

A Brief History of Bushwick:

The area along Bushwick Avenue between Flushing Avenue and Eldert Street developed primarily during the late 19th Century, largely driven by the numerous breweries in the area. German brewers and other manufacturers built large villas and commissioned churches and other cultural institutions along the avenue. Smaller speculative row houses, infill tenements, and other multifamily dwellings from the late-nineteen to the early twentieth centuries housed the workforce and middle management of this small industrial enclave, and characterize the rest of the street and the remainder of the neighborhood.

The elevated subway runs along Broadway, one block southwest, providing a few small shops and other commercial establishments, while at the west end of the Avenue, where it turns to the north, lie the historic breweries, warehouses, and other buildings that provided the economic foundation for the neighborhood's early growth. At their pre-Prohibition height, the fourteen breweries in Bushwick produced a peak output of 2.5 million barrels, supplying nearly 10% of all beer consumed in the United States. However, the advance of inexpensive rail transportation and mechanical refrigeration allowed entrepreneurs in other cities to make inroads into the market and brewing in Brooklyn declined. The closing of the remaining industry created an economic depression of the area.

The population of Bushwick remained predominately German until the 1930s and 40s, when they were supplanted by Italian-Americans. In the late 1950s and 60s, African-Americans and Puerto Ricans migrated to the neighborhood, comprising more than half of its population by 1970. The economic downturn of the 1970s was keenly felt in Bushwick, when New York City's fiscal crisis prompted cuts to fire department service in the area at a time when abandoned buildings were subject to frequent fires, further devastating the neighborhood. Redevelopment efforts began in the 1980s and continue to this day.

This walking tour was designed by the Bushwick Avenue Preservation Studio of the Historic Preservation Program at Columbia University in the Spring of 2011. Thank you for your interest in this diverse and rich neighborhood. If you are interested in more information on the history, culture and architecture of this section of Bushwick Avenue, please visit our website or any of the following resources.

Bushwick Avenue Preservation Studio:
<http://bushwick-studio.wikispaces.com>

New York Public Library Digital Gallery
digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/index.cfm

Brooklyn Historical Society
128 Pierrepont Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201
718.222.4111
www.brooklynhistory.org

Brooklyn Collection at the Brooklyn Public Library
10 Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn, NY 11238
718.230.2762
www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/brooklyncollection

**New York City Department of Buildings:
Brooklyn Borough Office**
210 Joralemon Street, 8th Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201
718.802.3675
www.nyc.gov/buildings

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, New York, NY 10007
212.669.7700
www.nyc.gov/html/lpc

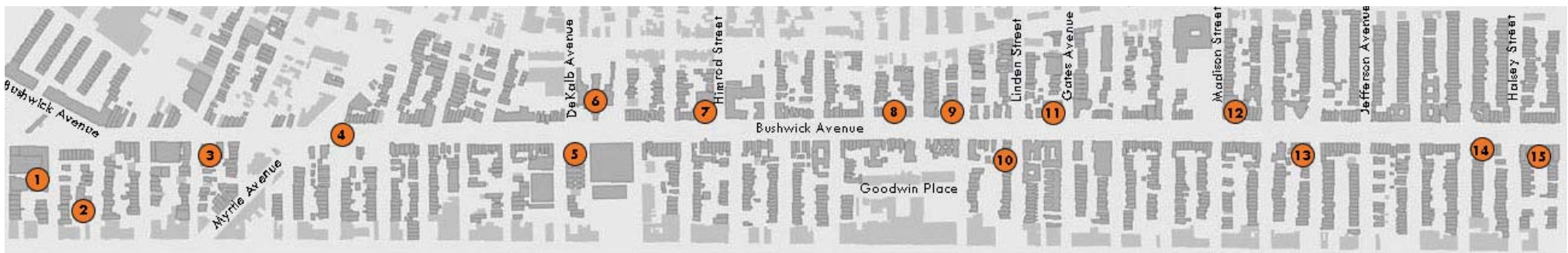
Bushwick Avenue Historic Walking Tour



Bushwick is a distinctive residential enclave within the City of New York and has been historically home to a diverse population in terms of social class and ethnicity. The neighborhood contains an eclectic mix of building types within a small area. This walking tour will introduce you to just a few of the most significant landmarks along Bushwick Avenue.

Several characteristics define Bushwick as a whole and illustrate its development in built form. As you walk down the Avenue, pay attention to:

- A mix of **building types** exists within Bushwick: freestanding, single-family houses and institutional buildings along the Avenue are interspersed with row houses; tenements and row houses fill in the side streets.
- The western section of Bushwick Avenue, north of Myrtle Avenue, contains an integrated mix of residential and **manufacturing** uses.
- Relatively **low-scale**, one- to four-story buildings predominate the wide boulevard with a few six-story apartment buildings.
- A vast majority of the buildings were **built between 1880 and 1915**, and, in spite of alterations to exterior finishes, lend the neighborhood a strong late-nineteenth-century character.
- During the **1977 Blackout**, Bushwick suffered more looting and damage to building fabric than any other neighborhood. While public/private partnerships have greatly improved the neighborhood in the intervening years, a legacy of community disinvestment remains a challenge to current residents.



The William Ulmer Brewery Complex
31 Belvedere Street

The Brewery Complex, constructed between 1878 and 1890, is a reminder of the prominent industry that dominated Bushwick and Brooklyn in the 19th and early 20th century and drove the development of the neighborhood. The focal point of the complex is the handsome two-story red brick office building, designed by Theobald Engelhardt, a prolific Brooklyn Architect, in the American round-arch Romanesque Revival style.

