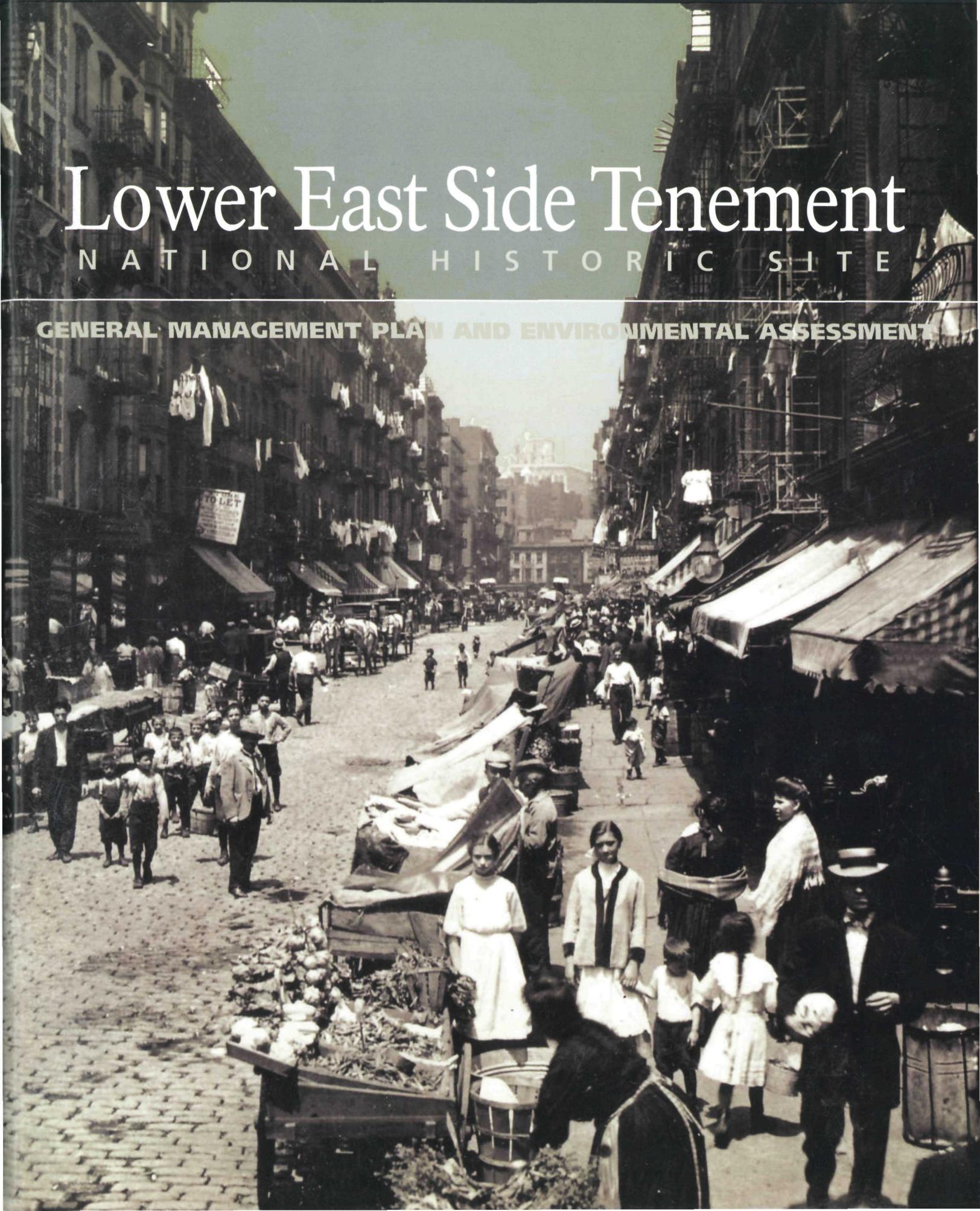




# Lower East Side Tenement

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT





# How To Comment On This Plan

We look forward to your review of the Lower East Side Tenement General Management Plan (GMP). This plan includes two management approaches for the Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site. We are very interested in receiving public comments to help us determine the most appropriate management alternative to recommend.

Comments will be accepted for 30 days after the date of the plan's release. If you wish to respond to the material in this document, you may submit your comments by any one of several methods, outlined below.

You may mail written comments to:

Linda McGrail, Project Manager  
Lower East Side Tenement GMP  
National Park Service  
200 Chestnut Street, 3rd Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
(215)597-1841

You may provide comments electronically at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>.

Please click on <Plans/Documents Open for Comment> and go to Lower East Side Tenement GMP.

You may also hand-deliver comments at a public meeting, to be announced in the media following release of this plan.

It is the practice of NPS to make all comments, including names and addresses of respondents who provide that information, available for public review following the conclusion of the NEPA process. Individuals may request that NPS withhold their name and/or address from public disclosure. If you wish to do this, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. Commentators using the website can make such a request by checking the box "keep my contact information private." NPS will honor such requests to the extent allowable by law, but you should be aware that NPS may still be required to disclose your name and address pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act.

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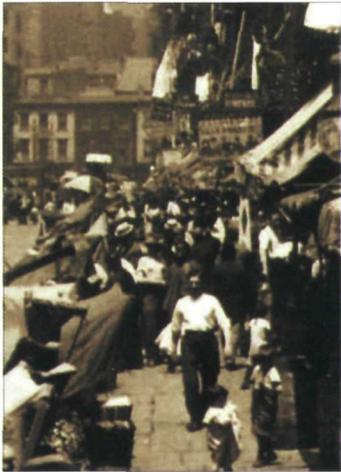
*Lithograph depicting the German Lower East Side in 1873*

**Photographs not otherwise credited are provided  
courtesy of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum.**

97 Orchard Street.  
Photo by NYC  
Department  
of Taxation and  
Finance, 1940.  
Courtesy of NYC  
Municipal Archives



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*Lower East Side street, circa 1900*  
*Philip and Olga Teresko, residents of 97 Orchard Street, 1913*  
*Levine apartment restored to its 1897 appearance. Photo courtesy of Alan Batt*

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Red Star Line.  
Antwerpen-New York.  
Antwerpen-Philadelphia.

Post card featuring  
the steamship  
Vaderland.  
Launched in 1900,  
she sailed for  
the Red Star Line  
between 1903  
and 1914 from  
Antwerp, Belgium,  
with room for  
342 first class,  
194 second class,  
and 626 third class  
passengers.  
Photo courtesy of  
Langsdale Library,  
University of  
Baltimore.

Right page:  
Left to right:  
1935 calendar found  
under floorboards  
inside an apartment  
at 97 Orchard Street

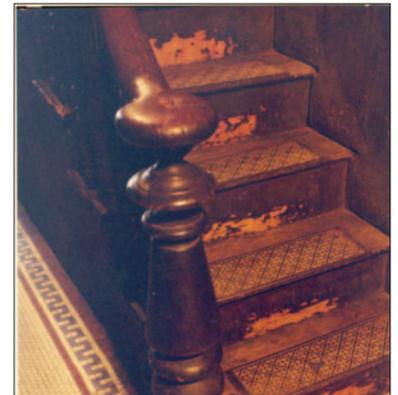
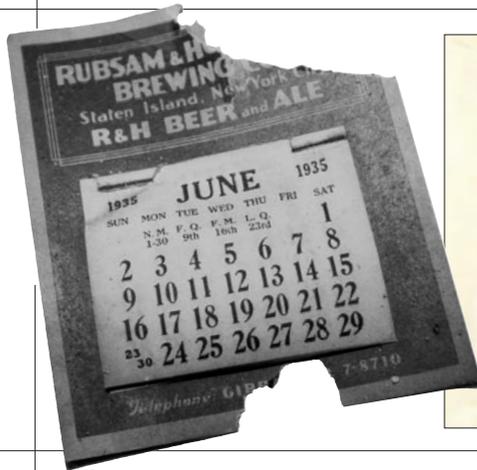
Entryway  
of the tenement at  
97 Orchard Street

Wooden staircase  
and tile floor  
in the entryway at  
97 Orchard Street



Doppel-Schrauben Postdampfer „Vaderland“.

# Purpose and Need for Action



## INTRODUCTION

This document sets forth the General Management Plan for the Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site. Congress designated the site an affiliated area of the National Park System in 1998 with the enactment of Public Law 105-378. This Act directed the National Park Service (NPS) to prepare a general management plan for the site, which comprises the building and property at 97 Orchard Street in the Borough of Manhattan.

An affiliated area of the National Park System is described by NPS Management Policies 2001 as a nationally significant natural or cultural resource that does not meet other criteria for inclusion in the National Park System (often because NPS management would not be a clearly superior alternative to other public agency or private management); requires special recognition or technical assistance beyond what is available through existing NPS programs; is managed in accordance with the policies and standards that apply to units of the National Park System; and is assured of sustained resource protection as documented in a formal agreement between NPS and the non-federal management entity.

In designating the Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site an affiliated area of the National Park System, Congress recognized it as among America's most special places. It represents a major and ongoing chapter of our nation's history—the life and times of the many millions of immigrants who have come, and continue to come, to our land seeking freedom or economic advancement, contributing so much to strengthen our national experience.

The Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site is administered by the Lower East Side Tenement Museum (Museum), a not-for-profit corporation. The Museum operates other facilities on Orchard Street, manages widespread programmatic activities, and has plans for significant expansion of facilities and programs at the national historic site and beyond its legislatively defined boundaries. This General Management Plan will describe the overall programs and plans of the Museum to permit the reader to place the future of 97 Orchard Street in the context of the Museum's larger current and planned activities.

**The plan, however, specifically addresses only resources directly related to 97 Orchard Street because those resources constitute the national historic site for which NPS planning and other assistance were authorized by Congress in P.L. 105-378.**

## Origins

Founded in 1988, the Lower East Side Tenement Museum is dedicated to telling the story of immigrant life on the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

The mission of the Museum is:

*To promote tolerance and historical perspective through the presentation and interpretation of the variety of immigrant and migrant experiences on Manhattan's Lower East Side, a gateway to America.*

Shortly after its establishment the Museum discovered the 1863 tenement structure at 97 Orchard Street. The building's upper floors had been unoccupied and sealed since the mid 1930s. As a result it was like a time capsule, having maintained the integrity of its floor plan and interior features—a venue perfectly suited for interpreting much of New York's immigrant story. The tenement was opened to the public on November 17, 1988, with an exhibit of Depression-era tenement photographs by Arnold Eagle. The building's storefronts were turned into program space as they became available, eventually housing a 50-seat theater. A \$3 million capital campaign was launched in 1993 to purchase and restore the building.

At the same time the tenement was opened to the public, research into the lives of its former residents began. Discussions with museum professionals, poets, playwrights, and scholars, part of a 1991 strategic planning study funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, reinforced the decision to interpret the lives of real people who lived in the tenement.

## Legislative History and Relationship with the National Park Service

In 1992, 97 Orchard Street was listed in the National Register of Historic Places, with its period of significance designated as 1863 - circa 1935. The following year the Museum and NPS filed a National Historic Landmark Nomination for the structure. Also in 1993 Congress directed NPS to conduct a Special Resource Study to explore the possibility of including the tenement building within the National Park System. Working closely with the Museum, neighborhood organizations and the public, the NPS North Atlantic Regional Office completed the study in 1994. That study documented the quality and condition of the building and evaluated its significance, suitability and

feasibility for inclusion in the National Park System. Three future management options for the tenement were considered:

- no federal action
- designation as a unit of the National Park System
- designation as an affiliated area of the National Park System

The study report recommended an affiliation between the Museum and the National Park Service. On April 19, 1994, "The Tenement Building at 97 Orchard Street" was designated a National Historic Landmark. In 1998 it was selected as a Featured Property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In the same year, federal legislation proposed by New York's congressional delegation and signed into law by President Clinton made it a national historic site and an affiliated site of the National Park System, and linked it with the Castle Clinton, Ellis Island, and Statue of Liberty National Monuments (NM). The following is an excerpt from that legislation:

*PL 105-378, Section 101 Findings and Purposes*

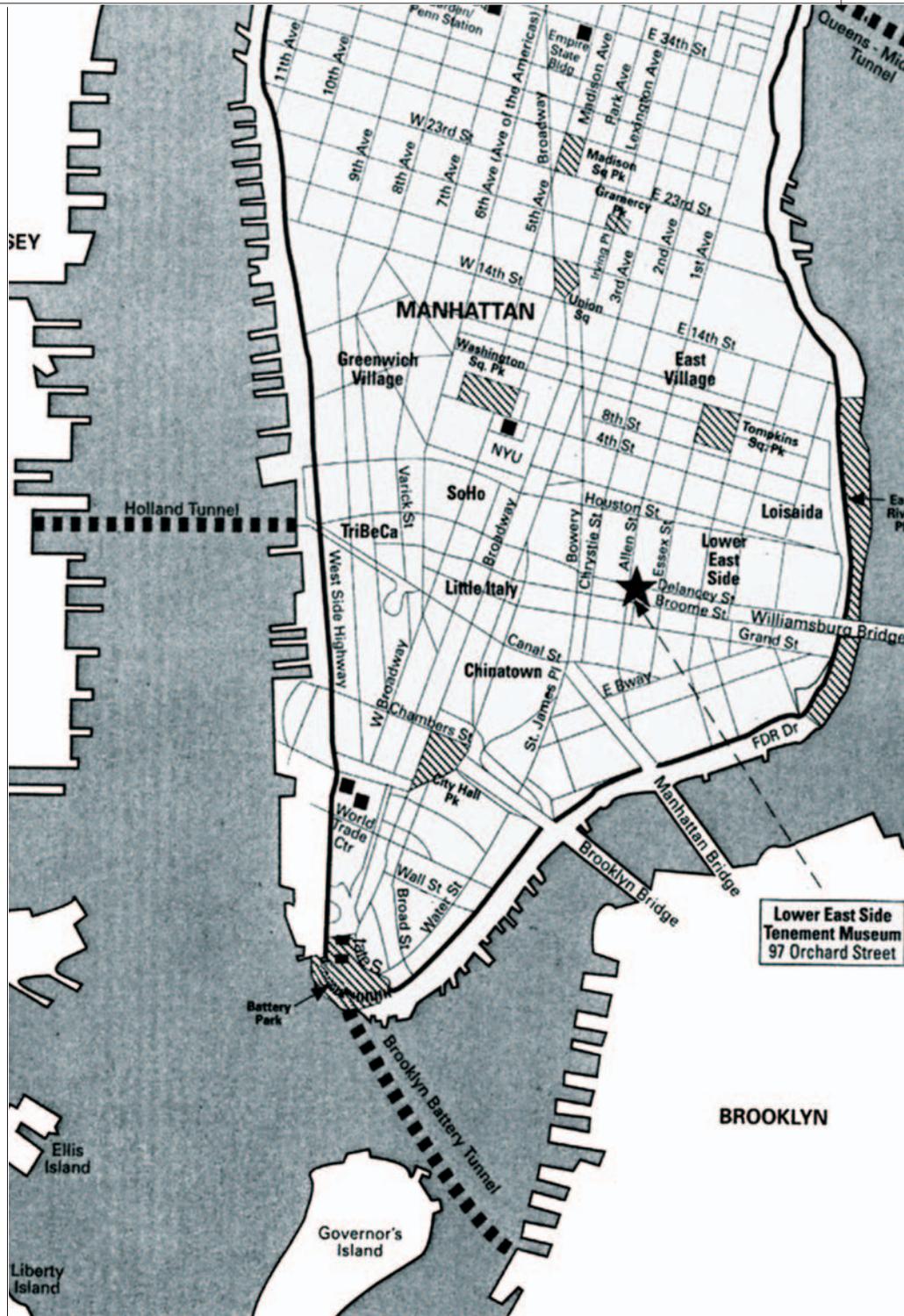
*(a) FINDINGS—Congress finds that:*

- (1) (A) immigration, and the resulting diversity of cultural influences, is a key factor in defining the identity of the United States; and (B) many United States Citizens trace their ancestry to persons born in nations other than the United States;*
- (2) the latter part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century marked a period in which the volume of immigrants coming to the United States far exceeded that of any time prior to or since that period;*
- (3) no single identifiable neighborhood in the United States absorbed a comparable number of immigrants than the Lower East Side neighborhood of Manhattan in New York City;*
- (4) the Lower East Side Tenement at 97 Orchard Street in New York City is an outstanding survivor of the vast number of humble buildings that housed immigrants to New York during the greatest wave of immigration in American history;*
- (5) the Lower East Side Tenement is owned and operated as a museum by the Lower East Side Tenement Museum;*

- (6) the Lower East Side Tenement is dedicated to interpreting immigrant life within a neighborhood long associated with the immigrant experience in the United States, New York City's Lower East Side, and its importance to United States history; and
- (7) (A) the Director of the National Park Service found the Lower East Side Tenement at 97 Orchard Street to be nationally significant; and (B) the Secretary of the Interior declared the Lower East Side Tenement a National Historic Landmark on April 19, 1994; and (C) the Director of the National Park Service, through a special resource study, found the Lower East Side Tenement suitable and feasible for inclusion in the National Park System.

