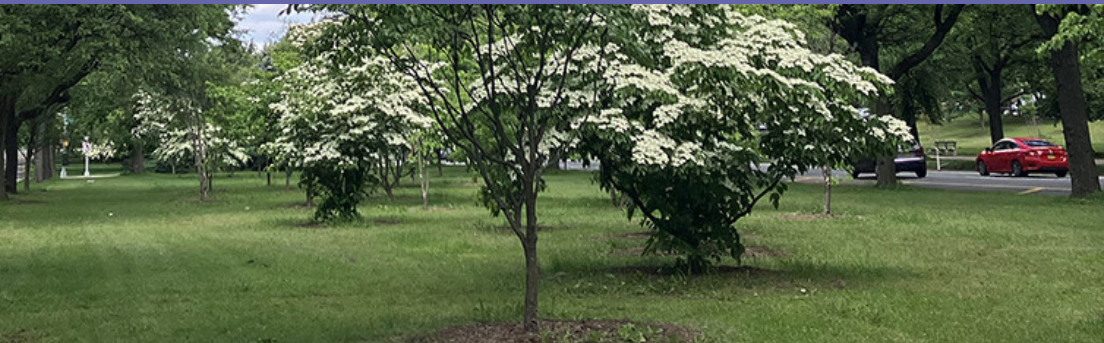




A GUIDE TO HISTORIC NEW YORK CITY NEIGHBORHOODS

# MOSHOLU PARKWAY & NORWOOD

## THE BRONX





The Historic Districts Council is New York's citywide advocate for historic buildings and neighborhoods. The Six to Celebrate program annually identifies six 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  
the Arts**

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The Six to Celebrate is generously supported by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature. Additional support is provided by New York City Councilmembers Erik Bottcher, Gale A. Brewer, Cristopher Marte, Keith Powers and Lincoln Restler.



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# MOSHOLU PARKWAY & NORWOOD

Mosholu Parkway, located entirely within the Bronx, is a tree-lined corridor that connects Van Cortlandt Park in the north to Bronx Park and the New York Botanical Garden in the south. Serving as a boundary between the Bedford Park and Norwood neighborhoods, it also functions as an important shared space for surrounding communities. It was created in the late 19th century, inspired by Frederick Law Olmsted's parks and parkway movement, and designed to act as an extension of the parks while accommodating various types of traffic, preserving a tranquil, natural setting through landscaped medians and grade-separated intersections.

Named after an Algonquian word meaning “smooth” or “small stones,” Mosholu Parkway is characterized by broad green spaces and trees planted in a naturalistic pattern. Over time, various services and recreational features were added along its length, such as an Art Deco comfort station at the southern edge of the Parkland, and a Subway Station (**Site 1**) at the intersection with Jerome Boulevard. In 1925, a monument was erected at Marion Avenue in honor of the local servicemen (or doughboys) who lost their lives during World War I. Improvements made between the 1930s and 1940s include Greenways (**Site 5**), two playgrounds (**Sites 4 and 7**), and the renovation of the Frank Frisch Field (**Site 6**) near Bronx Park.

The eastern side of the parkway was owned in the mid-1700s by Isaac Valentine, a blacksmith and farmer from Yonkers. It remained farmland until the late 19th century, when the city's plans for interconnected parklands prompted residential development. Early buildings included small single-family homes (**Site 19**), particularly near the LIRR's Botanical Garden Station. Soon after, religious institutions like Holy Nativity (**Site 17**) and St. Brendan (**Site 11**) were established to serve the growing community.

By the 1920s, apartment buildings became the predominant housing type along the parkway. Designed in Art Deco, Tudor Revival, and Neoclassical styles, these buildings typically fill their lots and feature uniform street walls interrupted by recessed entry bays or courtyards (**Sites 8 and 18**). As the population increased, new places of worship (**Sites 16 and 10**), educational infrastructure (**Sites 9 and 13**), and entertainment venues (**Site 15**) were added, shaping a vibrant urban neighborhood.

