



Saitta House

Dyker Heights, Brooklyn, New York.

Completed in 1899 by Architect John J. Petit.

THE

SAITTA HOUSE

IS LISTED ON BOTH THE
STATE AND NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC
PLACES

DUE TO THE COLLABORATION OF

THE DYKER HEIGHTS
CIVIC ASSOCIATION

(ESTABLISHED IN 1928)

AND

THE DYKER HEIGHTS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(ESTABLISHED IN 2006)



NEW YORK STATE
OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION
AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

This is to certify that

*The Saitta House
1135 84th Street*

Brooklyn, Kings County, New York

*in recognition of its significance in American history
and culture was listed on the*

STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

on

April 4, 2007

under provisions of the

State Historic Preservation Act of 1980

and on the

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

on

May 30, 2007

under the provisions of the

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

CAROL ASH
COMMISSIONER
NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION
AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER



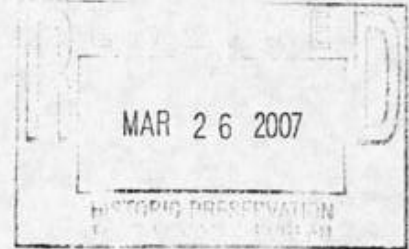
The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North, New York NY 10007 TEL: 212-669-7922 FAX: 212-669-7797

<http://nyc.gov/landmarks/>



RONDA WIST
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
rwist@lpc.nyc.gov



March 9, 2007

Ms. Ruth Pierpont, Director
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Peebles Island
Waterford, New York 12188-0189

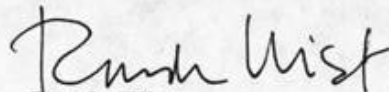
Re: Saitta House, 1135 84th Street, Brooklyn, Kings County,
New York

Dear Ms. Pierpont:

I write on behalf of Chair Robert B. Tierney in response to your request for comment on the eligibility of the Saitta House at 1135 84th Street in Brooklyn for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Mary Beth Betts, the Commission's Director of Research, has reviewed the materials submitted by the Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau and recommends that the Saitta House appears to meet the criteria for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Sincerely,


Ronda Wist

cc: Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Mary Beth Betts



**New York State Office of Parks,
Recreation and Historic Preservation**

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau • Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

518-237-8643

www.nysparks.com

Eliot Spitzer
Governor

Carol Ash
Commissioner

May 7, 2007

Mr. Christian Zaino
Dyker Heights Historical Society
1126 84th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11228

Re: Saitta House
1135 84th Street
Brooklyn, Kings County

Dear Mr. Zaino:

Following a detailed review, the State Review Board has recommended to the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, who is the New York State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), that the property identified above be listed on the New York State Register of Historic Places and nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

After reviewing the nomination, the SHPO has agreed with the recommendation of the State Review Board and has listed the property on the State Register of Historic Places. We shall now forward the nomination to the Keeper of the National Register in Washington, D. C.

If the Keeper of the National Register approves the nomination, the property will be listed on the National Register. You will be notified when this decision is made.

Information about the results of State and National Register listing were included in our earlier notification letter. If you have any further questions, please contact your field representative Kathy Howe, at the New York State Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau or call (518) 237-8643 ext. 3266.

Sincerely,

Ruth L. Pierpont
Director
Historic Preservation
Field Services Bureau

REP:Ysa



**New York State Office of Parks,
Recreation and Historic Preservation**

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau • Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

518-237-8643

June 18, 2007

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Eliot Spitzer
Governor

Carol Ash
Commissioner

Mr. Christian Zaino
Dyker Heights Historical Society
1126 84th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11228

Re: Saitta House
1135 84th Street
Brooklyn, Kings County

Dear Mr. Zaino:

I am pleased to inform you that the above referenced property has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As you may know, the National Register is the nation's official list of properties worthy of preservation. Listing on the National Register recognizes the importance of these properties to the history of our country and provides them with a measure of protection. In addition, owners of income producing properties may qualify for federal income tax benefits. Properties owned by municipalities and not-for-profit organizations are eligible to apply for state historic preservation matching grants.

If you would like more information about any of these programs, please contact your field representative, in this case, Kathy Howe, at the New York State Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau at (518) 237-8643 ext. 3266. Field Services Bureau staff maintains a continuing interest in all registered properties and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Ruth L. Pierpont
Director
Historic Preservation
Field Services Bureau

RLP:lisa

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Saitta House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1135 84th Street [] not for publication

city or town Brooklyn [] vicinity

state New York code NY county Kings code 047 zip code 11228

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- [] entered in the National Register
[] see continuation sheet
- [] determined eligible for the National Register
[] see continuation sheet
- [] determined not eligible for the National Register
- [] removed from the National Register
- [] other (explain) _____

Signature of the Keeper

date of action

Saitta House
Name of Property

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	TOTAL

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Queen Anne

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Wood (shingles and false half-timbering)

Stucco

roof Asphalt. Copper.

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Saitta House

Name of Property

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DESCRIPTION

The Saitta House is a two-and-a-half-story, one-family Queen Anne dwelling completed ca. 1899 by architect John J. Petit and builder P.J. la Note for Beatrice and Simone Saitta (**see Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7**). The home is located in the Dyker Heights section of Brooklyn, New York on the north side of 84th Street between Twelfth Avenue to the east and Eleventh Avenue to the west. Dyker Heights is a suburban, primarily residential, neighborhood in the southwest corner of Kings County (**see Figures 8, 9, 10 and 11**). This area consists mainly of one- and two-family homes – attached, semi-attached, and fully detached. This fully detached structure is situated on the south side of block 6307, lot 64 which is 80 wide and 100 feet deep (**see Figure 12**). The lot is 240 feet east of Eleventh Avenue. The house sits about ten feet above street level, in the northeast corner of the lot, situated about 25 feet back from the front of the property line (**see Figure 66**). The Saitta House is part of the original suburban community of Dyker Heights which was developed, and named, by Walter Loveridge Johnson from 1895 to about 1902.