Congress authorized the Secretary of the Interior to provide technical and financial assistance to the Museum. It also directed NPS to prepare a general management plan (GMP) that defines the role and responsibility of the Secretary with regard to interpretation and preservation of the national historic site, which is defined in the legislation as the Lower East Side Tenement at 97 Orchard Street. Therefore, the GMP applies only to 97 Orchard Street. The Museum's related plans and activities are described for contextual purposes, but are not the subject of the GMP.

Any future funding from the National Park Service is subject to competing needs of units if the National Park System, constraints on the availability of funds, and annual NPS funding priorities.



***To promote tolerance and historical perspective through the presentation and interpretation of the variety of immigrant and migrant experiences on Manhattan's Lower East Side, a gateway to America***

—Mission of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum

## Purpose and Structure of the Plan

This document serves three purposes. As the national historic site's first general management plan, it provides guidance for management of 97 Orchard Street and defines the role of the Secretary of the Interior and the relationship between the Museum and the National Park Service for the next 10 to 20 years. The plan is also intended to fulfill the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and has been prepared in accordance with NPS Director's Order 12, *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision Making*, and its accompanying Handbook, which are the NPS implementing regulations for NEPA. In addition, it meets National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 requirements for assessment of the effects of proposed management alternatives on the site's resources that are listed in or eligible for the National Register.

NPS Management Policies require that general management plans be based on four central principles:

- goal orientation
- logical decision-making
- scientific, technical and scholarly analysis
- public participation

General management plans contain the unit's mission and broad mission goals. The mission includes its purpose and significance based on the enabling legislation, in this case P.L. 105-378, and any other laws that apply to the park system or to the individual park unit. Mission goals articulate the ideals that managers will strive to achieve. Specific management prescriptions in the general management plan will (1) clearly define the desired natural and cultural resource conditions



and visitor experiences to be achieved and maintained over time; and (2) identify the kinds and levels of management activities, visitor use, and development that are appropriate for maintaining the desired conditions.

### **The Lower East Side Tenement Museum**

The Lower East Side Tenement Museum, which administers the national historic site, began with an idea conceived by founder Ruth J. Abram in 1983. In 1988 the Museum leased one of the four storefronts in the tenement at 97 Orchard Street and began its life with \$300,000 from private and corporate donations.

Today the Museum has over 100 full-time and part-time staff and volunteers. It operates on an annual budget of \$5 million and oversees a number of

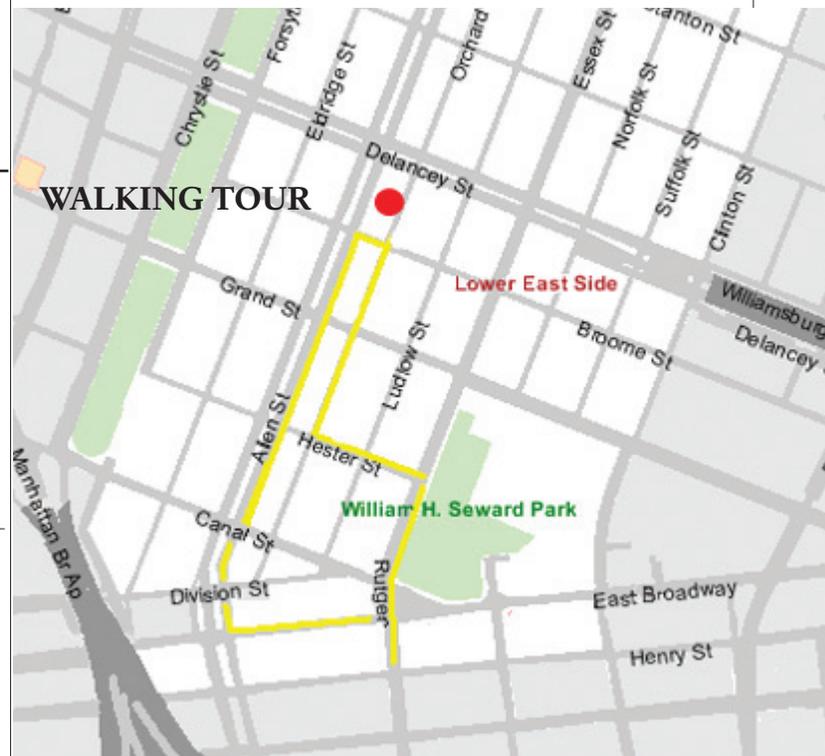
Currently, the Museum operates four separate facilities:

- the historic tenement at 97 Orchard Street (the national historic site and subject of this GMP), with restored and preserved apartments, and classrooms in the basement and on the first floor
- a storefront at 108 Orchard Street, serving as a visitor center and gift shop
- the cellar and first two floors of 91 Orchard Street, rehabilitated in March 2003, containing collections in the cellar and administrative offices on the first and second floors
- a storefront at 90 Orchard Street, housing *Recollections*, the Museum's new antiques and collectibles shop

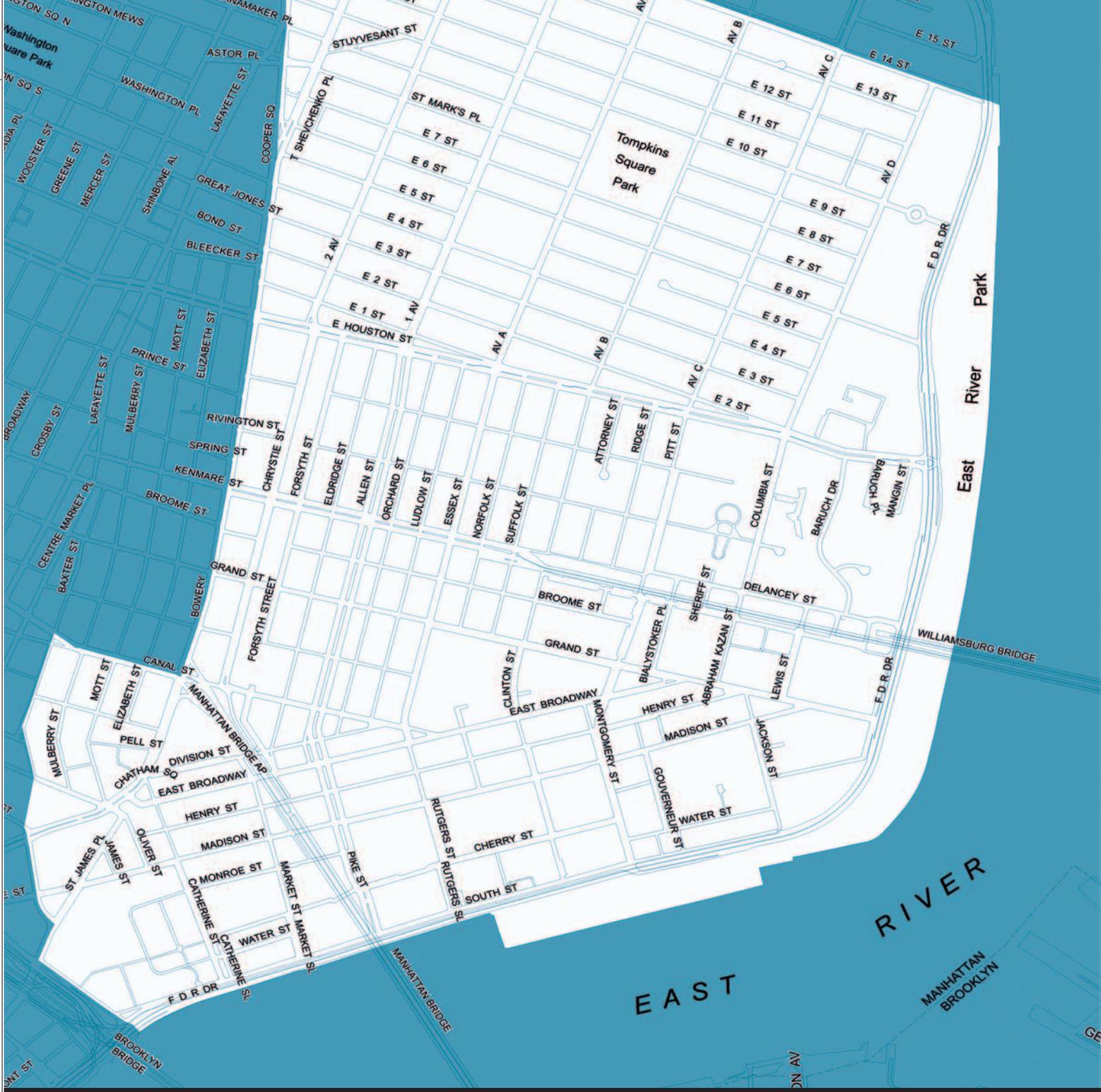
*The Lower East Side Tenement Museum began with an idea by founder Ruth J. Abram in 1983. In 1988 the museum leased one of the storefronts at 97 Orchard Street...*

interpretive and other educational programs including site tours, neighborhood walking tours, teacher training, art exhibits, the Lower East Side Community Preservation Project, the International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience, English language workshops for new immigrants, and other community services.

Chartered by the New York State Board of Regents, the Museum is governed by a board of up to 30 trustees, each elected for a three-year term, renewable once. After two terms a trustee may be reelected following a year off the board. Trustees are selected for their ability to contribute specific skills, networks, and funds, and for their willingness and ability to connect the Museum to diverse constituencies, including members of the immigrant and migrant communities whose history is addressed.



The Tenement Museum is supported by grants from corporations, foundations, and federal, state and city governments; private donations; individual memberships; unions; visitor contributions; and ticket and shop sales. Some examples of funding sources are the National Endowment for the Arts and the Humanities, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, the Altman Foundation, the New York Times Company Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Peter J. Sharp Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, and American Express, Inc.



## The Lower East Side

One of the stated purposes of the Act establishing the Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site (P.L. 105-378, Section 101(b)) is to ensure continued interpretation of the Lower East Side neighborhood's role in the history of immigration to the United States. The function this neighborhood served in providing a first foothold for new immigrants is unparalleled in U.S. history. When the immigrant population was

*Lower East Side historical boundaries.  
Manhattan Community District 3 Base Map.  
Courtesy of NYC Department of City Planning*

at its peak in 1910 the Lower East Side was home to more than 550,000 people. At that time the portion of the neighborhood comprising the Tenth Ward (between the Bowery and Rivington, Division, and Norfolk Streets) was one of the most crowded areas in the world, containing an average of 665 people per

acre (Professor Kenneth Jackson, National Historic Landmark nomination for the tenement building). Its most crowded block, bounded by Orchard, Allen, Delancey, and Broome Streets, included 97 Orchard Street. This single block housed 2,223 people on 2.04 acres in 1903. At that density (1,090 people per acre), Professor Jackson states, the entire population of the United States at that time could have been accommodated within New York City.

The Lower East Side had once been the pastoral estate of Lieutenant Governor James Delancey. One of the largest pieces of property in Manhattan, the estate covered what are now some 120 blocks between the Bowery, the East River, Chambers Street, and 14th Street. The Delanceys, a French Huguenot family that was perhaps the richest in pre-Revolution New York, took the Crown's side during the conflict and were forced into exile afterwards. The estate was carved up by more patriotic land speculators.

The Lower East Side became a neighborhood of middle-class row houses in the early 1800s, resembling areas in other eastern cities such as Philadelphia and Baltimore. Although not designed for multi-family occupation, many of those residences were converted to accommodate New York's growing population. Some say that a builder in 1833, sensing a market for small, cheap worker housing, erected the first tenement on Water Street, while others say that the first tenement was erected in the 1840s on Mott Street. Either way, others were soon being built, replacing the single-family homes that had previously existed.

In the 1840s a Chinese enclave was established at the southern fringe of the Lower East Side—an area that is present-day Chinatown. Between 1845 and 1860 the population of the city doubled with an influx of Irish immigrants escaping famine and Germans fleeing civil strife. Immigration occurred in waves that varied by ethnic composition, the Irish and Germans having followed the Dutch, French Huguenot, English, and the imported African-American slaves into the area. Immigrants continued to make their way during the 1860s and 1870s despite war and economic hardship. In the late 1880s Eastern European Jews and Italians

began gradually replacing the Germans and Irish. By the early 1900s Jews from Greece and Turkey started to appear. After World War II, Puerto Ricans and African-Americans from the southern U.S. arrived. Many, if not most, of those immigrants and migrants found their first accommodations in Lower East Side tenements. Today the neighborhood continues to provide housing for new immigrant groups, with Hispanic and Asian communities forming the majority of its ethnic populations.

The extant character-defining features of the Lower East Side include:

- A collection of tenement buildings dating from the mid 1800s until the 1910s. Many of those buildings retain a high degree of integrity in their external architectural features and continuing residential and commercial uses.
- The general urban fabric of the neighborhood. Most streets are made up of five- to six-story tenement buildings built out to the street, with prominent front entrances and repetitive window treatments.
- The pattern of land use with a large concentration of mixed-use buildings. The dominant pattern is ground floor commercial (sometimes in the basement as well as on the first floor) and upper floors residential.
- A number of landscapes, streetscapes and monuments that retain a high level of integrity. Orchard Street is one example with its street elevation and outdoor vendors evoking its past life. Other streets such as the Bowery, Allen and Delancey have been widened but still retain their basic alignment and hierarchy within the neighborhood.
- A number of cultural and community landmarks, many of which played a major role in the life of the community over the years.

Although this area has not been immune to the recent real estate boom in the City of New York, it has resisted complete gentrification and retained much of its working-class, ethnic character. Its existing tenement structures, streetscapes, and patterns of land use make it a living laboratory for understanding the heritage of many Americans.

## 97 Orchard Street

The building at 97 Orchard Street is an ideal place for interpreting tenement life in the mid to late 1800s and early 1900s. When the building was discovered and leased by the Lower East Side Tenement Museum in 1988, it had been vacant of residential tenants and its upper floors closed since 1935. As a result, the floor plan of the building is virtually intact and it provides a unique opportunity to see and explore the impacts of building code changes that were mandated throughout the history of housing reform.

The demand for cheap housing in New York City continued to increase from the time the first tenement buildings went up in the 1830s and 40s. In 1862 the Superintendent of Buildings in New York described a tenement as a place where “the greatest amount of profit is sought to be realized from the least amount of space, with little or no regard for the health, comfort, or protection of the lives of the tenants.” In that same year Lucas Glockner, a German-born tailor, purchased the lot at 97 Orchard Street for the purpose of constructing a tenement building. When new it was a well-built alternative to the rapidly deteriorating row houses converted into multi-family dwellings. Glockner moved his family into the building and rented out the remaining units.

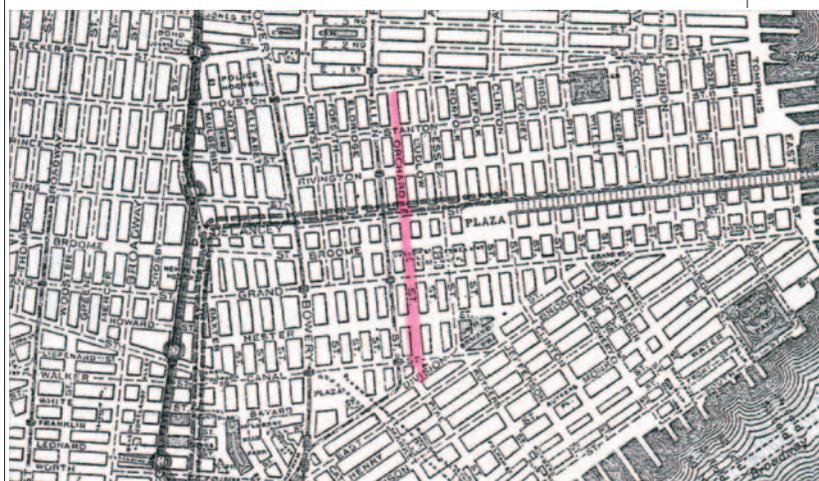
There were a total of 20 apartments and two basement level commercial shops. Each unit was a three-room apartment of 345 net square feet, with windows at one end. Ventilation and lighting were extremely poor, especially in the interior rooms. There were no toilets inside; tenants used a brick privy built in the back yard. Over the years, housing reform laws led to changes in the layout and amenities of the building.

In 1867 New York State passed the first Tenement House Law, which legally defined a tenement and required, among other things, that new tenements be equipped with one (outside) privy for every 20 occupants. An 1879 law, now called the “Old Law,” mandated that new tenements cover no more than 65% of a 25-foot by 100-foot lot (allowing for larger back yards), and that apartments be better ventilated, with windows that opened into a narrow air shaft.

