



A GUIDE TO HISTORIC NEW YORK CITY NEIGHBORHOODS

# CORONA-EAST ELMHURST QUEENS





The Historic Districts Council is New York's citywide advocate for historic buildings and neighborhoods. The Six to Celebrate program annually identifies six historic New York City neighborhoods that merit preservation as priorities for HDC's advocacy and consultation over a yearlong period.

The six, chosen from applications submitted by community organizations, are selected on the basis of the architectural and historic merit of the area, the level of threat to the neighborhood, the strength and willingness of the local advocates, and the potential for HDC's preservation support to be meaningful. HDC works with these neighborhood partners to set and reach preservation goals through strategic planning, advocacy, outreach, programs and publicity.

The core belief of the Historic Districts Council is that preservation and enhancement of New York City's historic resources—its neighborhoods, buildings, parks and public spaces—are central to the continued success of the city. The Historic Districts Council works to ensure the preservation of these resources and uphold the New York City Landmarks Law and to further the preservation ethic. This mission is accomplished through ongoing programs of assistance to more than 500 community and neighborhood groups and through public-policy initiatives, publications, educational outreach and sponsorship of community events.



**Council on  
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232 East 11th Street, New York, NY 10003 tel 212-614-9107 fax 212-614-9127

e-mail [hdc@hdc.org](mailto:hdc@hdc.org) [www.hdc.org](http://www.hdc.org) [6tocelebrate.org](http://6tocelebrate.org)

## CORONA-EAST ELMHURST

The area of Queens comprising Corona-East Elmhurst was called “Mespat” by the Native Americans and “Middleburgh” by the English colonists. It became part of the Town of Newtown, when it was incorporated in 1683 as one of the three original municipalities (along with Jamaica and Flushing) comprising what is now Queens. It remained largely rural until transportation improvements led to suburban development. In 1854 the Flushing Railroad began service through what is now 44th and 45th Avenues (now part of the Port Washington Branch of the Long Island Rail Road). Anticipating commuter service, a group of real estate speculators formed the West Flushing Land Company and purchased an extensive tract that they subdivided into house lots, naming the new neighborhood West Flushing. Just north (above what is now 37th Avenue) stood the National Race Course, also established in 1854. A massive complex and tourist attraction, it was soon renamed Fashion Race Course and notably hosted the first-ever ticketed baseball game, a best of three series between New York and Brooklyn.

In spite of this enthusiasm, actual building activity remained slow through the 1850s and was curtailed during the Civil War. By 1868, however, Benjamin W. Hitchcock, who also developed much of Woodside, acquired more than a thousand building lots in West Flushing, and most were sold by the early 1870s. Another local developer, Thomas Waite Howard, felt the name West Flushing was too easily confused with Flushing and petitioned the U.S. Postal Service for a more poetic moniker: Corona, the crown (or crown jewel) of Queens. Transit lines continued to expand, including the 1876 introduction of horse car lines to Brooklyn, providing connections to ferries to Manhattan, and trolleys running along Corona Avenue began in the 1890s. In 1898 Queens County was subsumed into Greater New York, and Corona, previously part of Newtown, became its own neighborhood with 2,500 residents. In 1904 the Bankers' Land and Mortgage Corporation launched a new residential development in north Corona called East Elmhurst, comprising 2,000 building lots along the western edge of Flushing and Bowery Bays. Growth accelerated with the opening of the Queensborough Bridge in 1908 and the East River tunnels to Pennsylvania Station in 1911. Perhaps most significantly, the subway system arrived in 1917 with the opening of the Alburis Avenue (now 103rd Street-Corona Plaza) station. In the 1930s the neighborhood's eastern boundary, the dumping ground that was once Flushing Creek, was transformed into “The World of Tomorrow” as the site of the 1939 World's Fair; it later reprised that role for the 1964 World's Fair and eventually became Flushing Meadows-Corona Park (site 1).

From the beginning, Corona-East Elmhurst was a diverse neighborhood. Several of its oldest institutions attest to the 19th century German influence, while many 20th century sites are associated with its Italian-American and Jewish communities. The northern section of this tour boasts a remarkable collection of culturally significant African-American sites. The first recorded residents of African descent arrived in the 17th century and settled along what is now Corona Avenue, a section of which (at 90th Street in Elmhurst) is named for the Rev. James Pennington (1807-1870), an enslaved fugitive from Maryland who became an influential Evangelical Abolitionist on the world stage. In the 1920s, Corona saw an influx of African-Americans, many following the Great Migration from the South, and Afro-Caribbean immigrants from the West Indies. After World War II, the area attracted prominent African-American cultural figures and civil rights activists, many of whom are celebrated on this tour.