The landscaping is typical for a Dyker Heights home today; evergreen bushes and shrubs of all shapes and sizes surround the house, as do grass, flowers, and tall trees (**see Figures 13, 14, 15 and 16**). A stone veneer retaining wall (ca. 1977) runs along the front of the property line. At street level is the entrance to a non-contributing garage (ca. 1977) which is built into the side of the embankment. The façade of the garage is a continuation of the stone veneer retaining wall. Entrance steps, which appear to be original, are located at the southwest corner of the property leading up to an iron entrance gate proudly adorning the letter “S” for Saitta. The steps are accompanied by large decorative planters with geraniums, impatiens, palms, and miniature ivy (**see Figures 17 and 18**).

While Dyker Heights is an example of an early twentieth century suburban development in Brooklyn the neighborhood is not eligible to be an historic district due to extensive alterations made to many original homes as well as new infill. The Saitta House has a high level of historic integrity and typifies original Dyker Heights homes as illustrated by its outstanding craftsmanship and use of quality materials.

The surrounding five residential properties are fully detached homes (**see Figure 12**). Immediately west of the Saitta House on lot 68 is an original Dyker Heights home which was most recently remodeled in 2003; it is a two-family home today (**see Figure 19**). The one-family house to the immediate east of the Saitta House on lot 60 is another original, Dyker Heights home that was remodeled in the late 1970s (**see Figure 20**). There are three houses that neighbor the Saitta property on 83rd Street to the north. Along the northwest corner of the Saitta property is lot 16, with a two-family home built in the 1990s, which replaced an original Dyker Heights home (**see Figure 21**). The one-family house on lot 19 (immediately behind the Saitta House) (**see Figure 22**) was built in 1976, and the one-family house on lot 23 (**see Figure 23**) was built in the 1930s and replaced an original Dyker Heights home as well. Lot 19 was originally part of the Saitta property until the 80 x

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200 property was sold in 1975. The empty 80 × 100 lot facing 83rd Street was sold to Frank Fogliano, brother-in-law of Frank J. Santo (current owner of 1135 84th Street). The two families share the adjoining backyards today.

The exterior of the Saitta House was designed in the Queen Anne style with Tudor decoration. It has a stuccoed first floor, shingled second, and a false half-timbered third. The roof consists of four, large, steeply pitched, cross gables which intersect in the middle of the house at right angles; the main ridge of the roof runs east-west, while the north-south ridge is about a foot lower. All the ridges and valleys are covered by weathered copper (**see Figure 25**). A total of four stuccoed chimneys pierce the roof in various locations. The roof itself is covered in asphalt shingles, arranged in the square-butt orientation, which have aged over time, giving the roof a light green/grey color (**refer back to Figure 25**). The symmetry of the roof is broken by the chimney stacks and also by the octagonal roof of the three-story tower, located on the southwest corner of the home (**refer back to Figure 6**). The seams on the roof of the tower are covered by weathered copper. A finial, which was a common feature of homes in Dyker Heights, sat at the apex of the tower's roof but was removed by the previous owner. The main gable was surmounted by a weathervane while the other three gables had decorative lightning rods – all victims of weather and gone by 1940 (**refer back to Figures 1 and 2**). Each projecting gable is adorned by two original scroll brackets (at the outer corners) and modillioned eaves. The bargeboard, which helps to accentuate the front gables, is dressed in dentils.

Perhaps the most decorative story of the Saitta House is the third floor, dressed in decorative half-timbering – a staple of Tudor architecture (**see Figure 27**). The raised vertical boards have been painted brown and applied over a beige, wood background. The gable ends at the front and sides of the home have double-hung sash windows, arranged in triplets, under a pent roof covered with brown wood shingles and adorned with dentils. The windows project out from the house by almost one foot. In the rear, there are two single windows with no pent roof – they are flat with the half-timbering (**see Figure 28**). Under each individual window of the triplet is one quatrefoil, painted brown (**see Figure 29**). The back windows are only surrounded by half-timbering – no quatrefoils. Under the quatrefoils, in the front of the house, are two rows of brown dentils separated by an equally long brown board which spans the entire width of the third floor (**refer back to Figure 27**). The top row of dentils in this “frieze” are slightly pitched, while the row of dentils below are not. This pattern seems to have been copied on the gabled roof of the entrance porch; however, without the dentils. The back of the Saitta House, and the sides, do not have this frieze, but instead they have diamond-shaped shingles, arranged in a fishscale pattern (**refer back to Figure 29**). These imbricated shingles are painted and are original to the dwelling. The entire third floor overhangs the second, except in the rear, and parts of the second floor are slightly extended over first (**see Figure 30**). The overhang of the second floor is accompanied by a cornice-like stringcourse with exposed beam ends resembling dentils.

The entire second floor is clad in coursed pattern wood shingles (painted beige); many have cracked due to 110 years of New York City weather (**see Figure 31**). On the front elevation of the second story are two equally spaced tripartite groups of double-hung replacement sash windows with a diamond-paned pattern (**see Figure 32**). Above these are original stained-glass windows. The outer

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Saitta House
Name of Property
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stained-glass windows each have a fleur-de-lis while the center windows have an orb. On top of these decorative headers are dentils. Both window groups extend beyond wall of the second floor and are flush with the dentiled frieze of the third. Both side elevations of the Saitta House have two, single windows in a projecting bay. This projection is flush with the third floor. On the north part of the west façade is a third, double-hung sash window, flush with the second floor (**refer back to Figure 30**). On the north part of the east façade is an open-air cutaway porch (**refer back to Figure 7 and see Figure 33**). One double-hung sash window and one door lead out onto the porch. The south part of the east façade has an elaborate stained-glass window (**refer back to Figure 7**). The windows in the back of the house are also double-hung sash windows that are not bilaterally similar with each other (**refer back to Figure 28**).