Like many areas of New York City, the neighborhoods surrounding Mosholu Parkway faced economic and social hardship during the 1970s and 1980s. Despite these challenges, residents remained committed to the protection and improvement of the parkland, establishing organizations like Friends of Mosholu Parkland. This organization advocates for the thoughtful stewardship of the parkway and is currently developing a Master Plan aimed at enhancing community access, expanding green infrastructure, and preserving historic sites. Their efforts reflect a broader commitment to honoring Mosholu Parkway's role as a public resource—linking neighborhoods, parks, and people.

This brochure was developed by the Historic Districts Council in partnership with the Friends of Mosholu Parkland. The featured sites offer a glimpse into the neighborhood's rich history, inviting you to explore further and support efforts to protect, preserve, and celebrate its unique legacy.

## MOSHOLU PARKWAY

### MOSHOLU PARKWAY SUBWAY STATION, JEROME BRIDGE & UNDERPASS

I

Mosholu Pkwy at Jerome Avenue  
(1914-1917, *Esquire J. Vickers*)



Jerome Avenue is one of the longest thoroughfares in the Bronx. Throughout its extension, it connects in different ways with other major streets and avenues, crossing Mosholu Parkway on an overpass known as Jerome Bridge.

This juncture is solved through a masonry arch bridge known as Jerome Bridge. Vehicular traffic passes through a central elliptical arch, while pedestrian traffic is channeled through two corridors with smaller round arches. All of these openings are highlighted with voussoirs and keystones, and separated by battered rusticated pilasters.

Directly above it is the Mosholu Parkway Station, part of an elevated line that runs along most of Jerome Avenue and is currently served by the 4 train. Opened in 1918, it was part of the final extension from Kingsbridge Road to Woodlawn, which had a significant impact on the population increase of residential areas in the vicinity.

The station has two side platforms and three center tracks, with concrete stair towers located at either end of the canopied platform. The facades at platform level feature a decorative tile frieze between the articulated corner piers. In 2008, artist Corinne Grondahl was commissioned by the MTA's Arts for Transit program to create the piece "Metromorphosis/Birth of a Station," which evokes the original meaning of "Mosholu" (smooth stones) through 14 fused glass panels in the windscreens of each platform. The station was renovated between 2006 and 2007.

## LEGEND OF DESIGNATIONS

National Historic Landmark	NH L
National Register of Historic Places - District	NR D
National Register of Historic Places - Property	NR P
New York City Historic District	NYC HD
New York City Individual Landmark	NYC IL
New York City Interior Landmark	NYC INL

The Mosholu Teaching Forest (MTF) is a 20-acre urban woodland in the northern section of Mosholu Parkway, beside the subway station. Spearheaded by artist Matthew López-Jensen, MTF is a grassroots effort to restore and reimagine this neglected parkland as a community-led center for ecological education and biodiversity, with public access.

Community volunteers gather regularly to organize vine removal, dumpsite cleanup, and trail planning. Recent efforts with youth groups included documenting trees, clearing storm debris, and planting native species. Likewise, a black tupelo tree located near the Knox-Gates Playground (Site 3) was recognized as an “NYC Great Tree” by the Parks Department, alongside a nearby massive white oak.

MTF’s long-term vision is to expand the forest canopy, build accessible trails, and connect the site to the local schools through outdoor curricula developed with educators and ecologists.

*Photo: Black Tupelo, courtesy of NYC Parks.*

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## MOSHOLU TEACHING FOREST

Mosholu Pkwy at Jerome Ave  
(2023)



3

## KNOX-GATES PLAYGROUND

Mosholu Pkwy at Gates Pl  
(1996)



Located at the intersection of Knox Place, Gates Avenue, and Mosholu Parkway North, this playground was constructed in 1996, becoming the latest addition to Mosholu’s infrastructure. It is bounded by a wrought-iron fence and has two play structures with safety surfacing, benches, and a large compass rose design set into the pavement before the entrance.

It was named after Revolutionary War generals Henry Knox and Horatio Gates. Knox played a significant role in forcing the British withdrawal from his birthplace of Boston, and established an artillery school that predeceased the United States Military Academy at West Point. In 1785, he became the first Secretary of War under the United States Constitution.

Born in England, Gates served in the French and Indian War before retiring to a farm in present-day West Virginia. He supported the American independence by leading troops in several battles, and served on the New York State Assembly in 1800.