# I

## FLUSHING MEADOWS-CORONA PARK

New York City Pavilion / Queens Museum (*Aymar Embury II, 1939*); New York State Pavilion (*Philip Johnson and Richard Foster, 1962-64 – NR*); Unisphere (*Gilmore D. Clarke, 1963-64 – NYC-IL*); World's Fair Carousel (*William Mangels, 1964 – NR*)

The city's second largest park was originally a meadow and wetland, but in 1907 industrialist Michael Degnon acquired much of the property hoping to woo the federal government to fund a port on Flushing Bay. He began filling it in with residential coal ash through contracts with the NYC Department of Sanitation and the Brooklyn Ash Removal Company. The port plan never materialized and the area remained for several decades the wasteland immortalized as the "valley of ashes" in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great*

*Gatsby* (1925). In 1935 the area was officially selected as the location for the 1939 World's Fair. Landscaping began in 1936 to the designs of Gilmore D. Clarke and Michael Rapuano and the fair opened on April 30, 1939. The only relic surviving in situ from the 1939 fair is the New York City Building, which later hosted the United Nations General Assembly from 1946-50 (while its permanent home was being built in Manhattan), was renovated as the New York City Pavilion for the 1964 World's Fair and is now the Queens Museum. For the 1964 World's Fair, Clarke and Rapuano updated their original landscape, whose centerpiece was the Unisphere, a 140-foot-tall globe set above a giant reflecting pool and fountain. Other extant sites include the New York State Pavilion and the World's Fair Carousel. The State Pavilion was meant

## LEGEND OF DESIGNATIONS

National Historic Landmark:	NHL
National Register of Historic Places	NR
New York City Historic District:	NYC HD
New York City Individual Landmark:	NYC IL
New York City Interior Landmark:	NYC INL



to showcase the state's cutting-edge art, architecture and technology, and consisted of three components: the open-air Tent of Tomorrow; three Astro-View observation towers; and the Theaterama (now the Queens Theatre in the Park). Long neglected, the Tent has been repainted, while its terrazzo floor—an oversized replica of a Texaco roadmap of New York State—has been mothballed, hopefully awaiting restoration. The carousel combined elements from two previous rides, Feltman's Carousel (1903) and the Stubbman Carousel (1908), both carved by Marcus Illions on Coney Island. It was moved to its current location in 1968. Ownership of the site was transferred from the World's Fair Corporation back to the city in 1967, permanently establishing Flushing Meadows-Corona Park.

# 2

## CONGREGATION TIFERETH ISRAEL

109-18 54th Avenue  
(*Crescent L. Varrone, 1911*)  
NYC-IL, NR



This modest, wood-framed building is considered the oldest surviving synagogue in Queens. Its congregation was formed in 1906 or '07 and formally incorporated in 1911 as the Home Street Synagogue (its original name). Many early members were recent immigrant Ashkenazi from Eastern Europe moving from the overpopulated Lower East Side. One of these was the young Josephine Esther Mentzer, a Corona resident who became the cosmetics entrepreneur Estée Lauder. Architecturally the building is reminiscent of small synagogues of the Lower East Side, which had to conform to narrow lot sizes meant for tenements. Its façade, with Gothic and Moorish elements, was restored in 2011-12. The complex eventually included a mikveh (ritual bath), yeshiva (Talmudic school) and cemetery. The yeshiva, located a block away at 108-44 53rd Avenue, later became famous as the brief home of pop star Madonna. From 1979-80 she lived in this loft/music studio, playing drums and keyboards in the band The Breakfast Club.



3

**WILLIAM F.  
MOORE PARK**  
108th Street and  
Corona Avenue  
(1922-29)

This small triangle of land was acquired by the city in 1924, and was originally known as Corona Heights Triangle. It was renamed in 1929 for Moore,

a Marine who died in World War I at the Battle of Belleau Wood—reportedly the war’s first casualty from the neighborhood. The rededication also included the installation of a “Victory Memorial Fountain” by sculptor James S. J. Novelli memorializing 49 local residents who also lost their lives (the fountain has since been removed but the bronze tablet remains). Additional memorials have been added, including a tablet and tree at the park’s southern tip honoring politician and community leader Joseph Lisa, Sr. (1898-1977). The park, at the heart of the neighborhood’s Italian-American community, is affectionately known as “Spaghetti Park” after author Dyann DeSalvo penned the 2002 children’s book by the same name. Its two bocce courts are regularly packed with players and spectators, many enjoying treats from the nearby Lemon Ice King of Corona (established 1944).