The first floor of the house is clad in beige stucco described as "H.W. Johns' Asbestos cement" in the *Scientific American Building Edition* article (**see Figure 65**). This floor has the most variation in terms of façade organization. The west façade has one tripartite bay window with stained-glass transom lights, and two regular windows, and a doorway leading out into the backyard (**see Figure 33**). The rear of the house has windows that correspond to the kitchen, breakfast room, and powder room. The east façade of the Saitta House has two sets of tripartite bay windows. The bay window of the conservatory, under the open-air cutaway porch, has the original leaded glass casements and transom lights (**see Figure 35**). One double, leaded window and transom, is below the north side of the open-air cutaway porch. Further to the back of the Saitta House is another set of windows. To the south, is the larger bay window with original stained-glass transom lights (**see Figure 36**).

The tower of the house, located in the southwest corner, has a stuccoed first floor, a shingled second floor, and a partly shingled third floor. Above the windowsills of the third floor are brown, vertical bands of original wood, matching the false half-timbering of the third story's façade.

The front of the house, at the first floor, features a porch which wraps from the polygonal tower on the southwest corner to the study's tripartite bay window on the east façade (**refer back to Figure 13**). Facing the street, the porch has four bays, the first three are open and the easternmost bay is enclosed. The enclosure of the porch at the southeast corner of the house dates to sometime before 1940 (**refer back to Figures 1 and 2**).

There are three sides to the enclosed porch; the north side, closest to the bay window of the study, has no windows and is stuccoed with the same texture and color as the rest of the first floor. The east elevation has a band of six, double-hung sash windows beneath a half-timbered gable. Facing the street (the south elevation) is a tripartite group of windows of the same type. The west elevation of the enclosed porch (facing onto the open part of the porch) has one French door topped by a transom flanked by a pair of floor-to-ceiling windows, also with transoms (**see Figure 38**).

The roof of the porch is supported by stuccoed, rectangular piers of beige color running from floor to ceiling. The space between the piers is occupied by a closed rail, also stuccoed. The porch's lean-to roof, covered in asphalt shingles, slopes up to meet the house just under the second-story windows.

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The west elevation of the lean-to is dressed in shingles of the second story. The façade of the east portion (which is a full gable – sloping up to a peak and down again) is decorated in the false-half timbering of the third floor. Over the porch's center entrance bay is an open gable, which is clad in false-half timbering with a frieze below – mimicking that found in the third-story gable ends (**refer back to Figure 13**). A dentiled bargeboard is also present, giving this gable comparative thickness and style to the gable of the third story. The gable is supported, at the edges of the base, by two scrolled brackets, whereas the soffits are adorned with modillions. The ceiling of the open porch is finished in tongue-and-groove boards running the full length of the porch. In the center of the ceiling, over the door, is a small chandelier.

The entrance consists of a pair of single-paned doors flanked by a decorative wood surround with an entablature above (**see Figure 39**). Although the doors are held by three, equally spaced butt hinges, one only sees the decorative hinges – two HL-hinges (top and bottom rails) and one vertical strap hinge placed in the middle of the stile. These hinges are made of metal and have a decorative scroll design at the ends as does the plate of the door handle. The entrance is flanked by leaded sidelights framed by a pair of Victorian pilasters, all of which sit atop a single-paneled, wooden pedestal with decorative plinth. To the left of the door is an original leaded-glass window with stained-glass transom. To the right of the door is a group of three double-hung sash windows that are leaded (**refer back to Figure 38**). Above them are three stained-glass transom lights. Since they have been protected by the porch for 110 years, the windows, doors, and their frames are all original and in excellent condition. The floor of the porch, as well as the steps leading to it, are tiled. Though the tile is not original it complements the existing colors.

The interior, like the exterior, retains a high degree of historic integrity of design, materials, and craftsmanship. The house was featured in the June 1901 issue of *Scientific American – Building Edition* (**See Figures 1, 2, 63, 64 and 65**). The article provided a detailed description of the interior and exterior of the house including floor plans of the first and second floors and illustrations. The interior plan, finishes, and features are largely intact with the exception of the service areas at the first floor rear of the house. The first floor is notable for its elaborate woodwork and fireplaces. The house retains the original wood doors, molded wood window and door surrounds, baseboards, and flooring. The paneled wood and glass door of the front vestibule opens to the main hall. To the immediate right is a “nook” as it is noted in the magazine article complete with window seat, fireplace, and eight-foot-high wainscoting. The fireplace cheeks and lintel are of green ceramic tile, laid in the running-course design (**see Figures 40 and 41**). The fireplace's surround is of wood as is the elaborate mantel – complete with decorative scrolled brackets. Above the mantel is an engaged arcade of four arches topped by an entablature. The arcade is flanked by pilasters, topped by a boxed entablature. East of this room is the doorway leading to part of the enclosed porch; this modern space serves as a family room.

The entrance hall is trimmed with quartered oak and has paneled wainscoting, oak ceiling beams, and a hardwood floor (**see Figure 42**). The staircase of the house is behind the fireplace of the nook and atop the landing is a stained-glass window. Hanging from the ceiling, which is ten feet high, is a

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Saitta House

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“silhouette” balustrade, complete with pendant drops between each baluster. To the left of the main hall is the current living room (original parlor), located at the southwest corner of the house, illuminated by stained-glass light (**see Figure 43**). The fireplace is adorned with marvelously carved wood – the mantel is supported by two urns atop pilasters (**see Figure 44**). To the north of this room, in the center of the house, is the current dining room (former sitting room) of a similar appearance. The dining room and living room can be closed off from each other, and the hallway, by massive, double, pocket doors. Across from the dining room is the current study (former dining room) – adorned by six-foot wainscoting (**see Figure 45**). The study has an elaborate beamed ceiling. The fireplace in the study is no less ornate than the others in the house (**see Figure 46**). The mantle here is supported by scrolled brackets as well as two engaged Ionic pilasters with elaborately carved wood. The fireplace mantels in the house were designed by White, Potter & Page of New York City and the ceramic tiling was done by Jackson & Son, also of New York. In the rear of the study, is the larger bay window of the east façade. On the south wall of the study is the entrance to the closet of the enclosed porch. In the rear of the Saitta House are three rooms: the kitchen, breakfast room, and bathroom, which were renovated in 1976.