Little Sisters of the Poor
797 Bushwick Avenue

This building was originally built in 1870-72 by the first American branch of the Little Sisters of the Poor, an order of Roman Catholic Sisters who are committed to the care of the elderly poor, regardless of their religious affiliation. The center wing contained a chapel with two wings on either side that housed the men and women separately. The Little Sisters ran the house until the 1970s when it was sold to the Brooklyn Board of Education.

Apartment Building
1041 Bushwick Avenue

This brick and terra cotta, Italianate apartment building, designed in 1923 by Mill Hohauser, was badly damaged during the fires and riots following the blackout in 1977. Its repair and renovation was one of the first signs of the economic revitalization of the neighborhood and it now provides quality low-income housing to the Bushwick community.

Arion Hall
11 Arion Place

Arion Hall, an anchor of the community from the late 18th to mid 19th centuries, was built in 1882 and designed by Theobald Engelhardt. The Hall was home to a German singing society that served as a society for German immigrants to retain and celebrate the culture of their homeland. The building suffered much neglect and was abandoned in the 1990s, but recently it has been restored and converted into multiple residential units.

The Dutch Reformed Church of South Bushwick
855-867 Bushwick Avenue

The Reformed Church of South Bushwick was one of the first Landmarks in Bushwick and has been in constant use by the same congregation since its construction in 1852. It is a remarkable Georgian type masonry church adapted to a Greek Revival Style and the tower, although much dilapidated, was modeled on the influential designs of the English architects Christopher Wren and James Gibbs.

Bushwick United Methodist Church
1123 Bushwick Avenue

The Bushwick United Methodist Church is the result of numerous building campaigns over the years. Originally a one-story frame church built in 1887, the Romanesque Revival style brick and terra cotta church now features a massive, octagonal tower that dominates the corner of Bushwick and Madison. Note the cornerstones on the northwest corner, marking the dates of the numerous additions.

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church
626 Bushwick Avenue

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church was established in 1869 and originally occupied a site on Evergreen Avenue. The church moved to Bushwick Avenue in 1885 to accommodate their growing congregation and constructed this brick, sandstone, terra cotta and granite church, designed by Theobald Engelhardt, in 1890-92. The steeple, with its distinctive pointed arches, clocks and copper roof houses 16 bells and reaches a soaring 193 feet high.

Italianate Rowhouses
945-965 Bushwick Avenue

These eleven brownstone Italianate Rowhouses located between Bleeker Street and Menahan Street on Bushwick Avenue were built as a speculative development by Jacob Murr in 1889 and retain many original details, such as the sandstone stoops and wooden cornices. John F. Hylan, mayor of New York City from 1918 to 1925, lived in number 959 in the center of the row.

Bethesda Baptist Memorial Church
1170 Bushwick Avenue

The late-Romantic style Bethesda Memorial Baptist Church, dating from 1894-96, features a slender, octagonal campanile with an open belfry and the square auditorium inside is naturally lighted by a clerestory of round arches. Next door to the north is the Renaissance Revival brownstone and brick parish house. The buildings were originally built by the Bushwick Avenue Congregational Church, a society organized in 1887.

William Ulmer Residential Row
670, 683-691 Bushwick Avenue

Facing one another on Bushwick Avenue is the three-story brick mansion across from five two-and-a-half story townhouses, all designed by Engelhardt between 1885 & 1889 for William Ulmer of the William Ulmer Brewery. Ulmer resided in the mansion until his death in 1905 and the townhouses were built for his upper-level employees. They reference the Romanesque Revival style of the brewery but with a distinctly residential character.

The Gustav Doerschuck House
999 Bushwick Avenue

The Gustav Doerschuck House was built in 1890 for German brewer, Gustav Doerschuck, part of the wealthy and influential class that drove the development of this area of Bushwick. The granite and brick Romanesque Revival structure is intended to convey the prosperity and power of its owner. The house features elegant details such as the eyebrow windows tucked into the roof and the floriated terra cotta over the gable's arched corbel table.

The Thomas W. Field House
1250-1252 Bushwick Avenue

The Field House, a Romanesque inspired home, is one of the earliest buildings along Bushwick Avenue. It was built in 1854 by Thomas W. Field, a Superintendent of Brooklyn Public Schools and historic drawings show that it had a front full-story stoop to an original second floor entrance. By 1869, Field owned the entire block and named the street "Weirfield" by combining his first wife's name, Charlotte Weir, with his own.

The DeKalb Public Library
790 Bushwick Avenue

This landmarked Classical Revival building of brick and limestone was designed by William B. Tubby in 1905, funded by a grant by Andrew Carnegie, in response to the large population growth in Bushwick during the late 19th century, which necessitated the development of local civil services. The double-height windows and rounded apse allow light and air into the library and has served the community for over a century.

Linden Street Rowhouses
37-53 Linden Street

The group of Rowhouses on Linden Avenue, built in 1888 and designed by F.K. Irving, are an impressively intact development. These richly decorated Queen Anne brick and terra cotta row houses have original wrought iron stoop railings, detailed brow and waist freezes and pressed metal cornices with foliated swags. A cast-iron crenellated mansard roof on the corner house provides a striking terminus to the row.

Tenement Block
1274-1290 Bushwick Avenue

This row of brick tenements between Halsey and Eldert was designed and owned by the architect Frank Ames in 1889. The unique design features seven three-story buildings with pressed metal cornices centered around a triangular pediment cornice mid-block. The row is capped on either end by two larger six-story apartment buildings. The row retains the original decorative brick relief on the facades and cast iron railings.