4a

**SANFORD HOUSE**  
102-45 47th Avenue  
(c. 1871) NYC-IL

4b

**UNION EVANGELICAL CHURCH**  
41-22 to 41-36  
National Street  
(1869-70)

These buildings are amongst the oldest in the neighborhood, survivors of its transit-fueled development in the mid-19th century. The Sanford House’s vernacular Italianate design was typical of the period and is likely similar to many of the area’s vanished old houses. The Union Evangelical Church is Corona’s oldest surviving building, and according to one history of Queens, “originated in a Sunday-school, established in 1869 by Mrs. (Mary) Page. Collecting a few truant children on her porch, she succeeded in interesting them in Bible stories.” Others soon became interested in forming a church, including Charles P. Leverich, who offered his house for services and eventually donated the land and money to construct this building. Leverich’s son Charles was also a supporter and donated a Sunday school building in 1889. As the neighborhood developed and the congregation grew, it established a satellite church in North Corona at 102-19 32nd Avenue. Originally known as the North Branch of the Union Evangelical Church, it was dedicated in 1915 and was later renamed the Leverich Memorial Church in honor of the younger Leverich.



5

**FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 289,  
LADDER COMPANY 138**  
97-28 43rd Avenue  
(Satterlee & Boyd, 1912-14)  
NYC-IL

After Queens County was absorbed into Greater New York in 1898, there was a wave of public building projects as the municipal government consolidated and modernized its services. At the time, Corona had two volunteer fire companies: Louona Engine Company 8 and Pioneer Fire Hook & Ladder 6. The old firehouse of the latter, a wood-framed building from the 1890s, still stands at 41-19 National Street. The city established permanent, professional fire service with the construction of a “modern” firehouse in 1912-14. Like many civic buildings of the period, it was designed in the formal Neoclassical style typical of the City Beautiful movement. Built in the early age of the automobile, it features two apparatus bays purpose-built for fire trucks. It originally contained a dormitory and a second-story terrace for recreation.

6

**P.S. 110 THE TIFFANY SCHOOL**  
43-18 97th Place  
(Skidmore, Owings & Merrill,  
2013-15)

This school sits on the grounds of the former Tiffany Studios’ Stourbridge Glass Company. Louis Comfort Tiffany established the company in 1893, importing a foreman and workers from the English town of Stourbridge, a center of glassmaking since the 16th century. Among the glass manufactured at the site was the famed Favrite Glass, an iridescent glass with ingrained coloring developed and patented by Tiffany. The school’s lobby displays a mosaic made from Tiffany glass shards found at the site during construction.



7

**PLAZA THEATER**  
103-14 Roosevelt Avenue  
(*R. Thomas Short, 1927*)



One of two historic theater buildings remaining in the neighborhood (the other being the Corona Theater at 37-80 Junction Boulevard), the Plaza originally opened in 1927 as the Loew's Plaza Theater and was prominently located on Corona Plaza (now renovated as a pedestrian mall), then the terminus of the Flushing IRT Line. With 2,151 seats, it was indisputably a movie palace. Under the strict Hollywood Studio System, however, it was relegated to third-run status following the opening of the Valencia in Jamaica (1928-29) and the Triboro in Astoria (1931). After a federal antitrust case broke up the system, Loew's sold the theater in 1952 to Century Theaters. It was later divided into two theaters and operated as the independent Teatro Plaza until 2005. Just south of the theater is Linden Park, also known as Park of the Americas, which once contained Linden Lake, a glacial kettle pond. Before it was drained in 1947, residents enjoyed swimming and lake-side concerts in the summer and ice-skating in the winter.



8

**DAVID JOHNSON LEISK  
CHILDHOOD HOME**  
104-11 39th Avenue  
(1906)

Better known by his pen name, Crockett Johnson, Leisk (1906-1975) was a beloved cartoonist

and illustrator. (The name derives from his childhood love of the outdoors and Davy Crockett.) His most famous creations were Barnaby (1942-52), a daily comic strip that reached national syndication, and Harold and the Purple Crayon (1955), a series of beloved children's books. Leisk first published his drawings in the Newtown High School student newspaper. After studying at Cooper Union, he held Art Editor positions including at the Communist-leaning New Masses, where he first began signing his drawings as Crockett Johnson. The Leisk family occupied the second story apartment of this house, then known as 2 Ferguson Street, from the early 1910s until around 1925.