The main stair at the front of the house and a smaller rear stair hall (from the kitchen) provides access to the second floor (**see Figure 64 for second floor plan**). The woodwork at the second floor is less ornate than that on the first floor. A long hallway runs from north to south with bedrooms on either side. The bedroom in the tower is notable for its unusual shape and wide ceiling cornice with dentils. Additional bedrooms and a former billiard room are located on the third floor.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location
- C** a birthplace or grave
- D** a cemetery
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance:

1897-1899

Significant Dates:

1899

Significant Person:

n/a

Cultural Affiliation:

n/a

Architect/Builder:

Petit, John J. (architect)

La Note, P.J. (builder) (see last page for some recently found information on the builder)

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Saitta House is significant in the area of architecture as a remarkably intact, high-style example of Queen Anne residential architecture and for its association with the development and planning of Dyker Heights, a turn-of-the-century suburban development in Brooklyn. No other house in Dyker Heights retains so much of its original architectural and structural components – both interior and exterior – as the Saitta House. The house was architect-designed for an affluent Dyker Heights family, and built ca. 1899 by craftsmen who came from Italy and lived on the premises during construction. Architect John J. Petit's work can be found elsewhere in Brooklyn especially in the Prospect Park South Historic District (National Register listed). This notable house represents the original ideals, way of life, and quality architectural design of the original Dyker Heights development.

Early History of the Community

The Saitta House lies within the Dyker Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn which is within the boundaries of the original Dutch town of southwest Kings County – New Utrecht (pronounced: Nieuw Yoo-Trekt) settled in 1657 (**see Figure 47**). The area that is now Dyker Heights was not developed in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries because the land was too sloped for farming. It remained common woodland until the mid-1800s. The trees of this forest were used by the townsfolk as a source of firewood and construction material. When the agricultural industry of New Utrecht changed from the farming of grains to the cultivation of market garden produce, the trees were cleared and the area became one large market garden with tomatoes, cabbages, and potatoes, among other produce.

The first house built at the top of the hill (what is now Eleventh Avenue and Eighty-Second Street, at about 110 feet above sea level) was built in the late 1820s by Brigadier General René Edward De Russey of the United States Army (**see Figures 48 and 49**). De Russey was a military engineer who built many forts in the United States – from the Canadian border and the eastern seaboard to the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific coast – including Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn. Since this is the tallest natural point in southwest Brooklyn, De Russey built his homestead here – it afforded a clear view of the harbor and its defenses, especially Fort Hamilton which was complete by November of 1831. De Russey died in 1865 and his wife, Helen, sold the property in 1888 to the Johnson's – Frederick Henry and Jane Elisabeth Loveridge (**see Figures 50 and 51**).

According to the *Brooklyn Eagle*, Frederick Johnson did "much toward developing the locality in which he resided. He was the author of the original New Utrecht Improvement Bill, and an ardent advocate

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National Park Service

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of the annexation of the Town to this City.”¹ The Town of New Utrecht was annexed to the City of Brooklyn on July 1, 1894. On January 1, 1898, the City of Brooklyn was annexed to the City of New York. Involved with real estate, Johnson was probably very aware of the real estate pressures on and potential of the real estate in New Utrecht. With this in mind, he most likely purchased the De Russy Estate with the intention of building an upscale residential neighborhood similar to Bensonhurst-by-the-Sea, built by James D. Lynch from 1880-1890 in the Bath Beach section of New Utrecht. At that time, *The Real Estate Record* claimed Bensonhurst-by-the-Sea was “the most perfectly developed suburb ever laid out around New York.”² The restrictions placed upon the property made Bensonhurst-by-the-Sea “a model settlement, where some of the most refined, intelligent and cultured of New York and Brooklyn’s citizens have built their homes.”³

Dyker Heights

Following Frederick Johnson’s death on August 15, 1893 at the age of 52, his second son, Walter Loveridge Johnson, took over the real estate business and by October of 1895 Walter started Dyker Heights on his parents’ property (**see Figures 52 and 53**). Walter L. Johnson named his development “Dyker Heights” after the Dyker Meadow and Beach, which his development overlooks. The meadow and beach received their name from either the Van Dykes (an original New Utrecht family) who built the dykes to drain the meadow, or for the dykes that the Van Dykes built.

In 1895, Johnson, very much aware of the successful Bensonhurst-by-the-Sea, built three homes (**see Figure 54**). His home was on the southwest corner of Eleventh Avenue and Eighty-Second Street (across the Avenue from the home of his mother), Albert Edward Parfitt’s home was on Eighty-Second Street next to Johnson’s, and the last, closest to Tenth Avenue, was the home of Arthur S. Tuttle who was Assistant Engineer of The Water Supply of The City Works Department of The City of Brooklyn. Parfitt was the architect of these three homes. Johnson’s house burned down before 1900,⁴ Parfitt’s was demolished by a developer in 1928 and replaced with seven, run-of-the-mill, fully detached, single-family homes, and Tuttle’s house was remodeled over 10 years ago and clad in bright-white and sky-blue brick.

Walter L. Johnson was able to develop this portion of New Utrecht woodland into a residential community by making necessary improvements to it. In 1890, the only roads present were Kings Highway, Eighty-Sixth Street, Denyse’s Lane, and a small unnamed road near Tenth Avenue – none of which were paved and only Eighty-Sixth Street was a thoroughfare specifically planned as such (**refer back to Figure 51**). The remaining land was unimproved. Johnson continued Brooklyn’s street grid south with macadam pavement, graded the properties, installed gas, water, telephone, and

¹ *Brooklyn Eagle*, “Frederick H. Johnson’s Sudden Death.” August 15, 1893, p. 1.