The shape of their revised floor plans resulted in these tenements being called “dumbbell tenements.” Circa 1895, the kitchens were enlarged at the expense of the parlor to permit the installation of running water and tub sinks.

The 1901 “New Law” banned the construction of the previous type of tenements because of evolving concerns about fire safety, and mandated changes in existing structures. In response to the 1901 law, translucent glass panels were cut into wooden apartment doors, and windows were carved into walls separating rooms, thereby exposing interior rooms to natural light. A skylight was put in over the stairway, and gas lights were required to burn in the hallways.

One toilet was installed for every two families, or two per floor, in 1905. When the toilets and an air shaft were added on the south side of the building the affected apartments’ net square footage was condensed to approximately 320 square feet, reducing the size of the kitchen and the inner bedroom. In the same year, the first floor apartments were converted into storefronts, and cast-iron stairs replaced the stone stoop.



Circa 1924, electricity was installed. Housing reform increased and the Multiple Dwellings Act of 1929 mandated additional toilets, improved ventilation, and fireproofing for new tenements. In 1934 an amendment to the Multiple Dwellings Act required fireproofing the public hall and stairs of existing tenements. Unable to comply, the landlord of 97 Orchard Street evicted all tenants and closed the building’s upper floors in 1935.



## PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE

### Purpose of the Site

Purpose statements rely heavily on congressional direction contained in the site's enabling legislation. The purposes of the Act establishing the National Historic Site are presented in Section 101(b) of P.L. 105-378:

- (1) to ensure the preservation, maintenance, and interpretation of this site and to interpret at the site the themes of immigration, tenement life in the latter half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, the housing reform movement, and tenement architecture in the United States;*
- (2) to ensure continued interpretation of the nationally significant immigrant phenomenon associated with New York City's Lower East Side and the Lower East Side's role in the history of immigration to the United States; and*
- (3) to enhance the interpretation of the Castle Clinton, Ellis Island, and Statue of Liberty National Monuments.*

In cooperation with the Museum, NPS developed purpose statements for the national historic site. They provide fundamental criteria against which the appropriateness of all plan recommendations, operational decisions, and actions are tested. The purposes of the Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site at 97 Orchard Street are:

- To preserve, protect and enhance the architectural and cultural features of 97 Orchard Street that are related to its period of significance between 1863 and 1935;
- To provide opportunities for research on, and to foster understanding and tolerance for, the immigrant and migrant experience within the Lower East Side of New York City in the full social, political, and cultural context of American history and world migration;
- To preserve the stories of 97 Orchard Street that document the immigrant and migrant experience of the Lower East Side of New York; and
- To provide opportunities for enhanced understanding and appreciation of the immigration experience as interpreted at Castle Clinton, Ellis Island, and Statue of Liberty National Monuments.

## Significance of the Site

The significance statement describes the reasons that the resource is important, in this case to the history of the United States. The Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site is significant because:

- The modest six-story brick tenement at 97 Orchard Street is an excellent surviving example of a distinct housing type associated with the greatest wave of immigration in American history. For more than two centuries millions of immigrants from around the world have flooded into America through New York City. While some moved on immediately to other parts of the country, many settled in New York's urban and culturally diverse neighborhoods, particularly the Lower East Side. With the influx of immigrants in the 19th century came one of the most acute housing crises in the industrialized world. In response, about 20,000 tenements were constructed in New York between 1860 and 1879 alone.
- Completed in 1864, the building at 97 Orchard Street is virtually intact. Built to house up to 20 families on a lot that had originally been intended for a single family residence, it exhibits the cramped, unhealthy quarters that were prevalent throughout the Lower East Side. As one enters the building the history of standards for tenement plumbing, light, ventilation, and means of egress is brought to life. The changes revealed in its successive layers document the pioneering housing reform efforts that became a model for the nation and provided a boost to the emerging national public health movement.
- Between 1864 and 1935, 97 Orchard Street was home to an estimated 7,000 people from over 20 countries. For vast numbers of Americans descended from a multitude of backgrounds, it represents the first chapter of their family history in the United States. Its surrounding neighborhood, the Lower East Side, retains much of its historic character and continues to provide housing for new immigrants.

## THEMES

Themes are the organizing framework for interpretation of related natural and cultural resources. They are the broad stories that integrate the collection of individual stories so that they may be viewed within the context of the whole. The themes of immigration, tenement architecture, housing reform, and tenement life, outlined below, form the basis for interpretive programs at the Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site.

- The vast wave of immigration that occurred in the latter half of the 19th and the first part of the 20th century greatly affected the built environment and unique cultural identity of the Lower East Side, creating a rich urban mix of tenements, houses of worship, occupations, restaurants, clubs, saloons, and other community institutions.
- The architecture of early tenement housing reflects the desire to house the greatest number of persons as inexpensively as possible in order to maximize landlord profits, and manifests the evolving standards of health, safety and privacy. Lower East Side tenements became the subject of national debates and inspired precedent-setting reform movements in immigration, housing, social welfare, public health, public safety, and labor.
- 97 Orchard Street represents the experience of cultural transition and invention in the moment when newly-arrived immigrants launched their struggle for a better life.
- 97 Orchard Street offers insight into the ways that immigrants shaped and were shaped by labor practices and economic relationships.
- The story of 97 Orchard Street provides an important perspective on issues and struggles faced by immigrants today.

*Left page:*

*Left to right:*

*Main building of the Ellis Island Immigrant Station, circa 1910.  
Photo courtesy of Statue of Liberty National Monument*

*Jennie and Harris Levine, residents of 97 Orchard Street,  
circa 1925*

## MISSION GOALS AND ISSUES

The overall mission of the Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site is to preserve and interpret 97 Orchard Street as a rare intact example of the earliest tenements built in New York City, and to promote understanding of tenement architecture, the urban reform movement, and the immigrant life of New York's Lower East Side in the context of American history and world migration. This mission will be achieved by meeting the following goals:

**Mission Goal #1—Resource Protection: Significant architectural and cultural resources associated with 97 Orchard Street are protected and maintained in good condition.**

Apartments within the historic structure are being preserved as they are, rehabilitated, or restored to their appearance at a particular time. Where documentation does not permit complete restoration, rehabilitation of apartment elements evoking the period will be undertaken. The basement and part of the first floor will be rehabilitated to approximate historic businesses. The back yard will be rehabilitated and the privy reconstructed. Elements are reconstructed only when the requirements of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Secretary's Treatment Standards) will be met. These standards provide the primary guidance for protecting properties that are listed in or meet eligibility requirements for the National Register of Historic Places. The types of treatment defined for such properties are as follows:

### Right page:

*Joan Geismar directing the archeological excavation of the rear yard at 97 Orchard Street, 1993*

**PRESERVATION**—The current form and character of historic structures and landscapes are retained through maintenance and repair. Changes that have accrued over time are kept, and current uses continue. This is the default treatment for all historic structures for which no other treatment is recommended.

**REHABILITATION**—Historic structures and landscapes are made available for interpretation, other forms of education and other uses through repair, alterations and additions. Their character is retained by preserving historic features, including changes that have acquired significance, and by replacing missing features.

**RESTORATION**—Historic structures and landscapes are returned to their appearance at a particular period of time. Features from that period are preserved, and those from other periods are removed. Missing features for which there is substantiating evidence may be reconstructed.

**RECONSTRUCTION**—New construction replicates the appearance of non-surviving structures or landscapes at a specific time period and in their historic location. This treatment is allowed when it is essential to public understanding of the property, and enough evidence is available that only minimal conjecture is needed.

Apartments chosen for restoration or rehabilitation rather than preservation are those that retain more of their historic fabric, such as wallpaper and floor covering. To represent the history of the building's alterations, care is taken to select a restoration period appropriate to each apartment. For example, in 1905 as the result of building code requirements, an air shaft and two water closets were added to each floor. These additions resulted in a minor reconfiguration of the apartments on the shaft-side of the building. Therefore, shaft-side apartments are always interpreted to a period subsequent to 1905.

The Museum maintains collections that add to the understanding of daily immigrant life within the tenement. Archeological investigations conducted in the back yard in the early 1990s yielded artifacts that contribute to the significance of the site and enhance its interpretation. Most of the more than 2,500 19th- and 20th-century artifacts were discovered by Museum staff within the building, under floor boards and behind walls, during initial stabilization and rehabilitation. Former residents have donated approximately 500 more items. Artifacts range from food and beverage containers to children's toys. In addition to its permanent collection the Museum maintains an exhibit collection comprising over 300 objects that have been donated or purchased and that serve interpretive and other educational purposes.



The tenement building and the collections are enhanced by their surroundings. The Special Resource Study recognized that the entire Lower East Side is critical in providing the background for the site's interpretation. Orchard Street, in particular, retains an exceptionally preserved sense of place with block after block of five- and six-story brick tenements, many dating from the same period as the site, bordering the street. The Museum is involved in efforts to preserve these historic surroundings.

### **Issues Related to Mission Goal #1**

#### ***How should the site be managed, and how can NPS best assist the Museum in protecting and managing it?***

Much work remains to be done to stabilize and preserve the building, including major repairs to the exterior as well as preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of additional apartments. The interior is beginning to show wear and tear from the large number of visitors touring the apartments presently open for interpretation. The level of visitation that the tenement can support without impacting its resources (its carrying capacity) is being determined by a visitor capacity study, which will indicate whether the number of visitors per day per apartment needs to

be reduced. The GMP will suggest appropriate ways to apply NPS experience in the restoration and care of historic properties to the protection and management of the site, ensuring that all alterations comply with the Secretary's Treatment Standards.

#### ***How can the site's collections best be maintained, and should NPS play a role?***

The collections are stored in the cellars of 91 and 97 Orchard Street. Problems with those areas include temperature and humidity fluctuations, the potential for a broken pipe or sewer backup, inadequate security, and lack of work space. The GMP will address the long-term environmental, security and work space needs for the collections.

#### ***What role can the example of 97 Orchard Street play in helping to maintain the historic structures and streetscape that provide context for the site?***

Demand for real estate is pushing up prices, resulting in the conversion of buildings to non-historic uses and changing the appearance of the neighborhood. The GMP will examine initiatives available to the Museum and NPS to further the ongoing work of the Museum with building owners and neighborhood civic organizations to preserve this notable streetscape.

**Mission Goal #2—Interpretation and Visitor Experience:** Visitors have an understanding of the human experience of those who owned, resided in, and/or worked at 97 Orchard Street and the conditions that led to the urban reform movement in New York City. Interpretation promotes understanding and tolerance for present day immigrant and migrant populations and provides a resource for research regarding the urban working class and contemporary immigrant and migrant experiences. Visitors appreciate the site’s many thematic connections to other historic sites and units of the National Park System.

In addition to conducting tours of the tenement for the general public and for visitors with special needs, the Museum carries out numerous innovative interpretive programs that tell the immigrant’s story at different levels: the larger phenomenon of mass immigration to New York, explored through the Museum’s relationships with Castle Clinton, Ellis Island, and the Statue of Liberty; the unique Lower East Side neighborhood that provides the context for 97 Orchard Street; and, at a more intimate scale, the day-to-day life of individuals who lived in the crowded environment of the tenement itself.

### **Issues Related to Mission Goal #2**

*How, given the limited capacity of 97 Orchard Street, can the Museum provide for the broadest scope of interpretation possible and reach larger audiences?*

The compelling stories of the arrival of immigrants through Castle Clinton and Ellis Island and their early assimilation on the Lower East Side need to be available to a broad cross-section of visitors who vary in age and in their familiarity with the immigrant experience. Because of the limited carrying capacity of the tenement and the large number of potential visitors, the GMP will explore ways in which various programs and media might help to accomplish the interpretive mission of the site.

**Mission Goal #3—Visitor Use and Facilities:** Visitors safely enjoy high-quality educational experiences accessible to all. The facility requirements of visitors, staff, and researchers are met or exceeded.

The quality of the visitor experience is affected by the condition of the site and related Museum facilities as well as by the quality of visitor programs.

The Museum recognizes the need for facilities that provide for a range of both visitor services and administrative functions. Many basic requirements, such as accessibility, restrooms, and offices, were documented in the Special Resource Study completed by NPS.

Some facility needs, e.g., space for classes, are currently being met on the lower floors of the tenement building. Other functions are housed off site; in particular, the Museum’s offices are located on the first two floors of 91 Orchard, and the visitor center is in a storefront at 108 Orchard.

### **Issues Related to Mission Goal #3**

*How can the Museum, given the limited space at 97 Orchard Street, best meet the needs for visitor use and services?*

In order to preserve the historic integrity of the site, most basic visitor needs must be accommodated elsewhere. For example, adequate, accessible public restrooms cannot be made available at 97 Orchard Street. Access to the upper floors of the tenement cannot be provided within the building for the visitors (approximately 15% of the total) who cannot negotiate the steep, narrow interior stairs or the exterior rear stairs. Use of the lower floors for visitor programs prevents their restoration or rehabilitation to historic uses. The Museum’s plans will be discussed as they relate to these issues.

*How can the Museum, using its related plans and programs, best accommodate the need for support space including administration and operations?*

Space must be provided for research, staff training, development, and other administrative functions.



**Above:** Dress based on a style advertised in the *New York Tribune* in 1898, possibly a style produced in the Levine garment shop

**Left:** Bar Mitzvah photo of Max Levine with his sister Pauline, residents of 97 Orchard Street, circa 1910

The lack of adequate off-site support facilities has necessitated the use of the bottom floors of 97 Orchard Street for offices, meeting room, food service, and collections storage. Offices, meeting room, and part of the collections have recently moved to 91 Orchard, but some non-historic uses remain. Related plans of the Museum that will permit it to function more effectively to meet the mission goals of the site and to better serve the needs of the visiting public and its own staff will be discussed.

#### **Mission Goal #4**

**Cooperative Action: Cooperation with public and private entities provides mutual benefits and cost effective impacts on resource protection, visitor services and interpretive programming.**

Millions who passed through Castle Clinton and, later, Ellis Island made their way to the Lower East Side. The site's authorizing legislation provides that "The Secretary, in consultation with the Museum, shall coordinate the operation and interpretation of the historic site with the Statue of Liberty National Monument, Ellis Island National Monument, and Castle Clinton National Monument." The legislation further states that "The Secretary may provide

technical and financial assistance to the Museum to mark, interpret, and preserve the historic site, including making preservation-related capital improvements and repairs." In addition, New York City offers a multitude of organizations, agencies and programs as potential partners for exploring issues related to immigration, housing reform and tenants' rights.

#### **Issues Related to Mission Goal #4**

***How can the Museum maximize opportunities for partnerships with NPS and others to promote resource protection and interpretation?***

Shared interpretive themes relating to immigration and the immigrant experience call for the development of joint programs by the Museum and the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, and Castle Clinton National Monuments. The Museum can also benefit from partnerships with a wider range of other public and private entities in the New York region for fund raising and interpretation. The GMP will explore means of partnering to provide additional technical and financial support for resource protection and for making these stories accessible to all visitors, both on and off site. Various management actions and options for cooperative partnerships with NPS and others will be suggested.

*Jane Moore Hanrahan, resident of 97 Orchard Street as a child, and her husband Roger Hanrahan, circa 1890s*



## RELATED ACTIVITIES AND ONGOING PLANS OF THE LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT MUSEUM

### Planning Program

As stated previously, this general management plan has been undertaken in full recognition that the Lower East Side Tenement Museum has ongoing plans and implementation strategies in place for 97 Orchard Street and the other properties and programs it administers. This section outlines the current activities of the Museum as well as its plans for the future.

During its 18 years of existence the Museum has achieved tremendous recognition and success in its celebration of the history of urban working-class and poor immigrants and migrants. In the future the Museum hopes to expand into additional facilities, build upon its alliances with compatible institutions including the National Park Service and the National

Trust for Historic Preservation, and increase the range of its interpretive and other educational and community-serving programs.

In establishing its planning process the Museum was initially assisted by McKinsey & Company, which donated its services for the preparation of a five-year plan. Long-range planning is now done by staff and members of the Board of Trustees (Board). Development of an annual plan to implement the five-year plan involves the entire staff and runs every March through May. That process commences with a review of the Museum's mission and the overall goals and objectives established the prior year to help create the map for the upcoming year. During those sessions, staff members assess the past year and decide which programs to continue, what new programs to launch, and which initiatives will require planning during the year for future implementation. Specific timetables are established and responsibilities are assigned. That planning document is brought to the Board for approval at its June meeting and is used throughout

the year to measure progress and staff performance. The Museum's President uses it as the basis for quarterly reports to the Board.

In August 2000 the Program Team developed a set of criteria for evaluating programs. According to those criteria the Museum's programs should do the following: maintain existing audiences and attract new ones; address subject matter that reflects the past and present diversity of the Lower East Side; engage visitors in the interpretation of the history of the Lower East Side and its people, events, and issues; raise awareness of the contemporary implications of the history interpreted at 97 Orchard Street and offer visitors the means to evaluate those issues on their own; engage audiences in a dialogue about contemporary issues in historical perspective; suggest opportunities for audiences to become involved in addressing the issues; and collaborate with other neighborhood organizations, artists and residents by integrating reflection on the past into their work.