9a

**OUR LADY OF SORROWS  
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
104-11 37th Avenue  
(1899-1900)

9b

**EMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
37-57 104th Street  
(1902-03)



Both congregations were established in the 19th century during the neighborhood's early development, and both buildings were

constructed around the turn of the 20th century. The Catholic congregation is older, dating to 1870, when it was established as an offshoot of St. Mary's of Winfield (a German congregation dating to 1854 in the village of Winfield, now part of Maspeth and Woodside). Damaged by fire in 2016, it has been carefully restored. The

complex also includes a rectory (1896), school (1911-12) and convent (1916), the latter two both designed by William J. Ryan. The Lutheran congregation was established a bit later, in 1887, also by German immigrants (note the language on the cornerstone to the left). Compared to the Catholic church with its dominant steeple and grand entrance steps, the Lutheran church is more modest, perhaps reminiscent of mid-19th century German architecture.

Located only a block apart are the residences of two jazz legends: great friends and nominal musical rivals John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie and Louis Armstrong. In the 1940s Gillespie (born in 1917 in South Carolina), made a name for himself as a trumpeter and bandleader in the New York City jazz scene, and is regarded today as one of the fathers of bebop. Gillespie owned and lived in this three-family Colonial Revival style building from 1952-66. Cornetist



10a

**JOHN BIRKS "DIZZY"  
GILLESPIE HOME**  
105-19 37th Avenue  
(1921-22)

10b

**LOUIS ARMSTRONG HOUSE**  
34-55 107th Street  
(*Robert W. Johnson, 1910*)  
NYC-IL, NR

Louis Armstrong (born in 1901 in New Orleans) lived in this Renaissance Revival style rowhouse with his wife Lucille from 1943 until his death in 1971. Over four decades the Armstrongs left their mark on the house, which remains virtually the same as they left it—from the flamboyant 1970s decor, to the musical memorabilia, to the outdoor bar they installed in the garden for entertaining. After Lucille passed away in 1983, the house was donated by the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation to the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs. In 2003 the house opened to the public as a museum, still owned by the city but managed by Queens College. The house next door at 34-52 107th Street serves as the museum's administrative building. It was bequeathed to the museum by Selma Heraldo, a good friend to the Armstrongs, after her death in 2011. Honoring Heraldo's gift, the NYC Department of Design and Construction is restoring the house and renovating the interior to better serve the museum.

II

**CORONA CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH**  
102-18 34th Avenue  
(1952-55)



One of the oldest and most storied African-American churches in this section of Queens, this congregation was founded in 1915 by 11 prominent families. Under the guidance of Rev. George W. Hinton (in whose honor the city park adjacent to the Dorie Miller Cooperative Houses is named), pastor from 1916 to 1958, the congregation established itself as a voice for equal rights. In 1929 W. E. B. Du Bois spoke at the church, and in 1939 its members organized lodging for families visiting the World's Fair who were denied accommodation in segregated hotels. In the 1950s and '60s the church developed ties to the NAACP and played a local leadership role during the Civil Rights movement under the leadership of its second pastor, Rev. Robert D. Sherard. During the 1960s, '70s and '80s, a period of

rapid change and destabilization in the neighborhood, members of the congregation battled poverty, racism and social disinvestment, and worked closely with the Corona Branch of the Black Panther Party's Free Breakfast Program. Today the Church continues its long tradition of social and political activism. Louis Armstrong's funeral was held here in 1971.

I2

**NORTHSIDE HEBREW  
CONGREGATION**  
100-05 34th Avenue  
(Paul Roth, 1923-24)



Like Congregation Tifereth Israel (site 2), this synagogue's architectural form is more reminiscent of the Lower East Side than suburban Queens. It occupies nearly the entirety of its long, narrow lot—almost as if anticipating tenements to be built on either side. The Northside Hebrew Congregation was organized in the early 20th century, by some accounts c. 1900 and by others c. 1913, but the present building was dedicated in 1924. At the opening ceremony a golden key was given to the architect by the congregation, which noted, "Roth, who is vice-president of the congregation, and his son, Harold Roth, donated their services in the planning and erection of the temple." Its most prominent architectural feature is a Classical portico featuring four Ionic columns, triangular pediment and modillion cornice. Since 1957, the building has been home to the Shaw A.M.E. Zion Church.