² Marc Linder and Lawrence S. Zacharias, *Of Cabbages and Kings County: Agriculture and The Formation of Modern Brooklyn* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999), p. 275.

³ Linder and Zacharias, p. 275.

⁴ The fire was believed to have been intentionally set by Johnson who was reported to have financial problems at the time and wanted to collect on the insurance money.

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electricity lines, and planted sugar maple trees – seven on the avenues and twenty along the streets.⁵ This opened over two hundred more building sites between Tenth and Thirteenth avenues as well as between Seventy-Ninth Street and Eighty-Sixth Street.

Throughout the infancy of the development, Walter L. Johnson was able to use the print press to his advantage. He advertised his suburban homes heavily and stated that the high ground, magnificent ocean view, and careful restrictions made Dyker Heights the handsomest suburb in Greater New York (**see Figure 55**). Based on the newspaper accounts, he was right. In 1896 Johnson built and sold thirty homes in Dyker Heights (which were all probably designed by Parfitt). By January of 1897, the *Brooklyn Eagle* reported on his achievements, “Mr. Johnson has met with great success in the development of Dyker Heights and had probably done more business and made more sales during the past year than all the rest of the surrounding settlements combined.”⁶ In April of 1898 sales were still very strong, “Dyker Heights still holds its lead among the suburban sections in building operations, over forty houses having been erected there during the past year, ... and there are fully twenty more houses about to be built.”⁷ One of its many advantages was the location, which according to the *Brooklyn Eagle*, “is one of the finest in Greater New York, commanding an extensive view of water from Sandy Hook to the Palisades, with Staten Island and the shores of New Jersey directly in front.”⁸ Still more praise in February of 1899, “Dyker Heights has been one of the most successful and the most rapid in growth of any of the suburban settlements, over one hundred dwellings, costing from \$5,000 to \$25,000 each, having been erected there within the last two years.”⁹

In September of 1899, the *Wall Street Journal* even reported on the advantages of the development, recommending it to “the busy man of Wall Street” because of “its magnificent transportation facilities... it can be reached via the Thirty-Ninth Street Brooklyn Ferry and Eighty-Sixth Street Nassau Line in 45 minutes.”¹⁰ In addition the article claimed that “the 45 minutes’ trip between Dyker Heights and Wall Street by water and rail is as invigorating as the Dyker Heights climate is healthy-living. The rare opportunities afforded by Dyker Heights to the wealthy and to those in moderate circumstances are due largely to the energy, enterprise and good taste of its founder, Mr. Walter L. Johnson.”¹¹ A month later, the *Wall Street Journal* published “An Ideal Spot for a Home.”¹² From that article, one can clearly see why Dyker Heights was so successful. Its location and luxurious homes were first rate, “[Dyker Heights] is without a rival as to location, situated as it is at an elevation of [110] feet above the sea level, and is directly opposite the new Dyker Meadow Park... which will be the only seaside park in Greater New York.”¹³ The article also explained the exclusiveness of the property, which can be seen in “its massive stone piers with heavy wrought-iron lamps and scrolls”

⁵ Johnson put in all the utilities with the exception of sewers.

⁶ *Brooklyn Eagle*, “Buys Brooklyn Realty,” January 17, 1897, p. 5.

⁷ *Brooklyn Eagle*, “Real Estate Market,” April 5, 1898, p. 14.

⁸ *Brooklyn Eagle*, “Dyker Heights Club House,” April 24, 1898, p. 10.

⁹ *Brooklyn Eagle*, “Real Estate Market,” February 1, 1899, p. 14.

¹⁰ *Wall Street Journal*, “Dyker Heights and Wall Street,” September 22, 1899, p. 5.

¹¹ *Wall Street Journal*, “Dyker Heights and Wall Street,” September 22, 1899, p. 5.

¹² *Wall Street Journal*, “An Ideal Spot for a Home,” October 24, 1899, p. 2.

¹³ *Wall Street Journal*, “An Ideal Spot for a Home,” October 24, 1899, p. 2.

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that adorn the entrances.¹⁴ In December of 1899 the *Brooklyn Eagle* reported that, “work has recently been commenced upon thirty high class Houses, the demand for which runs a dead heat with the supply.”¹⁵

Johnson set very high standards for the community, the *Wall Street Journal* explained: “the property is carefully restricted against all nuisances and no building can be erected upon a plot of less than 60 feet in width by 100 feet in depth, and each building must cost at least \$4,000 and stand well back from the street.”¹⁶ These regulations, which were similar to those of Bensonhurst-by-the-Sea, were active until 1915. However, the most desirable feature of the area was still the “uninterrupted view of the lower bay from the Narrows to Sandy Hook and Atlantic Ocean, [which] is one of the most magnificent in the country, and nowhere else in the consolidated city is there anything to compare it with. From here can be seen a marine panorama hard to beat.”¹⁷ Dyker Heights was so desirable that important members of society flocked to it. The *Brooklyn Eagle* reported in December of 1899 that this “drain” on the more established social neighborhoods such as Brooklyn Heights and those in Manhattan, “almost threatens to lower the social tone of the neighborhoods where this universal exodus is effecting a gradual change in the character of the population.”¹⁸

One of the many focal points of the neighborhood was the Dyker Heights Club, which started in October of 1896. By spring of 1898 the Club had a \$30,000 club house designed by Albert Edward Parfitt on an \$8,500 lot, measuring 200 x 200, located on the northeast corner of Thirteenth Avenue and Eighty-Sixth Street. Johnson moved his real estate office into the club house and hired a full-time architect, Constantine Schubert, who was also a Dyker Heights homeowner. This grand, neo-classical building was sadly demolished in 1929 by the Archbishop John Hughes Knights of Columbus Club, when they acquired the property for \$60,000.