In keeping with these criteria the Museum embarked on an ambitious plan for capital and programmatic improvements. The plan includes:

### Expanding the Historic Interpretation of 97 Orchard Street

- The restored **Meehan-Moore apartment** will be the first permanent exhibit of an urban working-class Irish immigrant family in a national historic site in the United States. The apartment will engage the public in dialogue concerning citizenship, the role of immigrants in political life, and public and maternal health.
- The re-created **Schneider's Saloon**, the German biergarten that existed in the basement of 97 Orchard Street in the first few decades of the building's life, will allow exploration of a center of cultural life in the 19th-century Kleindeutchland, an area of the Lower East Side that constituted the fifth largest German-speaking city in the world.
- The re-creation and interpretation of the **privy** that originally stood behind the landmark building at 97 Orchard Street will be the first re-creation and

interpretation of urban outdoor toilets and water systems in New York, promoting discussion of important questions concerning public health and sanitation in the city past and present.

### Serving Immigrants

- The Museum is piloting a program to teach **immigrant high school students English and citizenship**. Tours of the tenement's historic apartments combined with a discussion workshop help to orient and welcome children who may be struggling to find ways of adapting to their new surroundings.
- In 2004 the Museum, in collaboration with *The New York Times* and St. Martin's Press, published the *The New York Times Guide for Immigrants in New York City*. Printed in English, Spanish and Chinese, it is a resource guide for everything from finding housing or a job to setting up a bank account or applying for citizenship.

### Giving Voice to Contemporary Immigrants

- Currently in development is an **Immigrant Teen Website**, an interactive cartoon-style site for immigrant and migrant teens to discuss their concerns with each other and professional advisors.
- **Windows of 97 Orchard Street** offers a 24-hour free public art experience.
- The **Digital Artists in Residence Program** provides funding and support for artists who create original, web-based art works that explore the contemporary immigrant experience. The art works created through this program are hosted on the Museum's web site, [www.tenement.org](http://www.tenement.org).

### Serving the Community

- The Museum will be working with a number of local community groups to develop and implement the Lower East Side **Community Preservation Plan**, a blueprint for the economic, cultural and social development of the Lower East Side.

### Reaching Outside the Museum's Four Walls

- The Museum has developed **off-site educational programs** to accommodate those groups that can

not travel to the Museum and to offset the problem of group tour slots at the tenement being booked many months in advance.

- The **Immigrant Heritage Trail** will map historic sites, cultural centers and contemporary immigrant neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs of New York City.
- A new **distance learning program** will allow students who use wheelchairs or who cannot come to the tenement building to interact with Victoria Confino via videoconferencing.

### Expanding the Vision

- In **collaboration with Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island** the Museum is working out a plan for accommodating 3 million visitors as they trace the immigrant experience from processing at the immigration station to settlement in the tenements of the Lower East Side.

### Teaching Others in the Museum Community

- In response to requests from museum professionals around the world, the Museum is putting together a **professional training program** with modules on a variety of subjects including the use of history as a tool for citizen engagement, and the development of community outreach and service programs.

Demand for on-site tours has exceeded the capacity of the tenement. Between 50 and 250 potential walk-in visitors are being turned away each week, and school groups often have to book six months in advance. To respond to the continuing demand for additional services the Museum has established a \$15 million capital campaign, described next.

### The Orchard Street Campaign

The Orchard Street Campaign to raise \$15 million is focused on four key elements:

- \$4.5 million to stabilize and preserve the structure at 97 Orchard Street
- \$5 million endowment fund to ensure sustainability of the Museum's programs
- \$5 million reserve fund to purchase a second tenement building when it becomes available on the market

- \$500,000 to establish the Enterprise Program for the Museum's storefront businesses on Orchard Street

Stabilizing and preserving the building at 97 Orchard Street will allow future generations to continue to learn from the experiences of the immigrants who lived there. Completion of stabilization will enable the Museum to open more sections of this national historic site to the public. The building has the potential for five more restored apartments and four historic storefronts, including Schneider's Saloon.



In addition to ensuring the sustainability of the Museum's current programs, the endowment fund will provide financial stability for achieving growth in its programs and will help finance new programming. The Museum has received a prestigious Challenge Grant of \$500,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities to initiate the fund.

In New York's volatile real estate market a second tenement building in proximity to 97 Orchard Street may become available at any moment. Establishing a reserve fund to purchase a building is essential. The Museum will be financially ready when the opportunity arises.

Instituting the Enterprise Program will allow the Museum to increase earned income to fund ongoing programming needs. The Museum leases two storefronts on Orchard Street; one now contains an expanded visitor center and gift shop, and the other houses a new second hand store. Extensive renovation of the visitor center site is underway by CoreNet, an international corporate real estate association whose New York chapter has adopted the Museum as a project.



**Left page:**  
*Recollections, the Museum's antiques and collectibles shop at 90 Orchard Street*  
**Right page:**  
*Educational program for a school group in the Baldizzi apartment parlor, 1998*

The Orchard Street Campaign is critical to the vitality and continued growth of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum and the future integrity of 97 Orchard Street. The campaign is designed to meet the Museum's twin objectives of interpreting immigrant experiences of the past, and aiding contemporary immigrants and their families.

### **Environmental Assessment— 99 Orchard Street**

An environmental assessment was prepared by Allee, King & Rosen at the direction of New York State's Economic Development Corporation. The assessment reviewed the potential acquisition and development of 99 Orchard Street for services, expanded programs, and handicapped accessibility for tenement visitors. The study found that there would be no environmental impact on the neighborhood from the increase in visitors. The Museum has no present plans to purchase the building unless it is offered by willing sellers.

### **Seward Park Development Program**

New York City owns five parcels of land on the Lower East Side that it has considered selling to developers. The Museum has teamed with developers and also prepared a development plan of its own to accommodate its needs for a larger visitor center as well as classrooms, research center, library, exhibition space, kitchen for catered events, conference areas for the Museum and the community, and restrooms. Some of these functions are currently housed at 97 Orchard Street, and it is the Museum's intention to move them to another facility. However, the city is currently not pursuing the sale of that land.

### **International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience**

In December 1999 the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, the National Park Service (represented by the Regional Director of the Northeast Region), and seven other historic sites around the world founded the International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience. Founding members include District Six Museum in South Africa, Gulag Museum in Russia, Liberation War Museum in Bangladesh, Memoria Abierta in Argentina, Slave House in Senegal, Terezin Memorial in the Czech Republic, and The Workhouse in England. The Coalition is dedicated to establishing historic sites as centers for civic dialogue on pressing social issues. NPS accredited members are the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, and Women's Rights National Historical Site.

The Coalition develops signature Dialogue for Democracy programs, which are web programs linking member sites with human rights campaigns or related issues ([www.sitesofconscience.org](http://www.sitesofconscience.org)). It also serves as a consultant to networks of historic sites, human rights organizations, and non-governmental organizations around the world regarding the establishment of historic sites as centers for civic engagement and democracy-building. The Lower East Side Tenement Museum houses the secretariat of the Coalition.

### **Urban Museum Studies Program**

The Lower East Side Tenement Museum has partnered with City College to offer the first Urban Museum Studies program in the country. This Masters degree program has two goals: to change the face of the museum profession by training students from working-class, minority and immigrant backgrounds, and to change standards of museum practice by teaching students to use historic sites in urban areas as places of civic engagement. Graduates of the program create a pool of diverse, qualified candidates for positions at NPS and other urban historic sites.

## **RELATED NPS AND OTHER STUDIES AND INITIATIVES**

### **Special Resource Study**

In 1995 the National Park Service prepared a Special Resource Study to consider the inclusion of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum's building at 97 Orchard Street in the National Park System. The study assessed the historic building against NPS criteria in the areas of national significance, suitability and feasibility. The report concluded that the Lower East Side Tenement is an outstanding surviving example of tenements associated with immigration and the immigrant ways of life, a sub-theme not fully represented in the National Park System, and that it meets the criteria for inclusion.

Several management options were evaluated for preserving and interpreting the site. The study found that it would be more feasible as an affiliated area than as a park unit owned and operated by the National Park Service. In 1999 Congress, acting upon the recom-

mendations in the Special Resource Study, designated the Lower East Side Tenement a national historic site and an affiliated area of the National Park System.

### **The National Trust for Historic Preservation**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education and advocacy to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize communities. In 1998 the tenement became the 20th featured property of the National Trust and is marketed as one of its historic sites. The Museum is eligible to apply for funds and benefit from technical services of the Trust. The relationship is contractual, and will expire or be renewed in 2048.

### **National Parks of New York Harbor Initiative**

The National Parks of New York Harbor represents a new collaborative effort among several units of the National Park System. The purpose of this initiative of the Northeast Region of NPS is to increase coordination among park units in the greater New York area and to improve their effectiveness in working with other public and private programs, agencies and institutions on activities related to resource protection, education and visitor services. Leadership and support are provided by a commissioner and a small staff.

The Mission of the National Parks of New York Harbor is to enhance the identity of, visibility of, and public support for NPS units, to collaborate with others in the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area in the care and appropriate use of all historic, recreational and natural resources, and to promote the National Park System. Among other things, this new office will play an important role in coordinating and publicizing the interpretive and other educational programs of the various NPS sites, including the Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site.

The president and staff of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum have participated actively in workshops and planning meetings to determine the purpose and mission of this initiative. Future expansion plans for the Museum anticipate close interaction with the new office, which will provide an important urban venue for NPS interpretive and other



National Parks of New York Harbor  
Map courtesy of NPS

educational programs that will reach neighborhoods of the city that have had little or no contact with the National Park Service and its resources.

The official themes of the National Parks of New York Harbor are as follow, under the overarching theme that New York City is a great laboratory of experiment and change:

1. New York City and America are constantly transformed by the influx of new populations that bring with them requirements and needs.
2. The Defenses of New York Harbor reflect not only commemorations of military technology but also the political and diplomatic history of the United States from the early republic through the present.
3. Individual decisions based on evolving values and ideals about work and play have shaped and continue to shape the natural and cultural landscape.

### Comprehensive Interpretive Plan

Under the action alternative in this general management plan the Museum proposes development of a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP) to serve as the basis for decision-making for all interpretive planning for the park. The principal components of a CIP, outlined in NPS Director’s Order 6, are the Long-Range Interpretive Plan, the Annual Interpretive Plan and the Interpretive Database.

The Long-Range Interpretive Plan provides a vision for interpretation and usually has a lifespan of seven to ten years. It sets forth the site’s purpose, significance and interpretive themes and establishes management goals, all identified in this general management plan. The Annual Interpretive Plan translates the Long Range Interpretive Plan into the annual budget of a park unit to achieve the long-range vision. The Interpretive Database maintains a list of titles and locations of documents (e.g., reports of research about former residents, historic structure reports, archeological studies, visitor surveys) that help to tell the story of the site.



**Left:**  
*Communion photo of Josephine Baldizzi, seated, with Rita Bonofiglio, her neighbor at 97 Orchard Street, circa 1930s*

**Above:**  
**Left to right:**  
*Josephine Baldizzi in doorway of 97 Orchard Street, circa 1990*

*Kitchen and parlor of the Baldizzi apartment, restored to its 1935 appearance*

*Rosaria Baldizzi before immigrating to America*

# Management Alternatives



## OVERVIEW

This chapter describes two alternatives for management of the Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site. ‘A’, the No Action Alternative, represents a continuation of existing and planned capital improvements and interpretive programs at the site. ‘B’, the Preferred Alternative, incorporates the actions outlined in Alternative A and proposes additional opportunities for enhancing achievement of 97 Orchard Street’s mission goals for resource protection, interpretation and visitor experience, visitor use and facilities, and cooperative action.

The Museum and NPS recognize that under any alternative described in this general management plan, 97 Orchard Street does not have sufficient room to meet the needs for administrative functions, collections storage, and visitor services including orientation, additional exhibits and a book store. The Museum has secured space for a number of these purposes at other locations on Orchard Street. The Museum is also interested in acquiring a building adjacent to 97 Orchard to provide access to the site for those who are presently unable to experience the tenement because of accessibility limitations.

If there are willing sellers and the museum or another partner is able to obtain adjacent property, a boundary adjustment may be considered. To be eligible for

addition to the national historic site, a resource must include significant features related to the primary purposes of the site, address operational issues including access, or protect resources critical to the site’s purposes. Any boundary adjustment must consider alternatives for protection, must be feasible to administer, and requires Congressional approval. If properties are added to the national historic site boundary, they will have to compete with 97 Orchard Street for funding and technical assistance from the National Park Service or other funding sources. At this time no boundary adjustments are considered feasible; this question will be revisited if conditions change.

To retain the palpable sense of history contained within the tenement walls and provide a viable interpretive framework, it is critical to identify appropriate ways of treating the building’s historic fabric. The Lower East Side Tenement Museum’s philosophy for the treatment of the national historic site is based on several goals:

- Maximize retention of the site’s historic character.
- Minimize the loss of extant historic fabric.
- Respect the contributions of the entire period of the site’s historic significance (1863-1935).
- Provide safe public access to the building.
- Integrate historic preservation into the interpretive program.

## **ALTERNATIVE A: CONTINUATION OF CURRENT PRACTICES (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)**

The Museum carries out ongoing and planned work on the tenement building and yard, management of the collections, and tours, other interpretive programs and community activities as funding permits.

### **Resource Protection**

The Museum continues its existing fund raising campaign for 97 Orchard Street to preserve, rehabilitate, restore, and reconstruct where appropriate, the building and its lot according to present plans. Preservation activities stabilize and maintain critical features and spaces as they are, such as the cramped narrow hallways, stairs, water closets, and unrestored apartments. Rehabilitation allows for compatible use of the property while retaining its historic character; it is also used where insufficient documentation exists for restoration. Restoration demonstrates how specific areas appeared at a particular time within the site's period of significance. Reconstruction replaces components of the building and lot that have been lost but are clearly documented, when such actions meet the criteria for reconstruction found in the Secretary's Treatment Standards. Documentation for reconstruction is supplemented by knowledge gained from the 1991-1993 archeological excavation of the back yard.

The Museum continues consultation with the New York State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) on proposed alterations to the building to assure compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Recommendations of a Conservation Treatment Plan currently underway are implemented for stabilizing fragile components of the historic fabric such as paint and plaster that are disturbed by the presence of a lot of people in the building. Recommendations of a Collections Management Plan developed by an NPS team are implemented to improve security and environmental conditions for the artifacts and archives stored in the cellars of 91 and 97

Orchard Street until a permanent storage location is secured. Neighborhood preservation efforts continue in conjunction with other Lower East Side businesses and organizations.

### **Interpretation and Visitor Experience**

Interpretive programs are carefully coordinated with the restoration of apartments to a significant moment in the lives of former occupants. On the tenement tours visitors learn about these actual past residents and the challenges they faced. Furnishings and personal objects, some donated by the residents' families, enhance visitors' historical understanding. The building, walls, finishes, and objects in the tenement rooms are woven into the story. The physical and temporal layering of history is made evident, from the preserved untouched spaces to the restored apartments filled with artifacts, from the building's early occupants in the 1860s to those forced to vacate the non-code-compliant residential floors in the 1930s. Because visitors can readily contrast a preserved apartment with a restored apartment on each floor, education about the processes of preservation and restoration becomes part of the interpretive program.

The Museum's interpretive programming extends beyond the tenement, linking it with the Lower East Side neighborhood and with the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island and Castle Clinton. Educational programs reach out to the community, providing training for educators and free English classes for speakers of other languages, for example. The Museum expands programming both within and beyond the boundaries of the site as funding permits.

### **Visitor Use and Facilities**

The tenement is open to the public by guided tour only. Tours begin at the visitor center and enter the tenement building an average of every 20 minutes. Tour groups remain limited to 15 or fewer because of fire code restrictions, the building's small rooms and delicate historic fabric, and the Museum's desire to provide an interactive experience. Tenement tours during peak hours continue to sell out far in advance. The operational carrying capacity of the tenement is

currently 342 visitors a day, expected to increase to 382 after the Moore apartment opens in June 2006. Adjustments to the allowable number of visitors will be made if needed in accordance with the findings of a visitor capacity analysis, part of the Conservation Treatment Plan under development. An average of 50 walk-in visitors per week are turned away in normal times; during spring and early summer, holidays and school spring breaks that number can

through an adjacent building. If such a building becomes available from a willing seller and is acquired, its apartments will be restored or rehabilitated for interpretation, relieving some of the pressure from 97 Orchard Street. Historical businesses to be established in the basement and on the first floor following relocation of classrooms will also offer additional destinations for visitors.