Alongside walkways and roadways, the design of Mosholu Parkway included a bikeway, creating the Mosholu-Pelham Greenway System. This trail runs south along the Parkway from Van Cortlandt Park to Bronx Park, connecting cyclists to city attractions and local neighborhoods. It also connects to other regional trail systems such as the North-South County Trailway in Westchester and the multi-state East Coast Greenway.

The greenway was originally designed and built in the late 1930s by Robert Moses, and reconstructed in the late 1970s as the North Bronx Bikeway. It was later integrated into the East Coast Greenway, a planned biking and hiking route stretching 3,000 miles from Maine to Florida.

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## MOSHOLU-PELHAM GREENWAY

Mosholu Pkwy  
(1935-37)



5

## KOSSUTH PLAYGROUND

111 E Mosholu Pkwy N  
(1930)



Developed during a time of considerable population growth in the Bronx, Kossuth Playground is among Mosholu Parkway's most highly regarded recreational spaces. When it opened in 1930, it featured a recreation building, basketball court, volleyball court, shuffleboard court, and climbing equipment.

Located at Kossuth Avenue, it was named after Lajos Kossuth, a leader in the Hungarian radical reform movement of the 1830s. Born to a noble family, Kossuth trained as a lawyer and was

the editor of several journals and newspapers. He was elected to the Hungarian Diet (national assembly) in 1847, and a year later led the revolution that created a new national government for Hungary. In exile since 1948, Kossuth found many sympathizers in the United States who identified with the goal of overthrowing the foreign monarchy. He visited New York in 1951 and was given a huge welcome that included a reception hosted by Mayor Ambrose C. Kingsland, banquets, and a parade up Fifth Avenue.

The playground was renovated in 2020 to include new play equipment, spray shower features, basketball courts, fencing, and plantings.

## 6

## PATHWAYS &amp; ENTRANCES

Mosholu Pkwy

(Ca. 1888)



Throughout Mosholu Parkway there are a series of pedestrian pathways that connect the different areas of passive and active recreation pathways. These rectilinear and curvilinear paved walkways act as dividers between the greenspace and the roadway, as well as markers of the human scale within this large and naturalistic open space. Many of the sidewalks feature low stone walls and posts with concrete caps and metal pipe railing, and park benches constructed of concrete with wood slats.

This point of access on the west is marked by a small circular plaza, at 204th Street. The area features hexagonal pavers and a central landscaped area, with benches on the periphery. Another entrance at Marion Avenue has a similar design, with curved pathways surrounding flowerbeds and stone stairways that connect the different levels on the terrain that appear in this area.

Located at the back of Public School 8 Isaac Varian, Mosholu Playground is a jointly operated public space, open to elementary students and children of the community. It is equipped with a comfort station, two play structures, a basketball court and benches.

With the help of grants from Citizens Committee for NYC and Partnerships for Parks, the organization Friends of Mosholu Parkland (FOMP) commissioned local artist Kathleena Howie, a.k.a Lady K Fever, to create a three-wall mural on the perimeter of Mosholu Playground. The pieces “Birds Eye View,” “Soaring,” and “Natural Elements” were completed in 2016, and included the community’s input gathered during visioning sessions. The murals are also part of FOMP’s Murals on Mosholu program.

## MOSHOLU PLAYGROUND

## 7

E Mosholu Pkwy S, between  
Bainbridge Ave and Briggs Ave

(Ca. 1960)



8

## FRANK FRISCH FIELD

Mosholu Pkwy at Webster Ave

(Ca. 1890)



Alongside the New York Botanical Garden and Bronx Zoo, this ballfield is part of Bronx Park's many recreation areas. During the 17th century, the land was part of the estate owned by sea captain Jonas Bronck, later becoming one of the largest open spaces created throughout the city in the 1880s.

Originally named Mosholu Baseball Field, the grounds were renovated in 1935 as part of the New Deal programs. Seating accommodations were installed for 3500 people, plus 1000

park benches and a diamond built according to big league specifications.