Early in the history of Dyker Heights, Walter L. Johnson continually purchased consecutive tracts of land until the boundaries of Dyker Heights stretched from Seventy-Ninth Street in the north, roughly Eighty-Sixth Street in the south, Tenth Avenue to the west, and about 300 feet east of Thirteenth Avenue to the east (**refer back to Figure 51 and see Figure 56**). However, the boundaries of the Neighborhood of Dyker Heights are now defined by the Dyker Heights Post Office on the northwest corner of 13th and 84th Streets; along its northeast edge runs Bay Ridge Avenue; Sixteenth Avenue is its southeast boundary; Fort Hamilton makes its southwest border; and Interstate 278 is the northwest limit (**refer back to Figure 10**).

The original inhabitants of Dyker Heights were mainly of Anglican background; in fact they established Saint Phillip’s Episcopal Church, which still functions today. The residents were either

¹⁴ *Wall Street Journal*, “An Ideal Spot for a Home,” October 24, 1899, p. 2. One set of stone piers still remain in Dyker Heights.

¹⁵ *Brooklyn Eagle*, “Dyker Heights Development,” December 31, 1899, p. 28.

¹⁶ *Wall Street Journal*, “An Ideal Spot for a Home,” October 24, 1899, p. 2.

¹⁷ *Wall Street Journal*, “An Ideal Spot for a Home,” October 24, 1899, p. 2.

¹⁸ *Brooklyn Eagle*, “Dyker Heights Development,” December 31, 1899, p. 28.

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local government officials or wealthy professionals. For instance, M. De Varona was Engineer of the Water Bureau, Clarence Barrow was Ex-Fire Commissioner, William C. Bryant was current Fire Commissioner, George W. Dickinson was a cotton-goods merchant, W. Bennett Wardell was a retired Judge, Richard Perry Chittenden was Assistant of the Corporation Counsel, Freeland Willcox was Secretary of the Cheeseborough Vaseline Company, and Eugene Boucher was longshoreman and insurance broker. Most residents came from the City of Brooklyn or the City of New York, but some did come from other parts of the United States or Europe. Italian-American homeowners in Dyker Heights were originally small in number and included Dr. Lorenzo Ullo, Counselor to the General Company of Italian Navigation, and Simone Saitta, a Manhattan wholesale fruit dealer. However, Walter L. Johnson did not care much for Italians, especially poor Italians. The *Brooklyn Eagle* explained a problem Johnson had with a particular Italian family in Dyker Heights, “. . . [The property] which at the time was owned by Walter L. Johnson, was occupied by an Italian family, to whom Mr. Johnson paid \$600 to vacate it in order that the neighborhood of Dyker Heights, which is very carefully restricted, might have no objectionable features about it.”¹⁹ Ironically, by 1940 Dyker Heights was inhabited by a majority of people of Italian descent many of whom helped establish the Roman Catholic Shrine Church of Saint Bernadette (ca. 1935) on 13th Avenue between 82nd and 83rd streets. Today, Italian-Americans still make up the majority of residents in Dyker Heights.

The Saitta House illustrates an age of architectural and technological modernity. The Queen Anne Style, (as well as the other architectural styles one would find in Dyker Heights: Chateausque, Jacobean, Shingle Style, and Tudor), was quickly embraced by America because the Queen Anne style, as well as the other similar styles, “suggested the wholesome countryside rather than the wicked city, which Americans have always shunned, and the style was soon assimilated into the stream of American development.”²⁰

In the 1880s, 1890s, and 1900s many people moved to New Utrecht, especially to Bensonhurst-by-the-Sea and Dyker Heights to escape the urban areas which were becoming more crowded with immigrants. In addition to the well-built houses in the popular styles of the day, the high ground, magnificent ocean view, and careful restrictions of this handsome suburb, residents were attracted to Dyker Heights because of the plethora of modern amenities – running water, indoor plumbing, gas stoves, central heating, telephones, and even electric lighting. Although these amenities seem rudimentary today, they were a luxury and not yet common in 1900.

The Saitta House

In December of 1896, Walter L. Johnson, developer of Dyker Heights, sold the 80 × 100 lot on Eighty-Fourth Street to Corinne J. Moore for an undisclosed amount of money – probably \$2,500 (see **Figure 24**). Less than one year later, Moore sold the lot to the Saitta Family for \$2,700, according to the deed in the Kings County Register’s Office. This plot was very expensive in Dyker Heights due to its placement, high on top of the hill which afforded beautiful views of New York harbor, as well as the

¹⁹ *Brooklyn Eagle*, “Used Advertising Cards,” April 5, 1897, p. 16.

²⁰ Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koeper, *American Architecture 1607-1976* (Boston: MIT Press, 1981), p. 295.

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Dyker Meadow and the Dyker Beach (now the Dyker Beach Golf Course). The Saittas then hired architect John J. Petit to design the home and builder P.J. la Note of Bensonhurst to build it. The house was most likely completed in the second half of 1899 at the approximate cost of \$14,000, according to the *Brooklyn Eagle*. The 1910 census explained that Simone Saitta was a Manhattan wholesale fruit dealer, whose specialty was artichokes. Simone, who was born in Italy in about 1860, and his wife Beatrice, who was born in about 1868, both lived at 1135 84th Street. They had at least one child, a daughter Minnie living with them in 1910. Minnie was born in New York in about 1889. In 1920, Simone was still a fruits dealer and Minnie lived at home. At this time she was a stenographer in an export house with two young children – a six-year-old son, and a five-year-old daughter; there is no mention of a husband.

It is not known why or how the Saittas contacted John J. Petit to design their home, as the first architect of Dyker Heights was Albert Edward Parfitt (of the Parfitt Brothers Architectural Firm) while the second (and main) architect was Constantine Schubert, whose office was in the Dyker Heights Club House, along with Walter L. Johnson's real estate office. Parfitt and his brothers were heavily involved in Bensonhurst, Bath Beach, and Sea Gate, which are all in southern Brooklyn. Schubert designed mostly all of the Dyker Heights homes. Petit is best known for his work in Dean Alvord's Prospect Park South (National Register listed historic district), but he was also very active in designing suburban homes in Bensonhurst and Flatbush, in fact many of his homes can be seen in the *Scientific American Building Monthly / Scientific American Architects and Building Edition*, including the Saitta House. The Saitta House is pictured on the front cover of the July 1901 issue of *Scientific American Building Edition*; in addition, it is also pictured (with the first and second floor plans) on page 104 and is described in full detail on page 115 (see **Figures 1, 2, 63, 64, 65**).