**Left to right:**  
*Josephine and Johnny Baldizzi with their neighbor, Vincent Bonofiglio, on the roof of 97 Orchard Street, circa 1935*

*Josephine Baldizzi Esposito and her husband, children and grandchildren, 1992*

increase to 250 per week. It is the Museum's hope that tours of the Moore apartment will accommodate the bulk of the current excess demand; however, publicity about the newly restored apartment will increase future demand. Visitors who are turned away are directed to a virtual tour, a video about immigration and the Lower East Side, and books and other resources in the Visitor Center; to contemporary art displayed in 97 Orchard Street's storefront windows; and to walking tours of the neighborhood.

The steep, narrow staircase of the tenement continues to present a barrier to the upper floors for some visitors, who are limited to viewing the Confino apartment on the first floor. The Museum will explore any opportunities that arise to provide better access

### **Cooperative Action**

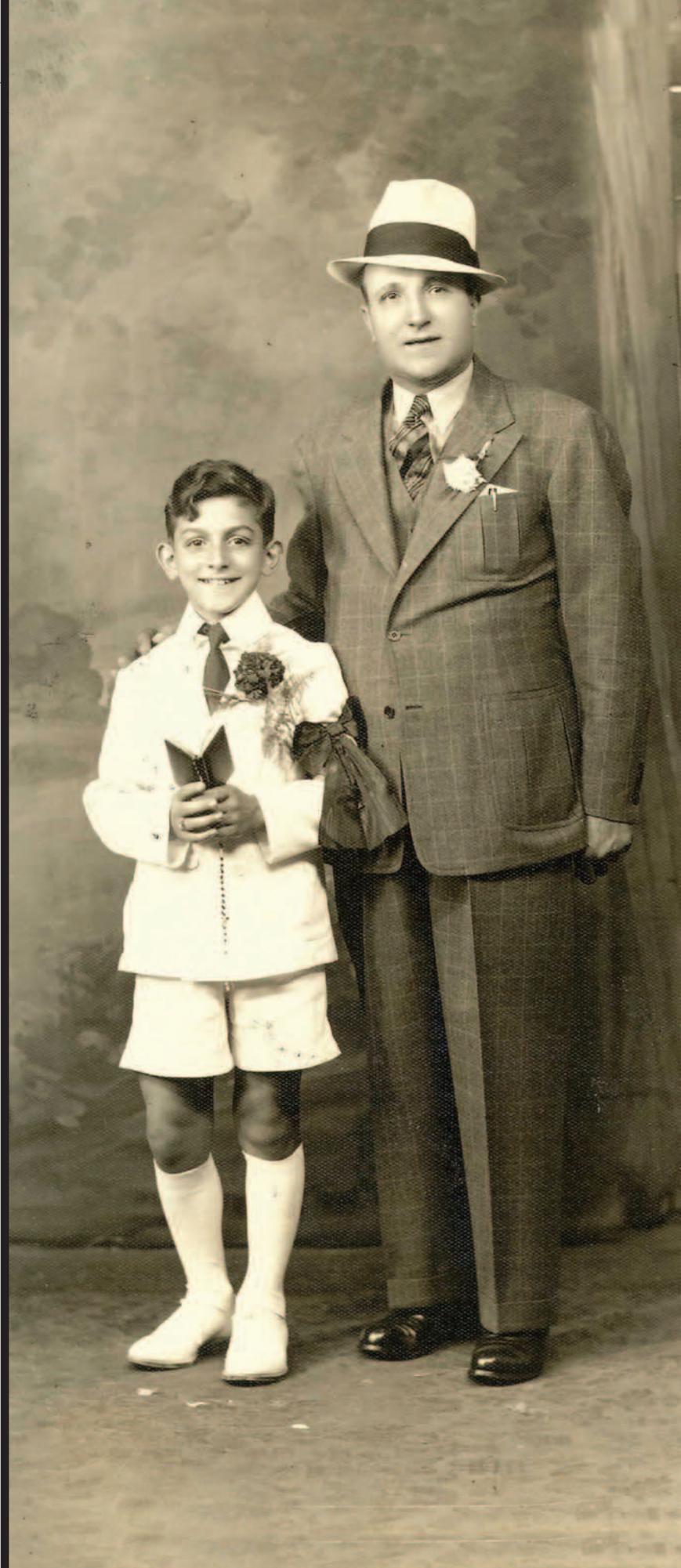
The Secretary of the Interior's role and the NPS relationship with the historic site continue to be funded through the budget line of Operations of the National Park Service. This funding is presently set at \$95,000 per year, subject to any annual congressional across-the-board rescissions. Through a series of cooperative agreements this money continues to be used primarily for interpretive programming. The Museum continues to be eligible to compete with others for NPS technical assistance and funding through already existing authorities such as any funding generally available for National Historic Landmarks, Challenge Cost Share, and Save America's Treasures. The Museum also seeks grants from other public and private sources, and works with other entities to preserve the character and historic fabric of the neighborhood.

## MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS

Alternative A describes the continuation of current activities and plans with regard to resource protection, interpretation and visitor experience, visitor use and facilities, and cooperative action at 97 Orchard Street. Within the broad parameters of the site's mission and mission goals, other approaches are possible. Management prescriptions, presented below, provide policy guidance for development of a new management alternative.

### Resource Protection

- Two apartments per floor on the first through fifth floors at 97 Orchard Street are restored as period apartments.
- The basement and part of the first floor are furnished and interpreted as period commercial establishments such as Schneider's Saloon.
- The rear yard is rehabilitated, and the privy is reconstructed as a vital component of interpretation.
- All alterations to the tenement are made in compliance with the Secretary's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The Museum continues to consult with the New York SHPO regarding Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
- Archeological resources previously recovered from the yard are used in making decisions about the treatment and interpretation of the site.
- Neighborhood preservation is recognized and promoted as being critical to the site's interpretation. The Museum provides technical assistance to others seeking to preserve historic structures.
- The museum collection is appropriately catalogued, conserved and protected in accordance with NPS collection management standards.



*Johnny Baldizzi with Ray Raspizzio, his godfather, circa 1930s*

## Interpretation and Visitor Experience

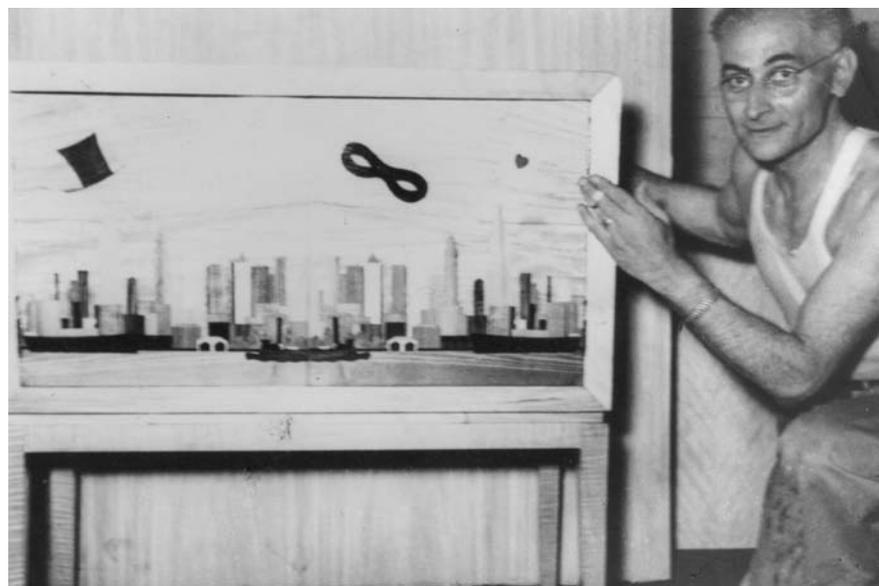
- Visitors are provided sufficient preliminary orientation to fully appreciate the tenement's historic context and significance.
- Visitors to all National Parks of New York Harbor sites understand the historic significance of the Lower East Side Tenement.
- Interpretive programs link 97 Orchard Street with the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island and Castle Clinton and with other immigration and migration related sites.
- Visitors experience vivid evidence of the conditions that led to the housing reform movement, experience the lives and times of 97 Orchard Street residents, learn of the waves of immigration to this country, and learn about current immigration and migration.
- The Lower East Side Historic District is widely recognized for its architectural resources, cultural traditions, and historic association with successive waves of immigrant and migrant groups.
- The Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site, through the efforts of the Museum, is nationally and internationally recognized as a leader in the development of socially relevant museum practices and programs and serves as a resource for historians and museum professionals.

## Visitor Use and Facilities

- Visitors are provided safe access to facilities and programs.
- Adequate facilities are available for visitor services, administration and collections storage.
- Expanded facilities and programming off site lessen demands on the tenement building by providing interpretive alternatives for visitors.
- The Museum explores the potential for a boundary adjustment after additional facilities are secured.

## Cooperative Action

- The Museum maintains and expands its full partnership role in the Management Council of the National Parks of New York Harbor, which coordinates operations and programming for its members for mutual benefit.
- The Museum participates in expanded cooperative ventures with the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island and Castle Clinton.
- The Museum, with existing and expanded programs, seeks, attracts and partners with a wider range of creative individuals and organizations with related interests.



**Left to right:**

*Adolfo Baldizzi in Italian military WWI uniform*

*Adolfo Baldizzi with a wood inlay of New York City crafted by him*

## **ALTERNATIVE B: EXPANDED PARTNERSHIPS WITH NPS AND OTHERS (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)**

This alternative includes all of the actions in Alternative A and presents potential additional roles for the Secretary of the Interior and the National Park Service, increases partnerships between the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, NPS and others, and provides for additional Museum efforts to aggressively attract financial and technical assistance.

### **Resource Protection**

All of the resource protection actions described in Alternative A are continued, realized in a shorter time frame, and expanded. The Museum focuses further on its relationship with the Lower East Side Community Preservation Project, a coalition of community leaders working to identify, restore, and interpret neighborhood sites, which it initiated in 2000. With the Lower East Side Business Improvement District, the Museum increases efforts to help property owners understand the benefits of historic preservation, conducts community workshops, and offers technical assistance. The Museum completes all relevant baseline studies enumerated in the NPS Director's Order 28 as well as a cultural resources plan for the national historic site.

### **Interpretation and Visitor Experience**

All of the actions related to interpretation and visitor experience described in Alternative A are continued and expanded on and off site. Increased resources and new partnerships permit the Museum to conduct varied and more numerous programs and expand walking tours and other events to enhance public appreciation for the architectural and cultural resources of the Lower East Side neighborhood and the stories of immigration they hold. The national historic site becomes a key stop and participant along the American Immigration Trail.

NPS assists in the completion of a comprehensive interpretive plan, recognizing the limits of space at 97 Orchard Street and utilizing additional interpretive

techniques and media to maximize public exposure to the site's stories and meanings. The plan's objectives are to provide a diverse range of interpretive initiatives focusing on urban architecture, the housing reform movement, and community-building efforts of 19th- and 20th-century immigrants from Europe, Asia, and Africa as well as more recent immigrants and migrants to the area including Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and Chinese.

### **Visitor Use and Facilities**

More than 125,000 visitors from throughout the United States and beyond presently tour the tenement during the course of a year, and interest is growing. Once the Moore apartment has been restored, 9,200 tours annually are expected to accommodate almost 138,000 visitors. If walk-in visitors have to be turned away they are directed to the Visitor Center, the art display in the windows of 97 Orchard Street, and walking tours of the neighborhood, as in Alternative A. Facility needs described in that alternative continue, i.e., for access to upper floors of the tenement at 97 Orchard from an adjacent building, for additional apartments to be restored or rehabilitated for interpretation, and for collections storage and visitor services.

### **Cooperative Action**

The Museum continues its ongoing partnership activities and becomes even more closely related to the National Parks of New York Harbor (NPNH), a new collaboration among units of the National Park System in the greater New York area that includes the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, Castle Clinton, Manhattan Sites, and Gateway National Recreation Area. A key role for this initiative is to coordinate and promote the integration of interpretive and other educational programs of the various NPS sites, including the affiliated Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site.

The NPNH initiative provides an important urban venue for NPS interpretive and other educational programs that will reach neighborhoods of the city that have had little or no contact with the National

Park Service and its resources. The Museum maintains an active role on the Management Council and participates fully in workshops and planning meetings. Information about the Museum is included in NPNH educational materials. Joint programs are developed, and publicity and marketing activities and community resource information are shared.

NPS and the Museum work closely together to ensure that the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act are met for any alterations at 97 Orchard Street. NPS provides Museum staff with opportunities to participate in NPS-sponsored training in areas such as resource protection, interpretation and safety. NPS and the Museum explore the possibility of temporary staff exchanges under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act or other temporary assignments.

The Museum significantly expands its partnerships with other public and private organizations to share resources and provide new and mutually beneficial interpretive and other educational experiences. In addition to its work with NPS, the Museum collaborates extensively with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience, as well as major historical societies and associations, immigrant services providers, museums, corporations, ethnic and religious organizations, universities, public and private school systems, local community organizations, and the media to further its mission. The primary objectives of this collaboration are to:

- establish a new model for museum and preservation professionals by serving as a center for encounter and dialogue among immigrants, scholars, policy makers, and practitioners working on historical and contemporary immigration-related issues;
- develop internationally recognized programs on site, off site, and on the web that will draw connections between past and present immigration and help visitors use history as a tool for addressing contemporary issues; and

- serve as an incubator for immigrant artists promoting continued reflection and interpretation of America's ongoing immigration stories.

The Museum assumes a leadership role, as it did with the International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience, in the formation of coalitions of immigrant- and migrant-related sites throughout the City of New York and the United States, and with emigration and immigration sites in other nations, such as the Cobh Heritage Center in County Cork, Ireland, and Grosse Isle and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site in Canada.

Under this alternative the Secretary of the Interior's role is to more fully implement the provisions of P.L. 105-378 within the constraints of available funding and ongoing National Park Service priorities. Section 104(b) of the Act states:

*TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE — The Secretary is authorized to provide technical and financial assistance to the Lower East Side Tenement Museum to mark, interpret, and preserve the historic site, including the making of preservation-related capital improvements and repairs.*

NPS assists the Lower East Side Tenement Museum to identify and secure other sources of funding from federal, state and local agency grant programs and private philanthropic and corporate fund sources. The Museum remains eligible for any additional Operations of the National Park Service funds that may be available.

## MANAGEMENT ZONING

The building and property located at 97 Orchard Street are managed as a single *Historic Zone*, with all non-historic uses removed and the lower floors of the tenement rehabilitated or restored. The treatments identified under Alternative A are conducted in a manner that meets the Secretary's Treatment Standards, and consultation with the New York SHPO continues.

*Albert and  
David Confino,  
residents of  
97 Orchard Street,  
circa 1920*

**Right page:**  
**Left to right:**  
*Davey Russo,  
nephew of  
Victoria Confino,  
circa 1922*

*Ouija board,  
doll head and  
whiskey bottle  
found inside  
the tenement  
at 97 Orchard  
Street*



# Affected Environment



## INTRODUCTION

This chapter identifies the topics selected for analysis on the basis of legislative requirements, resource information, planning issues, and other concerns arising from scoping sessions with NPS, the Museum and the public. The alternatives described in the previous chapter will be analyzed in Chapter IV in terms of their potential impacts on each of these topics. Some affected environment topics were eliminated from further evaluation as it was determined that they had little or no relevance, given the site's setting in Manhattan.

The tenement building at 97 Orchard Street and the surrounding Lower East Side neighborhood are significant artifacts in the story of the working-class immigrant experience in the United States. The site is listed in the National Register and has been designated a National Historic Landmark, and part of the Lower East Side is a National Historic District. There are a number of other National Register properties and National Historic Landmarks in the vicinity.

The significance of the site and the neighborhood derives from two major themes in 19th- and 20th-

century United States and New York history:

- immigration experience as a broad national phenomenon, a story that builds upon the interpretation of the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island and Castle Clinton
- urban social reform as expressed by early tenement housing laws in New York

The tenement building and the Lower East Side, which continues as an eclectic, mixed-use immigrant neighborhood in the city, play a key role in providing a comprehensive understanding of these themes.

## TOPICS ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER EVALUATION

### Natural Resources

The site is located in an urban setting that has been highly altered from its original natural state. There are no natural drainage systems or wetlands in the vicinity. Issues related to topography, soils, vegetation, and wildlife are not present. The proposed alternatives are not likely to present any short- or long-term impacts in these areas.

**Left to right:**  
*Charley, Esther,  
and Jack Confino  
and Davey Russo,  
1922*

*Rachel Confino  
after moving from  
97 Orchard Street,  
circa 1930s*

*Joseph and  
Lilly Confino,  
circa 1922*



## Threatened and Endangered Species and Species of Concern

Except for occasional transient individuals, no rare or listed species or species proposed for listing under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or any state or city regulatory agency are known to exist in the vicinity of the site. No significant natural communities are known to occur in the area, and there is no designated or proposed critical habitat. Therefore no biological assessment or further Section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act (87 Stat.884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) will be required with these agencies. (See Appendix B for letters from the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the New York State Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources.)