In 1948, the field was renamed in honor of baseball player Frankie Frisch, a Bronx native, who was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1947. Frisch attended Fordham University, where he was nicknamed "The Fordham Flash" for his skill in multiple sports. After graduating in 1919, Frisch signed with the New York Giants and became a major figure on the team and was named the National League's Most Valuable Player in 1931. Frisch retired as a player in 1938, becoming manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates and later the Chicago Cubs. *Photo courtesy of The Kermit Project.*

Located within the boundaries of Bronx Park, French Charley's Playground was developed in 1941 through the Works Progress Administration (WPA). This program was initiated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt as a component of the New Deal, providing labor for the construction of innumerable public works and helping the US to come out of the depression. The site's name refers to a nearby French restaurant that was owned by Charley Mangin in the 1890s. At the time, the area was a small French enclave and the restaurant was popularly referred to as French Charley's. Neighbors continued to use this name to refer to the recreational areas built after the restaurant closed.

The site was renovated by the Parks Department in 2000, adding new play equipment, safety surfacing, swings, and a new double gate. *Photo courtesy of The Kermit Project.*

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## FRENCH CHARLEY'S PLAYGROUND

E 204th St at Webster Ave

(1941)



## EASTERN BOUNDARY & NORWOOD

### HOUSES AT DECATUR AVE

10

3081-3085 & 3086-3096

Decatur Ave

(Ca. 1885)



Residential development of the eastern boundary of Mosholu Parkway began in the late 1800s, particularly in the area south of Woodlawn Road (current East 204th Street) near the New York and Harlem Railroad.

These six houses are among the few remaining examples of this early period. Although designed individually, they were all conceived as single-family homes maintaining similar heights, proportions and materials.

On the north side, No. 3081 retains many of its original features, including the mansard roof and dormer windows typical of the Second Empire style. On the south side, No. 3096 stands out as a well-kept example of the Queen Anne style, with a wrap-around front porch, asymmetrical facades and steep roofs with gables. It was built in 1894 by Harlem dentist John Carr, who hired architect John A. Hamilton for the design. Carr never lived at the house, renting it to painter John Wegmann. After Carr's death in 1919, the property was sold to real estate businesswoman Hermine Debrowszki, widow to banker Julius Debrowszki, who lived there with her family until the 1930s.

Other early residents include violinist Arthur Temme, who purchased No. 3083 in 1905. Born in Germany, Temme emigrated to the US at 10 years

old, studying at the New York College of Music and later under noted composer Anton Dvorak. Nos. 3086 and 3090 were bought by real estate developer Charles Forbach in 1905. He then sold No. 3090 to William F. Ashe, an artist who rented rooms to other illustrators, and kept No. 3086 as his family home for the next 20 years. *Photos: (top) 3096 Decatur Ave., (bottom) 3090 Decatur Ave.*

This three-story, Romanesque Revival brick structure was originally built as the Mosholu Jewish Center, an Orthodox Jewish community center and synagogue.

The building features a large central round-arched entry with a stained-glass window and an archivolt. The second floor has round-arched arcade windows, while the façade incorporates architectural tilework, a corbelled cornice, and a Star of David.

Founded in 1927, it was one of the most desirables synagogues in the Bronx at a time when nearly half the population of the borough was Jewish. Starting in 1947, it was led by Rabbi Herschel Schacter, who gained national prominence as chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations and Richard Nixon's emissary to Russia.

Membership began to decline in the late 1960s when families left for the suburbs, and by the late 1980s there were fewer than 100 people attending. Despite efforts by Rabbi Schacter, the Mosholu Jewish Center closed in 1999, and the building was sold to the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York in 2000. In 2003 it was reopened as the headquarters for the Head Start preschool program. *Photo courtesy of Friends of Mosholu Parkland.*

II

## HEADSTART PRESCHOOL

3044 Hull Ave

(1927)



I2

## TENEMENTS AT HULL AVE

3047-3053 Hull Ave

(1910-11, Moore & Lansledel)



Sustained population growth during the late-1890s prompted developers to build higher-density housing, and by 1910, there were a few examples of tenement buildings.

This group of three brick structures are among the earliest examples of this typology in the area. They were built by local developer Annie D'Ambria, who commissioned the firm Moore & Lansledel for the design. They would later design Mosholu Plaza East & West (Site 13), gaining notoriety for their residential architecture.

