



SOUTHSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

BOX 481 CORNING, NY 14830

History of the Southside Neighborhood Association

The Southside Neighborhood Association is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and restoration of our built environment in Corning. The organization had its beginning in March 1989, when a group of clergy representing First Street area churches met to look at some issues: interfacing with the planning commission, Intown, etc.; condition of some of the houses in the area; relationship with 171 Cedar; Canfield Park and the proposal for condominiums; maintenance of "green space"; parking; and funding for improvements. As the year progressed, representatives of the city, various organizations, and the neighborhood were asked to participate. At the May 9, 1990 meeting the group evolved into the Southside Neighborhood Association (SNA) under the leadership of Tom Dimitroff.

During the 90s the Southside focus of the SNA expanded to include more city-wide issues. Tom Dimitroff was appointed to the Board of the Market Street Restoration Agency which allowed for mutual support and interaction between these preservation groups. For example, with the help and generosity of Ted and Mary Ann Sprague and these groups, the Drake House, an important historic and architectural structure located at a key corner on the Southside, was saved and eventually restored by 171 Cedar. Today it is not only a jewel of preservation, but also a busy arts center serving the entire area. SNA also worked hard to save the Pritchard House by meeting with the hospital and publishing "Corning Hospital Parking Survey" in July 1990. Unfortunately

this architectural gem along with the Collins House was razed in September 1990 to make room for a parking lot.

In the fall of 1991 the SNA's dream and efforts to create an historic district on Corning's Southside took a major step to becoming reality when the group received a "Reconnaissance Level Survey, Southside Neighborhood Proposed Historic District : Phase I: Data and Resource Assessment, and Phase II: Historic Overview" prepared for SNA by Graduate Program in Historic Preservation Planning, Cornell University. Additionally Tom Dimitroff wrote a treatise entitled "The Southside Hill: A Good Place to Live, Work, and Worship." In 1993 SNA finally became incorporated and received its not for profit status. In the fall of 1994 a "Historic Landscape Report, Canfield Park, Denison Park, (Market Street Restoration)" was prepared by the State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Faculty of Landscape Architecture, Syracuse, NY.

In January 1998 residents received notification of placement on the New York State Register of Historic Places and in March of placement on the National Register of Historic Places. It was the leadership and work of Becki Baker and Elise Johnson-Schmidt that finally made this a reality.

SNA also mentored the local Yorkers Club (New York State Junior Historical Society) in their development of "Block 66: A Preservation Project" including a scale model of Canfield Park. (The Yorkers won first prize at their state convention.) In 1999

Corning Free Academy was nominated to the New York Preservation League's "Seven to Save" list.

Many public programs were held presenting the history and architecture of the area and specific buildings as well as information on preservation. The SNA cooperated with the Market Street Restoration Agency in presenting annual preservation lectures to the Rotary Club during Preservation Week. Tree plantings and clean ups in Canfield Park were held to coincide with Preservation Week. Trees have been planted in and by Canfield Park and in front of CFA, a tree survey of the neighborhood has been done and we have worked with the city on their tree program. Efforts have been made to save and restore the Walnut Street Post Office as well as preservation of the neighborhood – its schools and spaces. Local Boy Scout Eagle candidates working with Tom Dimitroff produced an architectural walking tour of parts of the Southside and placed historic markers throughout the Southside and the city. SNA also is working closely with the city and the current Master Plan. In

May 2004 we were joined by 171 Cedar Art Center in sponsoring an exhibition and sale of local artists' work titled "Corning on Canvas – Artists' Visions of Corning's Southside Neighborhood." We created an annual recognition program for outstanding preservation efforts – the CAP Award – given each year during Preservation Week. Presently, SNA is restoring the lighthouse in Denison Park, working with the city on a mini Master Plan for the park and is a sponsor of Corning's entry in America in Bloom.

There are many goals and aspirations that the SNA is working towards including: signage for the district and individual structures within it, a preservation library, additional walking tours, the identification of endangered landmarks and structures. As we find ourselves in the 21st century, it is hoped that the accomplishments of the 19th and 20th centuries are not lost. We welcome you to the neighborhood and hope you'll become a member of the Southside Neighborhood Association.

CAP Awards Established

As a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and restoration of our built environment, the Southside Neighborhood Association has established the Corning Architectural Preservation Award (CAP) to recognize preservation efforts. This award will be granted each year during May Preservation Month and will recog-

nize efforts in three areas: residential, commercial, and outbuilding. The award reads: *For excellence in the preservation of historic examples of our built environment which contributes to the vitality and rebirth of our community enabling present and future generations to understand, enjoy and benefit from our past.*