## Air Quality

None of the alternatives will have a measurable impact on air quality or any factors known to affect air quality. Transportation links between the site and other NPS units will emphasize the use of mass transit, and anticipated additional visitors will come primarily via public transportation systems. Emissions from occasional charter bus or school bus visits will have a negligible impact on local air quality.

## Climate Change

None of the alternatives will impact known factors related to regional or global climate change.

## Hazardous Materials

Other than some lead-based paint within the building at 97 Orchard Street, there are no known hazardous materials present at the site. Window units, a common source of airborne lead contaminants, have all been replaced with new sashes. In areas where lead paint will remain for historic purposes and may come in contact with the public or with site staff, minimal abatement efforts may be appropriate. If needed, they will be undertaken in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

## Noise

Either of the alternatives could produce some local, short-term construction noise. Since the site is located within a vibrant urban area, any increase in noise above existing levels will be negligible.

## Sacred Sites and Indian Trust Resources

Consultation with the American Indian Liaison for NPS, Northeast Region, indicated that there are no known sacred sites associated with a federally recognized tribe in this area, nor is the site an Indian Trust resource.

## Floodplains

The Flood Insurance Rate Map published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (Map Panel No. 47, November 16, 1983) indicates that the site and adjacent properties referenced in the alternatives are not within either the 100-year or 500-year floodplain.

## IMPACT TOPICS: CULTURAL RESOURCES

### Historic Structures

97 Orchard Street is an outstanding surviving example of the vast number of tenement buildings constructed during the 1860s. It preserves a great deal of integrity in both its exterior and interior because its upper floors were boarded up for nearly 60 years and thus did not undergo any major changes after the early 1900s.

It is a simple building with a red brick façade, crowned by a bracketed Italianate-style cornice. Each floor of the façade is articulated by four segmental arched windows. The rear elevation is simpler than the front and is faced with the lesser quality brick that was typically used for the side and rear elevations of buildings in New York.

The structure has five stories plus a raised basement at ground level and a cellar below grade, used for storage and mechanical systems. When first built there were two stores in the basement. The first and higher floors were all originally devoted to apartments; two on the first floor were later converted to businesses. The main entrance was originally a centrally located stone stoop with an iron railing (later replaced by cast-iron stairs) in front of a segmental arched brownstone doorway leading into the hallway and staircase that provide access to the apartments.

In a typical apartment, the 138-square-foot front room or parlor served many functions—during the day it might be used for work to earn a living, in the evening it could become a dining room, and at night it was often converted into a bedroom. The middle room served as the washroom and kitchen. In the back was the main bedroom, a cramped 67-square-foot space with no direct source of natural light or ventilation.

The layout changed over the years in response to housing reform laws. The floor plan as it currently appears dates to the building's closing as a residence in 1935, still containing the two toilets per floor that were installed in 1905. For a complete description of the building and its history, refer to the Special Resource Study prepared by the National Park Service and the

Museum entitled *A Tenement Story: The History of 97 Orchard Street and The Lower East Side Tenement Museum*.

### Collections

In 1988 the Lower East Side Tenement Museum moved into the 19th-century tenement building at 97 Orchard Street. Although the building's four storefronts continued to be active until the early 1990s, the apartments on the upper floors had been uninhabited since 1935. Residents and shopkeepers left behind numerous objects. The Museum contacted former residents, shopkeepers, building owners, and their descendants, who donated textiles, photographs, and other items. These artifacts comprise the permanent collection of the Tenement Museum.

This collection of food and beverage containers, furniture, clothing, cosmetics, toys, household accessories, storefront signs, shop merchandise, and decorative items illuminates day-to-day life in a typical tenement in New York. The Museum's artifact collection is one of the few in the nation to offer information about the material culture of the urban working class and poor in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In addition to its permanent collection the Museum has an exhibition collection that is similar in object type to the permanent one, but without primary historical significance to 97 Orchard Street or the Lower East Side. These objects are typically used in exhibitions and for educational programs.

The Museum will accept loans as part of this collection for a specified period of time. Loaned items must significantly enhance the interpretation of 97 Orchard Street and/or be used in a temporary exhibition sponsored by the Museum.

The permanent and exhibition collections of artifacts are maintained and treated in accordance with the Museum's Collections Care Manual. Complete records for each object are incorporated into the Collections Database, including description, classification, provenance, measurements, defining marks, multiple images, and present location. The database allows staff and researchers at the Museum to easily and securely search and examine the records without



disturbing the items themselves. Photographs of each artifact in the database further reduce the need for researchers to access and handle them.

The Museum possesses an archive of documents related to 97 Orchard Street and other tenements on the Lower East Side, as well as a collection of oral histories recorded with Lower East Side residents, shopkeepers, and landlords. The Museum's photographic archives contain prints and photographs of 97 Orchard Street, its former residents, other Lower East Side buildings, neighborhood street scenes, and tenements throughout New York City.

Archives and most items from the collections are stored in the cellar of 91 Orchard Street. The remainder are in the cellar of 97 Orchard Street. In December 2001 the Museum's Board of Trustees approved a revised Collections Policy with guidelines for acquisition and maintenance. In April 2005 NPS completed a Collections Management Plan for the Museum; its recommendations are outlined in Chapter IV.

### Archeological Resources

Between 1991 and 1993 the back yard of the tenement was excavated. The main purpose was to uncover evidence of the toilet facilities used from the time

**Left to right:**

*Restoration of the Gumpertz apartment, 1994*

*Parlor of the Gumpertz apartment restored to its 1878 appearance*

*Nathalie Gumpertz, resident of 97 Orchard Street from 1870 to 1885, and her memorial card*

the building was first occupied until indoor toilets were installed in 1905. The excavations showed that there had been no stone privy pit as expected; rather, the brick vault of the school sink was the original privy, and it was water-flushed and connected to the city sewer system. In addition these investigations revealed that the original yard surface was approximately 2 feet below the modern grade and that it was paved with stone. Some artifacts were also recovered.

## IMPACT TOPICS: SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Throughout the years the Lower East Side has continued to maintain its historic role as a gateway for new immigrants. Over time these groups have included African, Asian, German, Irish, Italian, Jewish, and Latino. The neighborhood has a number of local religious, business, educational, and social institutions that support its diverse cultural communities.



According to available figures, the Lower East Side neighborhood is presently about 33% Hispanic (largely Puerto Rican), 30% Asian, 29% Caucasian non-Hispanic, and 8% African-American.

### Land Use and Economy

97 Orchard Street is located mid-block between Broome and Delancey Streets, near the center of the Lower East Side as defined by both the historic and modern boundaries. The area is zoned C-6 (General Central Commercial District) by the city, reflecting and perpetuating a mixture of uses that include a wide range of multiple family residential, retail, office, amusement service, custom manufacturing, and related uses normally found in the central business district.

From the early 19th century through the end of World War II the Lower East Side was a source of industrial and manufacturing jobs for unskilled entry-level workers. Although garment factories remain, employment in the industrial and manufacturing sector has dropped to half its 1960 level. Poverty is higher in this neighborhood than the borough-wide average.

The Lower East Side has historically offered less expensive housing than most other parts of Manhattan. However, the real estate boom of recent years has brought skyrocketing rents, making it less affordable for its traditional immigrant population base. Although it has resisted complete gentrification and retained much of its primary character as a working-class neighborhood, the area continues to evolve and is undergoing a steady change. Real estate prices are climbing rapidly and speculative development is increasing. The Lower East Side Business Improvement District, which represents some local business and property owners, is attempting to maintain the neighborhood's rich diversity while encouraging private and public investment, streetscape improvements, and historic preservation. There is concern among some long-term residents and small businesses that such efforts will inevitably result in increased rents and displacement.

### Traffic, Parking and Transit

The tenement at 97 Orchard Street is located in a busy urban neighborhood with a significant amount of vehicular traffic on surrounding streets. A large number of visitors come to the tenement's immediate vicinity, drawn not only by the national historic site but by Orchard Street itself, a popular shopping street that attracts both city residents and tourists to its stores.

The site is well connected to public transportation, by which most visitors arrive. A total of seven subway lines serve the area (B, D, and Q at Grand Street; J, M, and Z at Essex Street; F at Delancey Street). The M15 bus and sightseeing buses stop at Grand and Allen Streets, bringing visitors from the Ellis Island Ferry stop.

According to the Lower East Side Tenement Museum's August 1999 Visitor Survey, approximately 27% of the total visitors travel to the tenement by automobile. The primary vehicular routes are Delancey, Allen and Grand streets. While curbside parking is very limited, a number of commercial parking lots are located within walking distance of the site. Three hours of free parking are provided by the Lower East Side Shopping District at the Shopper's Free Parking lot located on Broome Street between Norfolk and Suffolk Streets.

## IMPACT TOPICS: VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Since the Lower East Side Tenement Museum opened its doors in 1988 it has won national and international renown for its pioneering mission. It has also become a local institution rooted in the context of the Lower East Side, New York's most diverse immigrant neighborhood since the 1800s. Over the years the Museum has expanded the range of its programs to include interpretive and other educational activities, art, and social services.

The Museum has broken new ground in documenting and interpreting the lives of urban immigrants. The restored site with its period re-creation of resident families' humble living spaces is the centerpiece of its interpretive mission. Moving beyond a traditional role of documentation and exhibition, the Museum has been very successful in developing ways of using history to foster public dialogue on contemporary issues. In December 1999 the Museum's founder, Ruth J. Abram, reached out to comparable institutions around the world and formed the International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience, a group of museums that believe in their capacity to inspire social change and are dedicated to using their histories to encourage civic participation in contemporary issues. Building on this philosophy the Tenement Museum has, over the years, sponsored many programs with contemporary relevance to the community. Current programs offered by the Museum include:

**Tours**—Visitors tour carefully restored tenement apartments and learn about the lives of actual past residents and the challenges they faced. On the tour entitled "Getting By: Immigrants Weathering Hard Times" visitors meet the Gumpertz family, German Jews (1870s), and the Baldizzi family, Sicilian Catholics (1930s), and learn how each struggled to make their way through economic crises. In "Piecing It Together: Immigrants in the Garment Industry," visitors enter the 1897 home and dressmaking shop of Harris and Jennie Levine, Polish Jews, and compare their experience in the "sweat shop" with that

of the Lithuanian-Jewish Rogarshevsky family in 1918, whose father died of tuberculosis, the "tailor's disease." An interactive, family-oriented living history program focuses on the Confinos, Sephardic Jews from Kastoria (part of present-day Greece) (1916). The next apartment to open will interpret an Irish family living at 97 Orchard Street just after the Civil War. "The Lower East Side Stories" walking tour of the neighborhood, created in collaboration with the Lower East Side Community Preservation Project, showcases the area's complex history.

**Immigrant Arts**—The Museum invites visual artists, performers, digital artists, and poets to layer its historic home for immigrants with the expressions of new arrivals to this country. Through its Immigrant Arts Program each quarter the Museum hosts artistic productions in a variety of media that explore contemporary immigrant issues and experiences.

After September 11th, 2001, the Museum curated a series of four visual arts installations in its storefront windows. This exhibit, called "Points of Entry," was done in partnership with the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. The first installation was "The Burqua Project," an exhibit by Haitian artist Jean-Ulrick Desert that explored the strength and message of cultural iconography by creating traditional Afghani veils out of flags of the west. In its Tenement Theater the Immigrant Theater Project produced the American Dreams Series, a summer of readings by diverse emerging immigrant playwrights.

**Education**—In fiscal year 2004-05 the Museum's educational programs served nearly 30,000 school children from throughout the United States and beyond. Its teacher-training program has been endorsed by the New York State Department of Education and is in keeping with the New Jersey Core Proficiencies. Tenement Museum staff piloted a new children's program at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum and trained NPS rangers to deliver it. Entitled "After Ellis," the program simulates the 19th-century immigrant processing

experience at Ellis Island followed by an opportunity to “settle” in a Lower East Side tenement. The Museum’s first-of-a-kind Urban Museum Studies Program, in collaboration with City College, offers graduate training for the museum profession to the college’s largely working-class and immigrant student population.

In 2001 the Museum teamed with the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) to create “Tenement Inspectors,” an exciting and interactive program to educate students about the history of housing reform in New York City while simultaneously teaching them to be active citizens in the present. In the “Tenement Inspectors” program, school groups make inspections of 97 Orchard Street with an educator, learning about reforms that added ventilation, indoor plumbing and electricity to the building and how these improvements aided in ameliorating some of the harsh conditions earlier immigrants faced. The program also informs students of their rights as contemporary tenants, teaching them how to make sure that their homes comply with the law and how to contact HPD if any violations are found.

**Contemporary Issues**—The Museum is pioneering a new role for historic sites by using its history to address contemporary issues. For example, recognizing the need for free English classes, the Museum developed a series of “English for Speakers of Other Languages” workshops in the late 1990s. These workshops use the diaries, letters, and memoirs of earlier immigrants not only to teach English but also to help present-day immigrants understand that they are not alone in their experience. Graduates of these classes have helped develop a guide for new immigrants, the product of collaboration between the Lower East Side Tenement Museum and *The New York Times*, published by St. Martin’s Press.

Using historic preservation to build bridges among diverse elements of its local community, the Museum initiated the Lower East Side Community

Preservation Project in 2000. This project brings together community leaders to identify and preserve cultural landmarks in their neighborhood as centers for ongoing dialogues on common community concerns.

As the above examples show, despite limited resources and spatial constraints the Museum has developed innovative approaches to interpretation and other forms of education and has successfully expanded its program beyond the walls of 97 Orchard Street. The interpretive goals of the Museum go past standard exhibits to increase participation by the community. The ultimate goal of the Museum is to make people aware of the link between the history of most Americans and the day-to-day experience of new immigrants as they struggle to make a new start in their adopted country.

## **IMPACT TOPICS: VISITOR USE**

More than 125,000 people toured the site last fiscal year. Tours start from the visitor center and gift shop. Groups of a maximum of 15 are escorted into the tenement through the main entrance on Orchard and depart via the back entrance on Allen Street. Open seven days a week, 360 days a year, the site experiences its heaviest demand on Saturdays and Sundays when the Museum offers its tenement tours every 15 minutes, the Confino living history program every hour and, seasonally, two walking tours during the day. Attendance peaks in the early afternoon on both weekdays and weekends. Currently a maximum of about 90 people arrive and depart during peak hours.

Thousands of visitors are turned away each year, and demand is expected to continue rising. Visitors who cannot climb the narrow stairs are unable to visit the upper floors. Because the demand for tours exceeds the carrying capacity of the tenement, and the historic structure cannot be modified for accessibility, long-term plans involve expansion into additional facilities as well as development of new programs relevant to contemporary issues and needs.

*Fannie Rogarshevsky  
with four of her  
children (identity  
of young girl  
unknown) in front  
of their home at  
97 Orchard Street,  
circa 1915*



# Environmental Impacts

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes the alternatives presented in Chapter II to determine their anticipated *impacts* on the topics described in Chapter III, organized by the following categories:

- Cultural Resources
- Socioeconomic Environment
- Visitor Experience
- Visitor Use

In addition, the alternatives are analyzed for *effects* on certain cultural resources. Eliminated from analysis are topics for which no impacts or negligible impacts are predicted under NEPA, and no effects or no adverse effects are predicted under NHPA Section 106. Those topics are listed at the beginning of Chapter III with the reasons for their elimination.

## METHODS

### National Environmental Policy Act

Continuing as well as new projects and programs affecting the site's resources are subject to evaluation. Indirect impacts, which are reasonably foreseeable consequences that will not occur in the same place or at the same time as the proposed action, must be included in the analysis. Cumulative impacts, the combined results of past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions

regardless of who carries them out, must also be considered.

Both adverse and beneficial impacts are to be described in terms of their context, duration and intensity. Adverse impacts are negative changes in the nature or condition of the resource that move it away from its desired condition. Beneficial impacts are positive changes in the nature or condition of the resource that move it toward its desired condition. Context is usually geographic; i.e., impacts may be site-specific, local, regional, or national, and the severity of impacts on a particular resource may vary when viewed from those different perspectives. Duration can be short-term (lasting a year or less) or long-term (lasting more than a year). Intensity is classified as negligible, minor, moderate, or major, as defined below. These definitions are applied to the analysis of all affected resources.

**Negligible**—Impacts are at the lowest levels of detection and have no appreciable consequences for resources, values, or processes.

**Minor**—Impacts are perceptible but slight and localized. If mitigation is needed to offset any adverse impacts, it will be relatively simple to implement and will likely be successful.



Top to bottom:  
Abraham Rogarshevsky, circa 1915

Tombstone of Abraham Rogarshevsky in Mount Zion Cemetery in Maspeth, Queens

Reproduction of a wallpaper pattern found in the tenement at 97 Orchard Street, manufactured for the Museum by Scalandre and donated for use in restoring the Rogarshevsky apartment



**Moderate**—Impacts are readily apparent and widespread, and will result in a noticeable change to resources, values, or processes. Mitigation measures will probably be necessary to offset adverse impacts and will likely be successful.