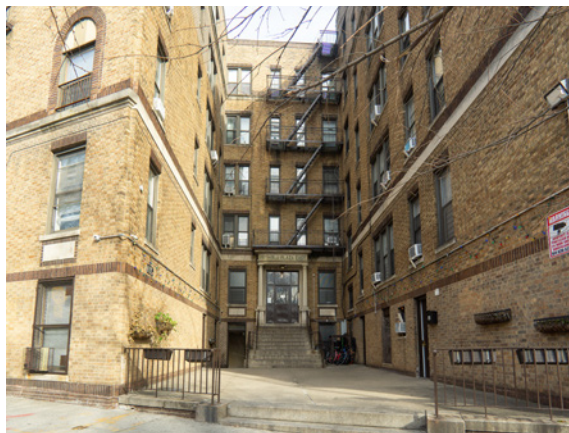
With four stories, these buildings feature a "dumbbell" floor plan, with eight apartments each. Facades were kept simple, with ornamental brickwork, rounded arch windows and keystones on the top and bottom floors.

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## MOSHOLU PLAZA EAST & WEST

323-333 E Mosholu Pkwy N

(1922-23, Moore & Landsiedel)



with round pilasters.

New York architects Frank L. Landsiedel and Fred W. Moore established their firm in 1900, with offices in both Manhattan and the Bronx. They were extraordinarily prolific, specializing in tenements, French flats, and apartment buildings. Examples of their work can be found in the Greenwich Village, Ladies Mile, Tribeca West, Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Northwest, and Morningside Heights Historic Districts.

During the 1920s, businessman Charles A. Goldreyer erected a series of theaters throughout the East Coast. Among them was the Mosholu Theater, which occupied most of this corner of Perry Avenue and 204th Street.

The Mosholu Theater opened in 1926 as a single-screen with a seating capacity of 1,100, and a rooftop “garden theatre” which seated about 1,000 more. Around 1954 it was renamed the Bainbridge Theatre, and later converted into a double-screen. The building suffered serious damage during the 1970s and 80s due to vandalism and financial struggles, ultimately closing. It was reopened in 1995 as the headquarters for the Bronx Dance Theatre, an organization founded in 1976 that offered both dance training and performances. Although the building was altered and converted for retail in 2000, some pediment ornamentation is still visible at the entrance on 204th Street.

## FORMER BAINBRIDGE THEATER

286 E 204th Street

(1925-26, Samuel Cohen)

14



15

## HOLY NATIVITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

3061 Bainbridge Ave  
(1906-1930, Hoppin, Koen & Huntington)



In 1900, a group of prominent Norwood families established the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Holy Nativity, the neighborhood's first and only religious institution.

The congregation initially held its services in a small, converted wooden barn, but sustained growth prompted plans for a new church. In the fall of 1905, they purchased this lot at the corner of Woodlawn Road and Bainbridge Avenue, and commissioned Hoppin, Koen and Huntington for the design. Construction of the

Tudor-style parish house began in 1906, but the cornerstone for the church and rectory was not laid until 1929, with the first service held in 1930.

Francis L. V. Hoppin and Terence A. Koen established their architectural firm in 1896, and were known for their Beaux Arts townhouses, police stations and fire stations. In 1902, Robert P. Huntington joined as a partner. He had a distinguished career as a tennis player and was the grandson of noted Judge Elisha Mills Huntington. They practiced together until Huntington retired in 1908.

In 1950, the New York Public Library system had only 29 branches in the Bronx, plus a Traveling Library program that provided books and other resources to communities without easy access to traditional branches.

Construction of the Mosholu branch began June of 1953, on land originally acquired for the Norwood subway station, which had remained vacant for decades. With a budget of over \$5 million today, the one-story

modernist building was a departure from other libraries in the Bronx. The design has an overall horizontal expression, large windows and aluminum cornices. A 60-seat, multi use meeting room is located in the basement. It was renovated in 2000, maintaining most of the original features.

## MOSHOLU BRANCH - NYPL

285 E 205th St  
(1953-54)

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In the 1930s, the City acquired this plot of land for the construction of the Concourse Line of the New York City Subway. The Norwood station opened in 1933, but was built underneath pre existing private property for most of its length. The property remained undeveloped for several years, until it was transferred by the New York City Transit Authority to NYC Parks in 1955.

In 1973, the park was renamed Whalen Park, in honor of celebrated soldier and activist Henry A. Whalen. A Norwood resident, Whalen participated in eight campaigns during World War II, serving in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. He was awarded the Purple Heart, Silver Star, and three Bronze Stars for acts of distinguished valor. After retiring, Whalen became an advocate for veterans' affairs and established the Norwood Civic Association for which he served as president.