I3

**LANGSTON HUGHES  
COMMUNITY LIBRARY  
AND CULTURAL CENTER**  
100-01 Northern  
Boulevard  
(Davis Brody Bond,  
1999)

Now part of Queens Library, the Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center was established in 1969 in response to local efforts to create a library and community center focused on the history and needs of the area's African-American community. Local residents, including former Queens Borough President Helen M. Marshall, who served as the library's first executive director before entering the political sphere, formed the Library Action Committee of Corona-East Elmhurst, Inc., which staffed the library from its opening until 1987 and is still responsible for operating the library's Homework Assistance and Cultural Arts

Programs. This purpose-built structure is the institution's second home; its first was located in a former Woolworth's department store on Northern Boulevard—the site of a civil rights struggle to break the color barrier for hiring in Queens. The library opened two years after Hughes' death and includes a large collection of materials by and about the poet. The new building includes gallery, auditorium, research, archival and children's spaces to hold its many performances, lectures and events celebrating black history and culture. The library is home to the Black Heritage Reference Center of Queens County, housing New York State's largest public circulating collection of materials on the black experience, estimated at roughly 45,000 titles and including approximately 1,000 theses and dissertations on black literature. The institution is a touchstone in the community and an important reminder of the importance of advocacy and activism.



**I4a**

**GRACE EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH**  
34-34 98th Street  
(1925)

**I4b**

**CHURCH OF THE  
RESURRECTION**  
100-17 32nd Avenue  
(1951-53)

These sister congregations merged in 2016 to become the Episcopal Church of Grace and Resurrection, occupying the latter's building on 32nd Avenue. Grace Episcopal Church was the slightly older congregation, founded in 1906 and organized in 1907 in a small chapel that later became its parish hall, located at 34-22 98th Street, "an attractive one story frame building, somewhat in the bungalow" style, according to the local press. Construction of a proper church was long planned but took a number of years to realize. The nearby Church of the Resurrection held its first service on Easter Sunday, 1923. Its congregation is comprised primarily of Afro-Caribbean and African-American families.



**I5**

**DORIE MILLER  
COOPERATIVE HOUSES**  
112-24 Northern  
Boulevard  
(1950-53)

Built at a time when segregation was widely enforced, the Dorie Miller Co-op was a rare integrated housing development. Originally conceived exclusively for African-American residents, it became "open occupancy" in large part at the urging of Congressman and pastor Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. (who presided over the opening ceremonies in 1953). The co-op's early residents were a mix of African-American, Jewish, Caucasian and interracial families—many coming from Powell's home neighborhood of Harlem. The complex was named for Doris "Dorie" Miller, a World War II hero and the first African-American to receive the Navy Cross, for his actions at Pearl Harbor (Miller died in action in 1943). Comprising six towers, the development originally housed 301 families. Like the greater Corona-East Elmhurst neighborhood, the co-op attracted a number of famous jazz musicians including saxophonists Julian "Cannonball" Adderley and Jimmy Heath, trumpeters Nat Adderley and Clark Terry, and singers Olga James and Nancy Wilson.

**I6**

**ELLA FITZGERALD/RAY  
BROWN HOME**  
105-19 Ditmars Boulevard  
(c. 1922)



Ella Fitzgerald, America's "First Lady of Song" (born in 1917 in Newport News, Virginia), got her start as a teenager by winning an amateur singing contest at the Apollo Theater in Harlem. She made her first recording in 1936, and in 1938 found fame with a hit rendition of "A-Tisket, A-Tasket," recorded with the Chick Webb Orchestra. Fitzgerald was a tireless performer, beloved and admired by audiences for her remarkable vocal range and indelible personal style. Nevertheless, she kept her personal life quite private. After a brief first marriage that ended in annulment, Fitzgerald married renowned jazz double bassist Ray Brown in 1948. Their marriage lasted only four years, during which time they lived in this impressive Tudor Revival style house. Fitzgerald later resided in a home in the Addisleigh Park Historic District in eastern Queens until 1967, and died at her Beverly Hills home in 1996.