**Major**—Impacts are readily apparent and widespread, will result in a substantial alteration or loss of resources, values, or processes, and will likely be permanent. Mitigation measures to offset adverse impacts will be necessary and extensive, and their success cannot be guaranteed.

Adverse impacts may be avoided, minimized, or offset through mitigation. Adverse impacts may be avoided altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action. Impacts may be minimized by limiting the degree of magnitude of the action or through preservation and maintenance operations that reduce or eliminate impacts over time during the life of the action. Finally, mitigation can rectify impacts by repairing, rehabilitating or restoring the impacted environment, or compensate for impacts by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

### **National Historic Preservation Act**

Section 106 requires federal agencies to make a determination of *no effect*, *no adverse effect* or

*adverse effect* for impacts to properties that are listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Adverse effects occur when any of the characteristics that qualify a property for listing are altered in a way that diminishes the integrity of the property. If adverse effects are predicted under either of the alternatives, the SHPO will be consulted and a programmatic agreement will be developed that identifies the actions that will require further consultation during implementation, the potential effects of those actions, and the mitigation that will occur.

## **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **Historic Structures**

#### ***Alternative A:***

#### ***Continuation of Present Plans and Practices***

Work on the tenement building continues as funding becomes available. Critical repairs are made to the exterior, including repointing the rear façade and the cellar foundation wall, sealing windows, rebuilding three chimneys, and painting the fire escapes and stoops. Apartments on the top two floors and the first floor are preserved or restored. Classrooms and collections are moved out when appropriate facilities have been acquired to house them, and historical businesses are re-established on the first floor and in the basement.



**Left to right:**

*Plate formerly owned by the Rogarshevsky family*

*Fannie Rogarshevsky, Thanksgiving Day 1941*

*Rogarshevsky apartment prior to restoration*

*Rogarshevsky kitchen and parlor with shiva table, restored to their 1918 appearance*

These projects benefit the structure by stabilizing it and preserving its historic character. There is the potential for some damage in the process of doing this work. For example, vibrations may cause the loss of plaster, paint or wallpaper; installation of the sprinkler system requires making openings in ceilings. Impacts are minimized by working with the contractor on such things as the routes for bringing equipment and supplies in and out of the building, and damaged materials are replaced in kind where appropriate. Any adverse impacts are predicted to be minor, and are not expected to diminish the integrity of the property.

Historic structures in the neighborhood may benefit from the efforts of the Community Preservation Program and the Lower East Side Business Improvement District. The Museum works with these organizations to inform property owners of the former uses of their shops and the historic significance of the Lower East Side.

For Section 106 purposes, the tenement building benefits from the exterior repairs, preservation and restoration of its storefronts and rehabilitation of its storefronts. The SHPO is consulted as needed to ensure that everything possible is being done to avoid any adverse effects that could be associated with this work. All alterations of the building meet the Secretary's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

***Alternative B: Expanded Partnerships***

Benefits to the tenement building are the same as in Alternative A but are expected to occur sooner with the increased funding available under this alternative. As above, there is the possibility of minor impacts resulting from maintenance, repair and restoration activities, but none are expected to be significant enough to diminish the integrity of the resource. The Museum continues to work with neighborhood associations and creates additional benefits over those in Alternative A by offering technical assistance to property owners to rehabilitate their storefronts.

For Section 106 purposes, the beneficial effects from exterior repairs and the preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of the interior of the tenement building may be realized sooner than in Alternative A. The SHPO is consulted as needed to ensure that

everything possible is being done to avoid any adverse effects that could be associated with this work. All alterations of the building meet the Secretary's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

## **Collections**

### ***Alternative A:***

#### ***Continuation of Present Plans and Practices***

The Museum's collections include documents, photographs, objects found on site or donated by former tenants' families, and objects not directly connected with the site but representative of its period of significance. Most had been kept in the cellar of the tenement building. After the Museum acquired the building at 91 Orchard Street most items were moved to its cellar, which they share with the boiler and other utilities.

Collections storage does not meet NPS standards at either location. Temperature fluctuations threaten some of the items, particularly those stored near the boiler at 91 Orchard. In addition, that building has no fire suppression or smoke detection system. The upper floors of 97 have both types of fire protection system, but its cellar does not. The easy accessibility of storage spaces in both 91 and 97 creates security problems. All of these deficiencies in storage conditions put the collections at risk for moderate to major long-term adverse impacts.

The Collections Management Plan recently completed by NPS recommends that the Museum relocate the collections to a secure aboveground location with temperature and humidity controls. Until a building can be acquired the Plan suggests actions to improve the existing situation, such as reorganizing the available space to achieve the best possible environmental conditions for each type of collection, adding fire protection systems, and installing physical barriers and new shelving units for better security. The Museum has obtained new equipment and is also planning to move some collection items to more environmentally compatible rooms. Although implementation of these interim measures benefits

the collections, it does not bring collections storage into compliance with NPS standards or remove the threat of adverse impacts.

### ***Alternative B: Expanded Partnerships***

The Collections Management Plan interim recommendations are implemented as in Alternative A. With the increased funding of Alternative B the Museum is likely to be able to secure a building that provides appropriate storage space within a shorter timeframe. This action will result in major benefits by reducing the time the collections are stored in less-than-optimum conditions, and will remove them from the threat of irreparable damage.

## **Archeological Resources**

### ***Alternative A:***

#### ***Continuation of Present Plans and Practices***

In 1993 the entire back yard of the tenement was excavated, revealing a water-cleansed privy vault. Because the privy was connected to the city sewer system, most discarded household objects that might have shown up later as artifacts were washed away. All artifacts that were found in the investigations were recovered; a few are on display in the tenement and most are in storage. Because the site has already been disturbed, no adverse impacts are expected from further excavation associated with the planned reconstruction of the privy.

**For Section 106 purposes, since the site has already been excavated, reconstruction of the privy will have no adverse effect on archeological resources.**

### ***Alternative B: Expanded Partnerships***

As in Alternative A, reconstruction of the back yard privy is expected to be carried out without impact to archeological resources.

**For Section 106 purposes, since the site has already been excavated, reconstruction of the privy will have no adverse effect on archeological resources.**

## Cumulative Impacts

Heavy demand for tours of the tenement is resulting in a steady stream of visitors year after year that is taking its toll on the interior; for example, the floors are showing signs of wear. A visitor capacity study presently underway will determine whether the current level of visitation is a threat to the building. If visitor numbers exceed carrying capacity, moderate adverse impacts to the historic structure could occur until the numbers are reduced and the damage repaired. Both alternatives call for acquisition of a second tenement, which would take pressure off the 97 Orchard Street building. Alternative B can help the Museum achieve this objective faster.

## Conclusion

Repairs and other stabilizing measures are needed to avoid deterioration of the tenement building. Under Alternative A these measures are planned but funding is not adequate to support them all. Alternative B increases the funding available for corrective actions. Both alternatives support action to counteract possible moderate adverse cumulative impacts that could occur to the historic structure if carrying capacity is exceeded. Again, funding is likely to be available sooner with Alternative B. Portions of the collections are at risk of minor to moderate adverse impacts in their current storage locations. Under Alternative B appropriate storage space is more likely to be acquired in time to avoid those impacts. Beneficial impacts of the Museum's community programs are enhanced under Alternative B with the provision of technical assistance to property owners.

## SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

### Land Use and Economy

#### *Alternative A:*

#### *Continuation of Present Plans and Practices*

The tenement is in a working-class neighborhood that has historically provided jobs for unskilled labor and offered relatively affordable housing. The area is a commercial district zoned for mixed use, including multi-family residential, retail, office, custom manufacturing, and related uses.

No adverse impacts to the neighborhood are expected from Museum activities. Ongoing and planned programs offer economic benefits by attracting visitors to tour the tenement and the neighborhood, opening retail establishments in the tenement and nearby buildings that employ local residents, and teaching English to immigrant adults and children. The Museum's acquisition of a second tenement building, if accomplished, benefits local businesses by bringing more people to the area. According to the 1999 Visitor Survey, visitors to the Museum go to other neighborhood attractions as well. Dining was the most popular activity (44%), followed by shopping (28%) and sightseeing (27%). Boosting the economy of the local neighborhood helps its residents to stay there, retaining its traditional character.

#### *Alternative B: Expanded Partnerships*

No adverse impacts are anticipated. Increased funding under this alternative enhances the economic benefits to the neighborhood that are described above by helping the Museum to expand its programs and to complete projects that attract more visitors and provide some local employment, including preserving and restoring the fourth and fifth floors of the tenement, re-establishing historic businesses in the basement and on the first floor, enlarging the visitor's center and museum shop, opening a second-hand store, and acquiring a second tenement building.

### Traffic, Parking and Transit

#### *Alternative A:*

#### *Continuation of Present Plans and Practices*

Vehicular traffic in the vicinity is substantial, as Orchard Street attracts shoppers as well as visitors to the Tenement Museum. Parking is available in commercial lots and in one free lot. The 1999 Visitor Survey compiled by the Museum showed that 63% of visitors arrived by public transportation or walking. That percentage is expected to stay constant as the number of visitors increases.

In response to its establishment of retail businesses and opening of the fourth and fifth floors of the tenement to the public, the Museum anticipates

an increase in the total annual number of visitors from 123,000 to 250,000. Assuming that 27% of total visitors arrive by car or taxi, the rate of peak visitors stays the same in the future as in the present and the auto occupancy rate is 2.3, the total number of new vehicle trips during times of peak attendance (early afternoon) is estimated to be 12 during the week and 18 on the weekend. Both these numbers are well below the City Environmental Quality Review Technical Manual threshold of 30 new trips that trigger the need for a detailed traffic analysis for this section of Manhattan.

Assuming transit riders to be 60% of all visitors, the number of new transit trips during peak hours is estimated at 92, which is below the threshold of 100 new trips that requires detailed subway or bus analysis. On the basis of these calculations, projected increased visitorship will not have any adverse impact on vehicular traffic or public transportation in the neighborhood, and parking lots will continue to provide adequate space within walking distance of the tenement.

#### ***Alternative B: Expanded Partnerships***

The number of visitors may grow faster with increased funding as projects are implemented sooner and programs expand. However, impacts on traffic, parking and public transit remain as described under Alternative A, with no adverse impacts predicted.

#### **Cumulative Impacts**

Historically, industrial and manufacturing jobs were key sources of entry-level employment. Loss of many of those jobs and increases in housing costs threaten to displace traditional residents. These changes create major long-term adverse socioeconomic impacts by making it difficult for the Lower East Side to continue its historic role as the first home for new immigrants. Alternatives A and B offer some economic help, mainly by bringing people to the neighborhood. Visitation could grow more rapidly under Alternative B and therefore be more helpful as projects that attract visitors are completed faster.

#### **Conclusion**

Neither alternative is expected to cause adverse impacts to land use or the economy or to the area's public transportation system, traffic or parking facilities. Economic benefits to the neighborhood are greater under Alternative B because expanded programs of the Museum attract more visitors. Economic benefits under both alternatives move toward counteracting the major long-term adverse cumulative impacts of job losses and rising housing costs.

The minority and low-income populations of the Lower East Side are not expected to experience adverse or disproportionately high impacts to their health or environment as a result of the implementation of either alternative. To the extent that the neighborhood economy benefits from the presence of the museum and its programs, the health of these populations may also benefit.

#### **VISITOR EXPERIENCE**

##### ***Alternative A:***

##### ***Continuation of Present Plans and Practices***

The primary resource for interpretation continues to be the tenement at 97 Orchard Street, which gives visitors a firsthand appreciation of the typical living conditions of many immigrants following their arrival in the United States. In addition to tenement tours the building hosts art exhibits and performances, classes and dinners that promote understanding of past and present immigrant life and immigrant populations. Walking tours of the neighborhood introduce visitors to the local context for the historic site.

Beneficial impacts result from the restoration of additional apartments, removal of non-historic uses and establishment of historical businesses in the tenement building. These actions bring to light more individual families' stories and give visitors a more realistic representation of immigrant life in the neighborhood. Benefits are greater if a suitable second tenement is acquired, restored or rehabilitated, and interpreted. Minor short-term adverse impacts to visitor experience could occur during construction

activities within either building from noise, vibration, or rerouting of tours.

Beneficial impacts also result from cooperative interpretive programming with NPS that develops visitor appreciation for the connections among the Lower East Side, the Tenement Museum, Castle Clinton and Ellis Island. Additional benefits occur if reconstruction of the privy in the back yard yields any artifacts or information useful for interpretation of the daily life of the residents, but it is unlikely that new discoveries will be made.

### ***Alternative B: Expanded Partnerships***

Minor short-term adverse impacts may be associated with construction as in Alternative A. Beneficial impacts are amplified by the increased funding of this alternative. Rooms of the tenement that are presently closed to the public become available more quickly.

A second tenement building is ready for interpretation sooner if additional resources facilitate its acquisition and restoration or rehabilitation. More frequent neighborhood tours, expanded educational programs and new interpretive opportunities are made possible.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

Changes to the neighborhood have accelerated in recent years as real estate prices have risen. Major long-term adverse impacts to visitor experience may result from the loss of historic context. Both alternatives try to lessen these changes through the Museum's involvement in preservation-oriented neighborhood associations. Alternative B is more effective because it provides resources that enable the Museum to teach property owners how to preserve their storefronts.

### **Conclusion**

Under both alternatives, minor short-term adverse impacts may occur to visitor experience during work to preserve, rehabilitate, restore, and reconstruct the tenement. However, most impacts are beneficial, resulting from tours of the building and the neighborhood and from the Museum's numerous programs and classes. Benefits are enhanced by expanded programming, restoration and rehabilitation

facilitated by the increased funding of Alternative B. The Museum's educational programs under both alternatives and its technical assistance under Alternative B help property owners to preserve and restore their storefronts in the face of major adverse cumulative impacts threatening the historic character of the neighborhood.

## **VISITOR USE**

### ***Alternative A:***

### ***Continuation of Present Plans and Practices***

The Museum offers tours of the tenement almost every day of the year but is unable to meet the demand; several thousand individuals as well as tour groups and school classes have to be turned away annually. The building is already showing signs of wear from more than 123,000 visitors per year. Not everyone who comes to the tenement is able to view the upper floors, as they are only accessible via steep, narrow stairs. Classrooms remain in the basement and on the first floor and a portion of the collections is in the cellar, although the Museum intends to remove all non-historic uses when an alternative location for them has been obtained.

Moderate long-term adverse impacts are occurring from the inability of the Museum to meet the demand for its services and from the lack of accessibility of most of the tenement building for visitors who are in wheelchairs or have mobility problems. Impacts may be greater if the carrying capacity study currently underway finds that the present level of visitation is a threat to the building and should be reduced.

Acquisition and restoration of another tenement building will have beneficial impacts by enabling the Museum to serve more visitors. If a building adjacent to 97 Orchard Street becomes available from a willing seller and can be acquired by the Museum, 97 Orchard may be made accessible by installing an elevator in the new building. Beneficial impacts will then result from offering all visitors the opportunity to experience all levels of the historic tenement.

Left page:  
Advertisement for  
the psychic services  
of 97 Orchard  
Street tenant Dora  
Meltzer, circa 1903

Right page:  
Sign advertising  
custom-made  
pants, found in an  
apartment at  
97 Orchard Street

# PRICE, 15c.

AND UP

## 97 Orchard Street,

Bet. Delancy & Broome Sts.

1st Fl. Back, Room 4, N. Y.

The World Famous Palmist and Mind Reader  
recently arrived from Europe.

### PROF. DORA MELTZER,

She guesses the name and age of Every Person.



She is an unexcelled  
Palmist, tells you the  
past, present and future,  
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business, journeys, Law  
Suits, Love, Sickness, Family  
affairs, etc.

Open from 9 A. M. to 10 P. M.

## 97 Orchard Street,

Bet. Delancy & Broome Sts.

1st Fl. Back, Room 4, N. Y.

The presence of classrooms in the basement and on the first floor has a long-term adverse impact on visitor use because they are taking the place of the historic use (retail business). However, the impact is minor since the classrooms are helping to fulfill the Museum’s mission and are not harmful to the building. Beneficial impacts are achieved by relocating them out of 97 Orchard Street, making space for the establishment of historical businesses.



**Alternative B: Expanded Partnerships**

This alternative’s opportunities for increased funding eliminate the adverse impacts noted above if they are able to help the Museum obtain additional space in order to serve more visitors, provide accessibility, and relocate non-historic uses.

**Cumulative Impacts**

The demand for tours continues to grow, increasing the Museum’s need for another tenement building. However, many of New York City’s surviving tenements have been substantially altered, no longer retaining their historic interior layout. The Museum’s work with the community on neighborhood preservation, which is a part of both alternatives but is stronger in B, may result in the preservation of a building that can help to meet this additional visitor demand.

