douglas Manor in

the Douglaston Historic District. Along the way to the Fiorinos, Jane's Walkers saw 15 other Arts & Crafts style houses, including three houses designed by Arts & Crafts master Gustav Stickley.

Stickley became the leading American proponent of the Arts & Crafts movement. He promoted the style with his magazine, *The Craftsman*, which featured the design work of his staff of architects and designers, who, along with himself, created house plans and furniture designs.

Two of the Manor's Stickley houses were built from *The Craftsman* magazine plans. A diverse collection of Arts & Crafts style houses and houses ornamented with Arts & Crafts detailing unrivalled in the City are arrayed along Douglas Manor's romantically winding streets.

Many of the Manor's Arts & Crafts style houses exemplify the tenets of the Arts & Crafts ethos that a true "home" requires "Beauty, Simplicity, Utility, and Organic Harmony."

The DLDC and DLNHS saw Jane's Walk 2018 as an opportunity to explore the theme of exactly what is meant by "Arts & Crafts" and what it is that makes a house an Arts & Crafts style house to begin with. The Jane's Walkers had a lively discussion, and lots of questions along the way about the Arts & Crafts movement, New York City Landmark regulations, and of course, "Arts & Crafts" style.

This is a tricky topic for there is no readily identifiable "Arts & Crafts" style. The movement started in England in the mid-19th century with the rise of industrialism and in opposition to it, as a way to cultivate the hand-crafted, and influenced architecture, fine arts painting, print making, furniture design, textile and graphic design.

Here in the States, the Arts & Crafts movement arrived a bit later, with a fantasized

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version of family life and domestic bliss thrown into the mix. In architecture, the Arts & Crafts “style” embraces many eclectic styles popular at the time including Tudor, Mediterranean, Shingle Style and Colonial Revival. The movement was popular between 1900 and 1920.

The Arts & Crafts style proved a perfect match for the early houses of Douglas Manor where the planned garden suburb reached by rail offered a green alternative to the increasingly mechanized and frenetic neighborhoods of Manhattan, but remained easily connected to it.

After two hours of intense walking and talking, visitors were ready for a break. The Fiorinos generously welcomed everyone to their house, where visitors were free to relax with refreshments in their circular back garden, or tour the house, three stories of Arts & Crafts bliss.

Prominent architect George Chichester designed the gambrel roofed, rose-covered cottage in 1911. Don & Leela – both accomplished artists–hired a craftsman who painstakingly recreated lost oak woodwork and built-ins that were removed by a previous owner during a misguided 1960s renovation. The richly outfitted oak woodwork and cabinetry rivals any that Stickley might have designed and looks as if it’s always been there.

Jane’s Walk is sponsored by the Municipal Art Society, and is in honor of the late Jane Jacobs, an urban activist. Jacobs, untrained in city planning, wrote *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, a critique of city planning and urban renewal. Her influence was so great that she changed the way every urban designer, architect and city planner today thinks about cities. Jane’s Walk is free and open to the public; it is celebrated in cities worldwide on the same May weekend each year.

Gustav Stickley houses

top: 140 Prospect Avenue

bottom: 111 Hollywood Avenue





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 and participation**

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*Our mission is the preservation of the Douglaston and Little Neck
 communities through education and advocacy.*