John J. Petit (1870-1923) was a Brooklyn resident and partner in the Manhattan firm of Kirby, Petit & Green. Petit was the chief architect for Dean Alvord's Prospect Park South development. The designation report for the Prospect Park South provides the following context on Petit's work:

Petit was one of a large number of turn-of-the-century architects who, in order to appeal to the eclectic interests of contemporary patrons, were proficient in the design of buildings in many stylistic variants....Petit used many forms and details that had been popular throughout the Victorian period, but rearranged these in a fresh manner to create buildings that reflected the needs of the turn-of-the-century suburban residents.

Petit was undoubtedly familiar with the architectural publications of his time, particularly with *Architecture and Building* (later *Architects' and Builders' Magazine*), a magazine that published two articles on Prospect Park South, as well as a number of separate designs by Petit. In his designs Petit incorporated stylistic details found in published architectural drawings and photographs. Although he borrowed many stylistic details from these

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sources, all of his best works show a sophisticated design sense that is lacking in the works of less skilled revival architects.²¹

Petit's design for the Saitta House is an excellent example of the Queen Anne style known for its eclecticism and flamboyance. The Queen Anne style was the dominant style of residential design from the 1880s to the early 1900s. From major design conventions, to small details, the Saitta House incorporates classic examples of the style. Characteristic of the style is its asymmetrical massing and multi-planed roof, pierced by prominent chimneys. The polygonal tower on the front façade is a popular trait of the style. Known for its asymmetrical footprint, the style also called for deviation in the vertical wall plane. This was achieved by prominent overhanging gables, bay windows, and a recessed second-story porch. The one-story porch, spanning the front facade of the first story and wrapping around the side, is another major design element common to the Queen Anne style. Known for multiple textures, the architect used contrasting stucco, wood shingles of different shapes, and half-timbering to create a textural complexity. The ornamental false half-timbering in the prominent gable ends mimics Medieval English infilled timber framing. This ornamental device is not unusual for the style which, though named "Queen Anne," actually borrowed more heavily from late Medieval models of the preceding Elizabethan and Jacobean eras. The *Scientific American Building Edition* article refers to the house as being designed in the "English half-timbered style" and the interior is in the "Elizabethan style."²²

Like the exterior, the interior displays a richness of materials and sophistication of design details. The interior is notable for its use of different types of wood for wainscoting, beamed ceilings, floors, and trim. Each fireplace is distinctly different with tile and ornate wood surrounds and mantels. The floor plan, with its varying room sizes and shapes is typical of the Queen Anne style. The house has been lovingly maintained and remains a key landmark of Dyker Heights.

Dyker Heights Today

Of the approximately 150 homes built by developer Walter L. Johnson, about half remain; while the others have been razed and replaced by large Mediterranean villas, condos, as well as semi- and fully attached homes (**see Figures 57, 58, 60-62**). Very few of these homes fit into the historic context of Dyker Heights and very few have been constructed with the high level of design, craftsmanship, and materials exhibited by the Saitta House - both inside and out. The Saitta House is significant in that it retains a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Unfortunately, many of Dyker Heights' original surviving homes have been extensively renovated and remodeled (**see Figure 59**).

While much of the historic character of Dyker Heights has been compromised or lost, the recently approved downzoning by the New York City Council will help protect the neighborhood from future

²¹ Prospect Park South Historic District Designation Report, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, February 8, 1979, p. 15

²² "A Residence at Dyker Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y." *Scientific American Building Edition* (June 1901) 115.

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overdevelopment. In addition to the efforts by local government officials to help protect the character of the neighborhood, the community should recognize those who have preserved Dyker Heights' historic houses through the years like Frank J. Santo, the owner of the Saitta House since 1975. The recently established Dyker Heights Historical Society, associated with the Dyker Heights Civic Association founded in 1928, is raising the community's awareness of its rich historic and architectural heritage. The first official action of the Historical Society is the preparation of the Saitta House National Register nomination. The Dyker Heights Historical Society will begin to help the residents of this locality finally recognize and appreciate the beauty, quality, and importance of the original homes of Dyker Heights, as well as help them learn more about the history and become prouder of this great community.

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9. Major Bibliographical References
Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by historic American Building Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 583192 4496530
Zone Easting Northing

3 18
Zone Easting Northing

2 18

4 18

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By (*See continuation sheet for author)

name/title Contact: Kathy Howe, Historic Preservation Program Analyst
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date March 15, 2007
street & number Peebles Island, P.O. Box 189 telephone 518-237-8643, ext.3266
city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Saitta House
Name of Property

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Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Frank J. Santo

street & number 1135 84th Street telephone _____

city or town Brooklyn state NY zip code 11228

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20503

STATEMENT OF OWNER SUPPORT

Before an individual nomination proposal will be reviewed or nominated, the owner(s) of record must sign and date the following statement:

I, FRANK J. SANTO am the owner of the property at
(print or type owner name)

1135 84TH STREET, BROOKLYN N.Y. 11228
(street number and name, city, village or town, state of nominated property)

I support its consideration and inclusion in the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Frank J. Santo

8/3/06

(signature and date)

1135 84TH STREET

BROOKLYN, N.Y. 11228

(mailing address)