**Conclusion**

Long-term adverse impacts described under Alternative A result from the inability to accommodate all potential visitors and to house non-historic functions outside the tenement building. Alternative B offers the possibility of funding to help eliminate those impacts faster than under Alternative A.

**COST ESTIMATES**

Capital and operating costs presented below are associated with 97 Orchard Street and not with the Museum’s other buildings. NPS contributions will be made within the constraints of available funding and ongoing NPS priorities and will be used for the purposes set forth in P.L. 105-378, Section 104(b):

*TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE — The Secretary is authorized to provide technical and financial assistance to the Lower East Side Tenement Museum to mark, interpret, and preserve the historic site, including the making of preservation-related capital improvements and repairs.*

Capital expenses are estimated for the 20-year life of the plan and include, for both alternatives, preservation of the tenement building, restoration of four apartments on the upper two floors of the tenement and one on the first floor, rehabilitation of other first floor space as historical businesses, reconstruction of the privy in the back yard, and payment of the mortgage principal on the building. Operating expenses are annual and cover staff, consultants, travel, routine maintenance, supplies, utilities, insurance, mortgage interest, and more. The cost difference between the alternatives comes from programmatic expansion in Alternative B, plus any additional improvements beyond those currently anticipated.

**TABLE IV-1: ALTERNATIVE A COSTS in 2005 dollars**

	Low	High
20-year capital costs	\$4,365,000	\$5,238,000
Annual operating costs	\$2,700,000	\$3,240,000

**TABLE IV-2: ALTERNATIVE B COSTS in 2005 dollars**

	Low	High
20-year capital costs	\$4,565,000	\$5,478,000
Annual operating costs	\$2,975,000	\$3,570,000

*Victoria Confino  
(back row, middle)  
and friends,  
circa 1920*

**Right page:**  
*Tenement House  
Inspectors, 1915.  
Collections of the  
New York Public  
Library, Astor,  
Lenox and Tilden  
Foundations*



# Consultation and Coordination



## PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

A public scoping session was held at the Museum at 7:00 pm on June 14, 2000. In addition, numerous working meetings were held by Museum and NPS staff during scoping and the subsequent development of draft alternatives and assessment of impacts. Those meetings involved NPS park programming and operations staff as well as cultural resource specialists from both the local parks and NPS regional offices.

The SHPO and the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation were notified of this planning process at the outset of public scoping. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the New York State Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources were contacted to determine the possibility of any impact upon threatened or endangered species. Copies of those letters and responses to them are provided in Appendix B.

## DISTRIBUTION

This document can be found on the NPS website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>.

A copy has been sent to the following agencies, organizations and officials:

### Elected Officials

Governor George Pataki  
Mayor Michael Bloomberg  
Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton  
Senator Charles E. Schumer  
Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney  
Congresswoman Nydia M. Velazquez  
New York State Senator Thomas K. Duane  
New York State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver  
New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn  
New York City Council Member Alan Gerson  
Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields

### Federal Agencies

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

### State Agencies and Organizations

Council on the Arts  
Council for the Humanities  
Department of Economic Development  
Department of Education  
Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of Tourism  
Office of Parks,  
Recreation and Historic Preservation

### City Agencies

Convention and Visitor's Bureau  
Department of Consumer Affairs  
Department of Cultural Affairs  
Department of Environmental Protection  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
Department of Planning  
Department of Transportation

### Lower East Side Tenement Museum

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Ford Foundation  
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Museum of Chinese Americans  
Nash Family Foundation  
National Trust For Historic Preservation  
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Pfizer, Inc., Corporate Affairs  
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Pine Bridge Foundation  
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RGK Foundation  
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Scherman Foundation  
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Schnurmacher Foundation  
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South Manhattan Development Corporation  
The Starr Foundation  
Roy and Niuta Titus Foundation  
Trust in God Baptist Church  
Twenty-first Century ILGWU Heritage Fund  
United Federation of Teachers  
Norman & Rosita Winston Foundation



## Appendix A: Legislation

*Benjamin and Bessie Solomowitz,  
residents of 97 Orchard Street, circa 1905*

**Right page:**  
*Last legal day for pushcarts on  
the Lower East Side. Photo taken  
from the third floor of 140 Orchard Street  
by David Berkowitz, 1939*



Public Law 105-378  
105th Congress

An Act

To establish the Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**TITLE I—LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, NEW YORK.**

**SEC. 101. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

(a) FINDINGS—Congress finds that—

- (1)(A) immigration, and the resulting diversity of cultural influences, is a key factor in defining the identity of the United States; and
- (B) many United States citizens trace their ancestry to persons born in nations other than the United States;
- (2) the latter part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century marked a period in which the volume of immigrants coming to the United States far exceeded that of any time prior to or since that period;
- (3) no single identifiable neighborhood in the United States absorbed a comparable number of immigrants

than the Lower East Side neighborhood of Manhattan in New York City;

(4) the Lower East Side Tenement at 97 Orchard Street in New York City is an outstanding survivor of the vast number of humble buildings that housed immigrants to New York City during the greatest wave of immigration in American history;

(5) the Lower East Side Tenement is owned and operated as a museum by the Lower East Side Tenement Museum;

(6) the Lower East Side Tenement Museum is dedicated to interpreting immigrant life within a neighborhood long associated with the immigrant experience in the United States, New York City's Lower East Side, and its importance to United States history; and

(7)(A) the Director of the National Park Service found the Lower East Side Tenement at 97 Orchard Street to be nationally significant; and

(B) the Secretary of the Interior declared the Lower East Side Tenement a National Historic Landmark on April 19, 1994; and

(C) the Director of the National Park Service, through a special resource study, found the Lower East Side Tenement suitable and feasible for inclusion in the National Park System.

(b) PURPOSES—The purposes of this title are—

- (1) to ensure the preservation, maintenance, and

interpretation of this site and to interpret at the site the themes of immigration, tenement life in the latter half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, the housing reform movement, and tenement architecture in the United States;

(2) to ensure continued interpretation of the nationally significant immigrant phenomenon associated with New York City's Lower East Side and the Lower East Side's role in the history of immigration to the United States; and

(3) to enhance the interpretation of the Castle Clinton, Ellis Island, and Statue of Liberty National Monuments.

### **SEC. 102. DEFINITIONS.**

As used in this title:

(1) HISTORIC SITE—The term 'historic site' means the Lower East Side Tenement found at 97 Orchard Street on Manhattan Island in the City of New York, State of New York, and designated as a national historic site by section 103.

(2) MUSEUM—The term 'Museum' means the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, a nonprofit organization established in the City of New York, State of New York, which owns and operates the tenement building at 97 Orchard Street and manages other properties in the vicinity of 97 Orchard Street as administrative and program support facilities for 97 Orchard Street.

(3) SECRETARY—The term 'Secretary' means the Secretary of the Interior.

### **SEC. 103. ESTABLISHMENT OF HISTORIC SITE.**

(a) IN GENERAL—To further the purposes of this title and the Act entitled 'An Act to provide for the preservation of historic American sites, buildings, objects, and antiquities of national significance, and for other purposes', approved August 21, 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.), the Lower East Side Tenement at 97 Orchard Street, in the City of New York, State of New York, is designated a national historic site.

(b) COORDINATION WITH NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM—

(1) AFFILIATED SITE—The historic site shall be an affiliated site of the National Park System.

(2) COORDINATION—The Secretary, in consultation with the Museum, shall coordinate the operation and interpretation of the historic site with the Statue of Liberty National Monument, Ellis Island

National Monument, and Castle Clinton National Monument. The historic site's story and interpretation of the immigrant experience in the United States is directly related to the themes and purposes of these National Monuments.

(c) OWNERSHIP— The historic site shall continue to be owned, operated, and managed by the Museum.

### **SEC. 104. MANAGEMENT OF THE HISTORIC SITE.**

(a) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT—The Secretary may enter into a cooperative agreement with the Museum to ensure the marking, interpretation, and preservation of the national historic site designated by section 103(a).

(b) TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE— The Secretary may provide technical and financial assistance to the Museum to mark, interpret, and preserve the historic site, including making preservation-related capital improvements and repairs.

(c) GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN—

(1) IN GENERAL—The Secretary, in consultation with the Museum, shall develop a general management plan for the historic site that defines the role and responsibility of the Secretary with regard to the interpretation and the preservation of the historic site.

(2) INTEGRATION WITH NATIONAL MONUMENTS—The plan shall outline how interpretation and programming for the historic site shall be integrated and coordinated with the Statue of Liberty National Monument, Ellis Island National Monument, and Castle Clinton National Monument to enhance the story of the historic site and these National Monuments.

(3) COMPLETION—The plan shall be completed not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

(d) LIMITED ROLE OF SECRETARY—Nothing in this title authorizes the Secretary to acquire the property at 97 Orchard Street or to assume overall financial responsibility for the operation, maintenance, or management of the historic site.

### **SEC. 105. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this title.



## Appendix B: Consultation and Coordination Letters

*Evelyn and Jack Solomowitz,  
residents of 97 Orchard Street, circa 1931*



## United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Northeast Region  
United States Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

IN REPLY REFER TO:

D18 (P & P)

March 1, 2005

Information Services  
New York Natural Heritage Program  
625 Broadway, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Albany, NY 12233-4757

Dear Colleague:

Please provide us with information regarding the presence of any rare species in the area of 97 Orchard Street in Manhattan. The National Park Service is preparing a general management plan and environmental assessment for the Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site, located at that address. The block containing the site is bounded by Delancey, Allen, and Broome streets as well as Orchard. This urban setting has been highly altered from its natural state. The tenement building is being preserved, rehabilitated and restored and is open to the public for tours. Plans include re-establishment of retail businesses on the bottom floors and reconstruction of privies in the small back yard.

Thanks very much for your assistance. Please contact me with any questions about this request at (215) 597-1841.

Sincerely,

Linda McGrail  
Community Planner

**New York State Department of Environmental Conservation**  
**Division of Fish, Wildlife & Marine Resources**  
**New York Natural Heritage Program**  
625 Broadway, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Albany, New York 12233-4757  
Phone: (518) 402-8935 • FAX: (518) 402-8925  
Website: www.dec.state.ny.us



March 16, 2005

Linda McGrail  
U.S. National Park Service  
U. S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Ms. McGrail:

In response to your recent request, we have reviewed the New York Natural Heritage Program databases with respect to an Environmental Assessment for the proposed Building Restoration - Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site, site as indicated on the map you provided, located at 97 Orchard Street in Manhattan, New York.

We have no records of known occurrences of rare or state-listed animals or plants, significant natural communities, or other significant habitats, on or in the immediate vicinity of your site.

The absence of data does not necessarily mean that rare or state-listed species, natural communities or other significant habitats do not exist on or adjacent to the proposed site. Rather, our files currently do not contain any information which indicates their presence. For most sites, comprehensive field surveys have not been conducted. For these reasons, we cannot provide a definitive statement on the presence or absence of rare or state-listed species, or of significant natural communities. This information should not be substituted for on-site surveys that may be required for environmental assessment.

Our databases are continually growing as records are added and updated. If this proposed project is still under development one year from now, we recommend that you contact us again so that we may update this response with the most current information.

This response applies only to known occurrences of rare or state-listed animals and plants, significant natural communities and other significant habitats maintained in the Natural Heritage Data bases. Your project may require additional review or permits; for information regarding other permits that may be required under state law for regulated areas or activities (e.g., regulated wetlands), please contact the appropriate NYS DEC Regional Office, Division of Environmental Permits, at the enclosed address.

Sincerely,

*Betty Ketcham*  
Betty A. Ketcham, Information Services  
New York Natural Heritage Program

*jk*

Enc.

cc: Reg. 2, Wildlife Mgr.



## United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Northeast Region  
United States Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

IN REPLY REFER TO:

D18 (P & P)

March 4, 2005

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
3817 Luker Road  
Cortland, NY 13045

Dear Colleague:

The National Park Service is preparing a general management plan and environmental assessment for the Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site, located at 97 Orchard Street in Manhattan. The block containing the site is bounded by Delancey, Allen and Broome streets as well as Orchard. It is an urban setting that has been highly altered from its natural state. We are not aware of any wetlands in the neighborhood. Response to an inquiry made of your office a few years ago indicated that no federally listed or proposed endangered or threatened species were known to exist in that vicinity except for occasional transient individuals. Please inform us of any change or confirm that there are still no such species living in the area.

Thanks very much for your assistance. Please contact me at (215) 597-1841 if you have any questions about this request.

Sincerely,

Linda McGrail  
Community Planner



## United States Department of the Interior

### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

3817 Luker Road  
Cortland, NY 13045



March 22, 2005

#### Memorandum

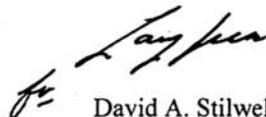
To: Community Planner, National Park Service, Philadelphia, PA  
From: Field Supervisor, Fish and Wildlife Service, Cortland, NY  
Subject: Lower East Side Tenement National Historical Site, Manhattan, New York

This responds to your correspondence of March 4, 2005, requesting confirmation on the absence of endangered or threatened species in the vicinity of the Lower East Side Tenement National Historical Site in Manhattan, New York County, New York.

Except for the occasional transient individuals, no other Federally-listed or proposed endangered or threatened species under our jurisdiction are known to exist in the project impact area. In addition, no habitat in the project impact area is currently designated or proposed "critical habitat" in accordance with provisions of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). Should project plans change, or if additional information on listed or proposed species or critical habitat becomes available, this determination may be reconsidered. The most recent compilation of Federally-listed and proposed endangered and threatened species in New York\* is available for your information. If your project is not completed within one year from the date of this determination we recommend that you contact us to ensure that the listed species presence/absence information for your proposed project is current.

The above comments pertaining to endangered or threatened species under our jurisdiction are provided pursuant to the ESA. This response does not preclude additional U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service comments under other legislation.

If you require additional information or assistance please contact Jill Olin of our Long Island Field Office at (631) 581-2941.

  
David A. Stilwell

\* Additional information referred to above may be found at our website at:  
<http://nyfo.fws.gov/es/esdesc.htm>.

cc: NYSDEC, Long Island City, NY (Env. Permits)



## United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Northeast Region  
United States Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

IN REPLY REFER TO:

D18 (P&P)

February 25, 2005

Ms. Ruth Pierpont, Director  
Field Services Bureau  
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation  
Pebbles Island Resource Center  
P.O. Box 189  
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Dear Ms. Pierpont:

The National Park Service is developing a general management plan (GMP) for the Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site, as directed by Congress in Section 104(c) of Public Law 105-378. The GMP will present and evaluate alternative approaches to site management and alternative strategies for addressing identified site needs. The environmental assessment (EA) being prepared as a part of this plan will include an assessment of effect in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

We want to acknowledge the past consultation between your office and the Tenement Museum staff, and to affirm that consultation will continue through the planning and implementation process for the GMP. We welcome your input and will soon be sending you a copy of the draft GMP/EA for your review and comments. Should you have any questions regarding this plan please contact Linda McGrail at (215) 597-1841.

Sincerely,

Terrence Moore, Chief  
Park Planning and Special Studies

# Acknowledgements

## PLANNING TEAM

Ruth J. Abram *President, Lower East Side Tenement Museum*  
Renee Epps *Executive Vice President, Lower East Side Tenement Museum*  
Maria Burks *Commissioner, National Parks of New York Harbor*  
Tom Dyer *Planner, Office of Park Partnerships, Northeast Region (NER), NPS*  
Linda McGrail *Community Planner, NER, NPS*

## CONTRIBUTORS

### Lower East Side Tenement Museum

Philip Cohen *Program Director*  
Kate Fermoile *Former Education Director*  
Derya Golpinar *Collections Manager*  
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Steve Long *Vice President of Collections and Education*  
Nikia Redhead *Public Relations and Marketing Coordinator*  
Liz Sevchenko *Vice President of Interpretation*  
Katherine Snider *Vice President of Public Affairs*

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Li/Saltzman *Architects*

### National Park Service

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Cynthia Garrett *Superintendent, Statue of Liberty NM*  
Duncan Hay *Historian, NER*  
Louis Hutchins *Senior Curator, Northeast Museum Services Center*  
Jacquelyn Katzmire *Regional Environmental Coordinator, NER*  
Tina LeCoff *Former Resource Planning Specialist, NER*  
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*Gateway National Recreation Area*  
Diana Pardue *Chief of Museum Services, Statue of Liberty NM*  
Molly Quackenbush *Superintendent, Theodore Roosevelt*  
*Inaugural National Historic Site*  
Patti Reilly *Director, Northeast Center for Education Services*  
Russ Smith *Superintendent, Fredericksburg*  
*& Spotsylvania National Military Park*  
Paul Weinbaum *History Program Manager, NER*





#### DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has the responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. Its duties include fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The Department also has major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.



#### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The National Park Service is a bureau within the Department of the Interior. Its mission is to preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