The park was renovated in 2018, transforming it into a multigenerational playground with new game tables, play equipment, climbing blocks, and spray showers.

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## WHALEN PARK & PLAYGROUND

293 E 205th St

(Ca. 1955)



18

## ST. BRENDAN ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

333 E 206th St

(1965, Belfatto & Pavarini)



In 1908, a new Roman Catholic parish was established in Norwood under the leadership of Fr. Denis O'Donovan. It was named after the Irish navigator, St. Brendan.

A small frame building on Webster Avenue and 205th Street was initially converted into a chapel, and the following year the congregation purchased seven lots at the corner of East 207th Street and Perry Avenue for a new church. A school and rectory were added in later years.

In the mid-1960s, St. Brendan's congregation decided to replace the original church with a modernist building. This, due to the profound effect that the Second Vatican Council had in the Church, changing religious doctrine and practice, as well as architecture.

New York architects Belfatto & Pavarini designed this unique structure resembling the prow of a ship in commemoration of the voyages of their patron saint. The firm had recently completed the Church of the Epiphany in Manhattan, considered one of the best examples of modernist architecture in the city.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Epiphany was organized in 1900 by German Lutherans living in East Harlem. The congregation built a church on East 128th Street near Fourth (now Park) Avenue, but after merging with the Bronx Church of the Ascension in 1927, services were held in a commercial building on Hull Avenue.

Construction of the current Gothic building at this location began the following year, with designs by Cherry & Matz, a New York-based architectural firm that specialized in ecclesiastical design. Two of their buildings have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Art-Deco Fourth Church of Christ, Scientist (now known as the Hebrew Tabernacle) in Washington Heights and the colonial revival-styled First Protestant Dutch Church in Rockland County.

The congregation relocated in 2013 to the Holy Nativity Episcopal Church at 205th Street, and the building was sold to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church of our Savior. Established in 1984, it is one of the first of its kind in the United States.

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## ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOR

302 East 206th St  
(1928-30, Cherry & Matz)



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## FORMER P.S. 80

149 E Mosholu Pkwy N  
(1925, William H. Gompert)



Originally built as Public School 80, this five-story brick structure was part of a city-led campaign to erect new school buildings for an increasing school-age population after World War I. The Georgian Revival building features paired double-hung windows with keystones, a two-story portico with classical columns, a center entrance with sidelights, transom and a broken scroll pediment, and stone beltcourses.

Architect and Superintendent of School Buildings William H. Gompert was responsible for the design. He established his own practice in 1906, specializing in the design of commercial and institutional buildings. Gompert began working with the New York City Board of Education in 1923, succeeding Charles B.J. Snyder. During his five-year tenure, Gompert implemented several changes to optimize the process of school construction, and is credited with overseeing the design and construction of over 170 new schools and additions. *Photo courtesy of Friends of Mosholu Parkland.*

Capitalizing from the success of Grand Concourse and improvements in public transportation, a series of large apartment buildings were erected at the eastern boundary of Mosholu Parkway during the mid-1920s. Developers catered to wealthy residents by offering state-of-the-art amenities and high-quality materials, as well as superior design features.

A notable example is this monumental seven-story Neoclassical building designed by Emery Roth. Faced in multi-colored brick laid in Flemish bond, it has a recessed central section forming a small courtyard that marks the main entrance, featuring an elaborate stucco-parged Neoclassical door surround with pilasters. Sections of the façade have minimally ornamented expanses of brickwork, while others feature bold decorative features such as ornate window surrounds, stucco-parged blind round arches, and parapets featuring steps with broken pediments.

Renowned architect Emery Roth was born in Hungary, and designed many New York City hotels and apartment buildings of the 1920s and 1930s. He delivered some of the most influential examples of Beaux Arts style buildings. Many of his most notable projects are located on the Upper West Side, specifically Central Park West which is home to the San Remo, the Beresford, and the Ardsley, among others. His sons joined the firm in 1938, largely expanding it under the name Emery Roth & Sons.

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## PARK LANE COURT

45 E Mosholu Pkwy N

(1926, *Emery Roth*)



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