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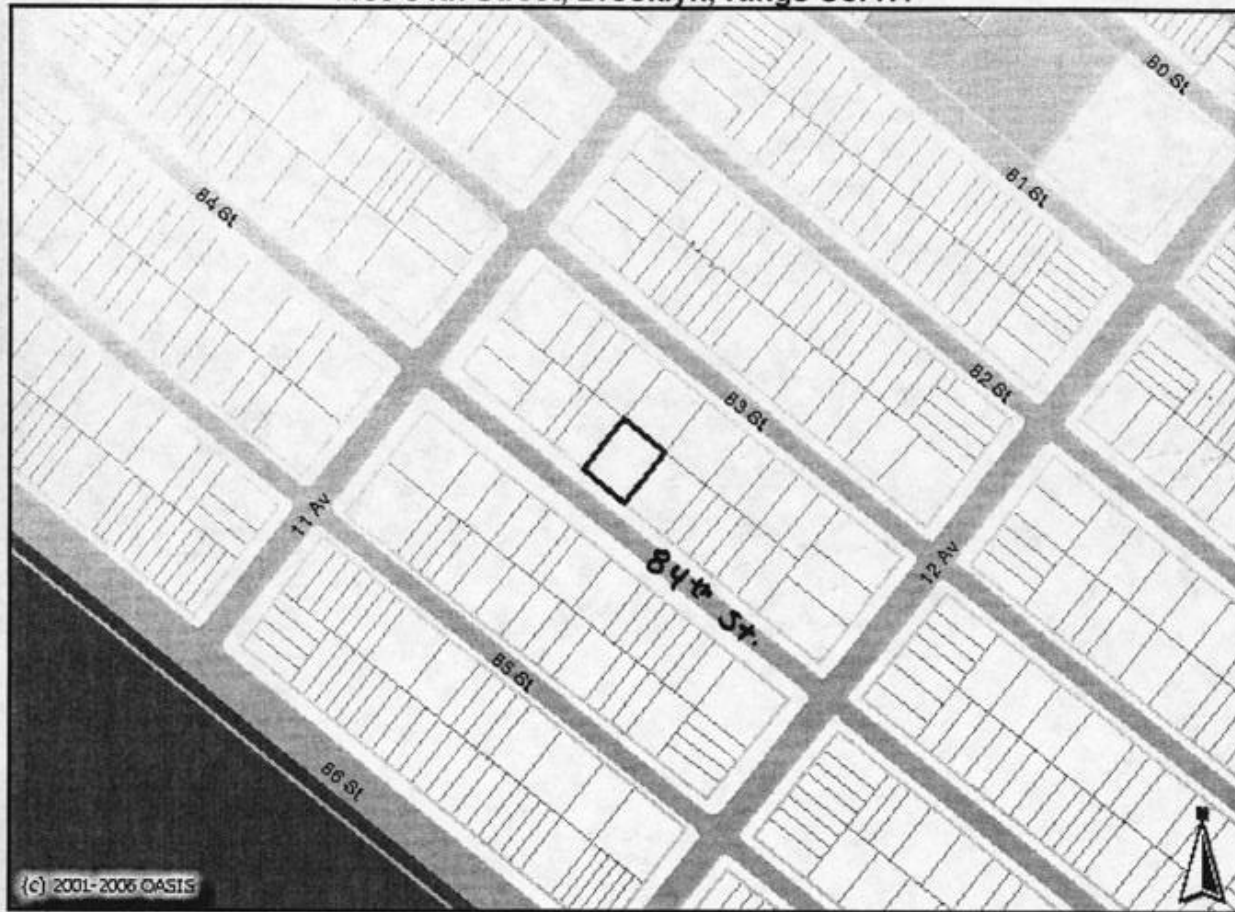
Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries are delineated on the attached tax map (block 6307, lot 64). The lot is 80 feet wide by 100 feet deep.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries encompass block 6307, lot 64, which are historically and currently associated with the Saitta House.

OASIS Map
1135 84th Street, Brooklyn, Kings Co. NY



(c) 2001-2006 OASIS

Saitta House
1135 84th Street
Brooklyn, Kings County, NY

Nomination boundary indicated by dark line
Block 6307, Lot 64, Brooklyn
Lot frontage: 80' Lot depth: 100'
Scale: 3/4" = approx. 200'
Source: NYC Oasis map (www.OASISnyc.net), 2007.

THE NARROWS QUADRANGLE
 NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY
 7.5-MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

2'30" 1 990 000 FEET (NY LONG ISLAND) '83 '84 74°00' 40°37'30"



Saitta House
 1135 84th Street
 Brooklyn, Kings Co,
 N.Y.

Zone 18

140 000 FEET
 (NY LONG ISLAND)
 Easting 583192
 Northing 4496530
 Narrows Quad
 USGS
 1:24000

US MILITARY RES
 FORT HAMILTON

Norton Point
 Coney Island
 Lighthouse
 BROOKLYN
 Coney Island
 Coney Is

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Form prepared by

Christian J. Zaino,
Founder and Current President
Dyker Heights Historical Society
1126 84th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11228
cjz208@nyu.edu

It should be noted that C. David Elligers of the *Friends of Historic New Utrecht* believes that the Saitta House was built by **P.J. Van Note**, and not P.J. La Note as was written in *Scientific American Building Edition*. Mr. Elligers thinks this was a spelling error and has provided a newspaper advertisement proving that P.J. Van Note was involved in construction in this area in the late 1890s. It is from the *Bayside Review* (5 September 1900, p.17).

In addition, Mr. Elligers stated that Van Note built the New Utrecht Reformed Church Parsonage on 83rd Street in 1906 and that he worked on the New Utrecht Reformed Church Chapel (which is now the Parish House).


Since the Saitta House was listed with La Note as the builder, this document was printed without change. We have provided this information for your consideration and are greatly appreciative of Mr. Elligers.

THE FAIR HERALD.

It was Ruskin who said . .

"I would have our ordinary dwelling houses built to last, and built to be lovely; as rich and full of pleasantness as may be, within and without."
Built to last, and be lovely! That's the ideal! From foundation to peak, all strength, beauty, durability!

Sturdy buildings require a careful builder. For such a one we recommend



P. J. VAN NOTE
207 Bay 35th St., bet. Cropsey and
Bath Aves., Bensonhurst.
Telephone, 32 Bath Beach.