This American Craftsman style residence was home to William Francis Kenny, Jr., known professionally as Bill Kenny, a pioneering tenor vocalist with the Ink Spots, a popular vocal group that prefigured doo-wop and rock and roll. Kenny, whose vocal range spanned four octaves, joined the Ink Spots in 1939 at the age of 17, and sang on the group's first hit, "If I Didn't Care," with fellow East Elmhurst resident Orville "Hoppy" Jones. Kenny shared the home with his wife, Audrey, and their daughter. Kenny, as one of the Ink Spots, was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1989.



17

**BILL KENNY HOME**  
109-04 31st Avenue  
(c. 1925)

18

**MALCOLM X,  
EL-HAJJ MALIK EL-  
SHABAZZ HOME**  
23-11 97th Street,  
Malcolm X Place  
(1925)



Malcolm X, civil rights leader and former figurehead of the Nation of Islam, lived in this bungalow with his family from 1959 to 1965. Born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1925, by the 1940s he was living in Boston, where he was arrested for robbery and sent to prison. During his incarceration, Little was introduced to the religious and political movement known as the Nation of Islam (NOI), and corresponded regularly with its leader Elijah Muhammad. Before his release in 1952, Malcolm joined the NOI and changed his name to "Malcolm X". In 1960, Malcolm established Nation of Islam Temple 7B at 105-01 Northern Boulevard, just blocks from the original Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center. It is now the Masjid Nuriddin & Clara Muhammad School. In March of 1964, Malcolm X publicly announced his break from the NOI, and in April, flew to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, at the start of his Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca). He thereafter became known as el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz. Upon his return he expressed that seeing Muslims of all races and backgrounds interacting as equals led him to see Islam as a means by which racial problems could be overcome. After his break with the organization, the NOI began eviction proceedings to remove Malcolm X and his family from the house on 97th Street, although Malcolm Little was the signature on the deed. On February 14, 1965, the home was set ablaze by Molotov cocktails. The family escaped the fire and was given refuge by neighborhood residents. One week later, on February 21, 1965, Malcolm was assassinated while making a speech at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem. Malcolm X's presence is still felt in the community and he is a revered local figure. In 2005, the street in front of the house was renamed Malcolm X Place.

19

**BULOVA WATCH COMPANY  
BUILDING**  
75-20 Astoria Boulevard  
(Alexander D. Crossett &  
Associates, Aymar Embury II  
consulting architect, 1953)



This 400,000-square-foot complex was built to house offices, state-of-the-art laboratories (occupied by 140 research scientists), extensive manufacturing facilities (staffed by 2,000 workers), a 500-car parking garage and a public recreation field. Founded in 1875 as the J. Bulova Company, the firm achieved fame both for its innovative timepiece designs and marketing campaigns. In the 1920s it produced some of the earliest radio advertisements, and in 1941 aired what is considered the first television commercial. Bulova also affiliated itself with the burgeoning aerospace industry, offering Charles Lindbergh a prize for his pioneering trans-Atlantic flight and sending watches to the Moon with NASA astronauts. Inspired by the Federal Reserve Bank in Washington, DC, this limestone-clad building's style is a bit old fashioned for its time of construction. Its Stripped Classical design more closely resembles buildings from the 1930s, such as the New York City Building from the 1939 World's Fair, also designed by Embury. Nevertheless, it won the Queens Chamber of Commerce's Outstanding Building Award in 1953.

This approximately 1,000-ton boulder, a neighborhood icon, currently sits in the LaGuardia Plaza Hotel's parking lot, but was once surrounded by empty land. It was a popular playing ground for children and inspired such affection that neighbors have rallied against its removal on multiple occasions. The Giant Rock was brought to its present location (probably from southern Westchester) by an ice sheet approximately 10,000 to 12,000 years ago.



20

**"THE GIANT ROCK"**  
104-04  
Ditmars Boulevard

21

**THE LENT-RIKER-SMITH HOMESTEAD**  
78-03 19th Road  
(c. 1729)  
NYC-IL, NR



The oldest building in New York City still used as a private residence, this Dutch Colonial Farmhouse was built circa 1729 by Abraham Lent, grandson of Abraham Riker, using local stone and rough-hewn timber. The locally prominent Riker family was the namesake of nearby Rikers Island. The property contains a small cemetery containing the graves of family members, as well as that of Williams James MacNeven, an Irish patriot and pioneering physician who had stayed with the Riker family before his death. Portions of the farmhouse were damaged by fire in 1955, but the property was fully restored by the current owner Marion Duckworth Smith and her late husband, Michael Smith.

