



IMMEDIATELY
June 19, 1989
127-A

**HISTORIC HOUSE TRUST
ANNOUNCED AT GRACIE MANSION**

Mayor Edward I. Koch, Parks Commissioner Henry J. Stern, and Cultural Affairs Commissioner Mary Schmidt Campbell today announced the creation of the Historic House Trust of New York City, a not-for-profit organization that will assist the City in operating, maintaining and restoring the 15 historic house museums on City parkland.

The Mayor was joined by many of the 18 citizens who have agreed to serve on the Historic House Trust's board of directors as well as representatives of groups that have provided initial private funding to the Trust. The Mayor also presented the new "Historic Houses Passport," a promotional booklet modeled on the design of a U.S. passport, to encourage more people to visit the house museums. The new Parks brochure was underwritten by the Arthur Ross Foundation.

Mayor Koch said, "For more than 100 years, since the City acquired the first of its historic houses, the Bartow-Pell Mansion in the Bronx in 1888, we have tried to provide the funding and the support they deserve. We have spent, in the last eight years, more than \$6 million in capital funds to restore these houses, and millions more in maintenance, security and program support through the Parks Department and the Department of Cultural Affairs to assist the volunteer organizations that run these houses. This new partnership with the private sector will enable us to provide a new level of concern and care for these treasures."

Commissioner Stern said, "These houses are the City's links with its past, and deserve better promotion and support. We hope that the successful examples of the Central Park Conservancy and the Prospect Park Alliance can be repeated to help restore the houses and bring them to life for many more visitors."

Cultural Affairs Commissioner Mary Schmidt Campbell, whose agency also supports the historic houses, said, "We applaud the Parks Department's initiative in creating the Historic House Trust. It will augment the Department of Cultural Affairs' strong commitment to preserving and interpreting these museums."

(more)

The Historic House Trust board currently includes 18 prominent citizens active in historic preservation, architecture, design, cultural institution management, development, civic affairs and other areas. The charter board members are:

Myra J. Biblowit
Vice President, Development and Public Relations
Central Park Conservancy

Amanda Burden
Vice President for Planning and Design
Battery Park City Authority

David Castro-Blanco
Architect, Castro-Blanco Piscioneri & Associates

Alice Diamond
Staten Island Civic Leader

Murray Bartlett Douglass
Senior Vice President, Brunswick & Fils, Incorporated

Timothy C. Forbes
Publisher, American Heritage Magazine

Jeffrey Glick
Principal, The Glick Organization

Mark Hampton
Interior Designer, Mark Hampton, Incorporated

Hugh Hardy
Architect, Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer

Dr. Robert L. Hess
President, Brooklyn College and Historian

Deborah Krulewitch
Executive Director for Corporate Administration
Estee Lauder Companies

William H. Luers
President, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Gene A. Norman
President, CEO, Harlem International Trade Center Corporation
Former Chairman, N.Y.C. Landmarks Preservation Commission

Joseph Pierson
Film Producer/Preservationist

(more)

Dianne Pilgrim
Director, Cooper-Hewitt Museum

Nicholas Quennell
Landscape Architect, Quennell Rothschild Associates

Henry J. Stern
Commissioner, Parks & Recreation (ex-officio)

Cynthia Wainwright
President, Preservation League of New York State
Chairperson of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
Commission of New York City

Arnold Vollmer
President, Vollmer Associates

Ultimately 25 to 30 trustees will serve on the board in different terms. Incorporation of the Trust is proceeding with the bro-bono legal assistance of Debevoise & Plimpton.

Groups that have provided initial funding for the Trust include: The Vincent Astor Foundation; The J.M. Kaplan Fund, Inc.; The Estee Lauder Companies; The Arthur Ross Foundation; and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

Formation of the Historic House Trust is part of a new initiative by the Parks Department to assist the private volunteer groups who run most of the houses (the City currently administers one, Lefferts Homestead in Prospect Park). Over the last year the Parks Department has appointed the first Director of Historic Houses, and created an in-house Historic House Restoration Crew to provide skilled maintenance and restoration for the houses, which were built between the 1640's and the 1850's.

Initial projects of the Historic House Trust will include: deployment of the Historic House Restoration Crew; curatorial and programming support for the houses; preparation of the historic structures report for each house; creation of a historic house interpretive team of Urban Park Rangers; assigning landscape gardeners for the historic houses grounds; establishing project for much-needed improvements; and restoration of properties where major repairs are needed.

Parks has also published a new guide to the houses, funded by a \$20,000 grant from The J.M. Kaplan Fund. To receive a free copy of the 40-page booklet, call (212) 360-1350.

(more)

The most recent Parks Department publication is the “Historic Houses Passport,” paid for with a \$10,000 donation from the Arthur Ross Foundation. This mock passport can be used by visitors to each house. Each of the 15 historic house museums will have new customized “visa stamps,” also designed by Parks. Visitors completing the “Grand Tour” and having their passports imprinted with all 15 historic house visa stamps will receive a “special gift” from the Parks Department.

The Historic House initiative at the Parks Department is being directed by Diana Chapin, Deputy Commissioner for Planning; it was conceived and is being implemented by Adrian Benepe, Director of Art and Antiquities, and Mary Ellen W. Hern, Director of Historic Houses. Donald DeFillo is the newly appointed Supervisor of the Historic House Restoration Crew.

The Department of Cultural Affairs also provides \$1.1 million annually for institutional and program services support for many of the houses. The Bronx County and Staten Island Historic Societies, which operate historic houses on parkland, are Department of Cultural Affairs institutions.

The historic house museums owned by the City of New York are:

Alice Austen House Museum: (ca. 1691/1844) Gothic Revival stone and frame cottage
2 Hyland Boulevard, Alice Austen Park, Staten Island
(718) 816-4506
Administered by the Friends of Alice Austen House, Inc.

Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum: (1836) Greek Revival stone manor
Shore Road, Pelham Bay Park, The Bronx (212) 885-1461
Administered by the International Garden Club
Carriage house currently in design for restoration as a visitors’ center

Conference House: (ca. 1680) Dutch Colonial fieldstone manor
Conference House Park, 7455 Hylan Boulevard, Staten Island
(718) 984-2086
Administered by the Conference House Association, Inc.

Dyckman House: (1725/1785) Dutch Colonial farmhouse
4881 Broadway, Dyckman House Park, Manhattan (212) 304-9422

Gracie Mansion: (1799 – 1809) Federal frame mansion
88th Street and East End Avenue, Carl Schurz Park, Manhattan
(212) 570-4751
Administered by the Office of the Mayor and the Gracie Mansion Conservancy as the mayoral residence

(more)

King Manor: (1733/1810) Georgian and Dutch Colonial frame manor
150th Street and Jamaica Avenue, King Park, Jamaica, Queens
(718) 291-0282 Administered by the King Manor Association
Currently under City capital restoration: to reopen Fall, 1989

Lefferts Homestead: (1777) Dutch Colonial farmhouse
Prospect Park, Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn (718) 965-6505
Administered by the Department of Parks & Recreation
Currently in design for roof restoration

Morris-Jumel Mansion: (1765) Georgian Colonial mansion
West 162nd Street and Jumel Terrace, Roger Morris Park
Manhattan (212) 923-8008 Administered by the Washington Headquarters Association.
Currently in design for a City capital restoration

Poe Cottage: (1812) 19th century wood workman's cottage
2640 Grand Concourse, Poe Park, The Bronx (212) 881-8900
Administered by the Bronx County Historical Society

Queens County Farm Museum/Adriance Farmhouse: (1772)
Dutch Colonial farmhouse, 73-50 Little Neck Parkway, Floral Park, Queens
(718) 347-3276
Administered by the Colonial Farmhouse Restoration Society of Bellerose, Inc.

Van Cortlandt Museum: (1748) Georgian fieldstone manor
Van Cortlandt Park, Broadway and 246th Street, The Bronx
(212) 543-3344
Administered by the National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York

Pieter Claeson Wyckoff House Museum: (ca. 1652) Dutch Colonial frame house
5816 Clarendon Road at Ralph Avenue, Brooklyn
(718) 629-5400
Administered by the Wyckoff House and Association, Inc.

Other historic museums on City parkland:

Kingsland: (1785) English and Dutch Colonial frame house
143-35 37th Avenue, Weeping Beech Park, Queens
(718) 939-0647

Owned and administered by the Queens Historical Society

Richmontown Restoration: Historic village of the 17th, 18th and 19th century commercial
and domestic structures

441 Clarke Avenue, Richmontown, Staten Island
(718) 351-1611

Owned and administered by the Staten Island Historical Society

Valentine-Varian House: (1758) Colonial fieldstone house
3266 Bainbridge Avenue, Varian, Park, The Bronx, (212) 881-8900
Owned and administered by the Bronx Historical Society

####

CONTACT: Skip Garrett or Gary Zarr (212) 360-1309
NIGHTS & WEEKENDS (212) 397-3111