

# Chester Court Historic District Designation Report

December 16, 2014



Cover Photograph:  
Chester Court Historic District, looking west  
*Christopher D. Brazee, 2014*

# Chester Court Historic District Designation Report

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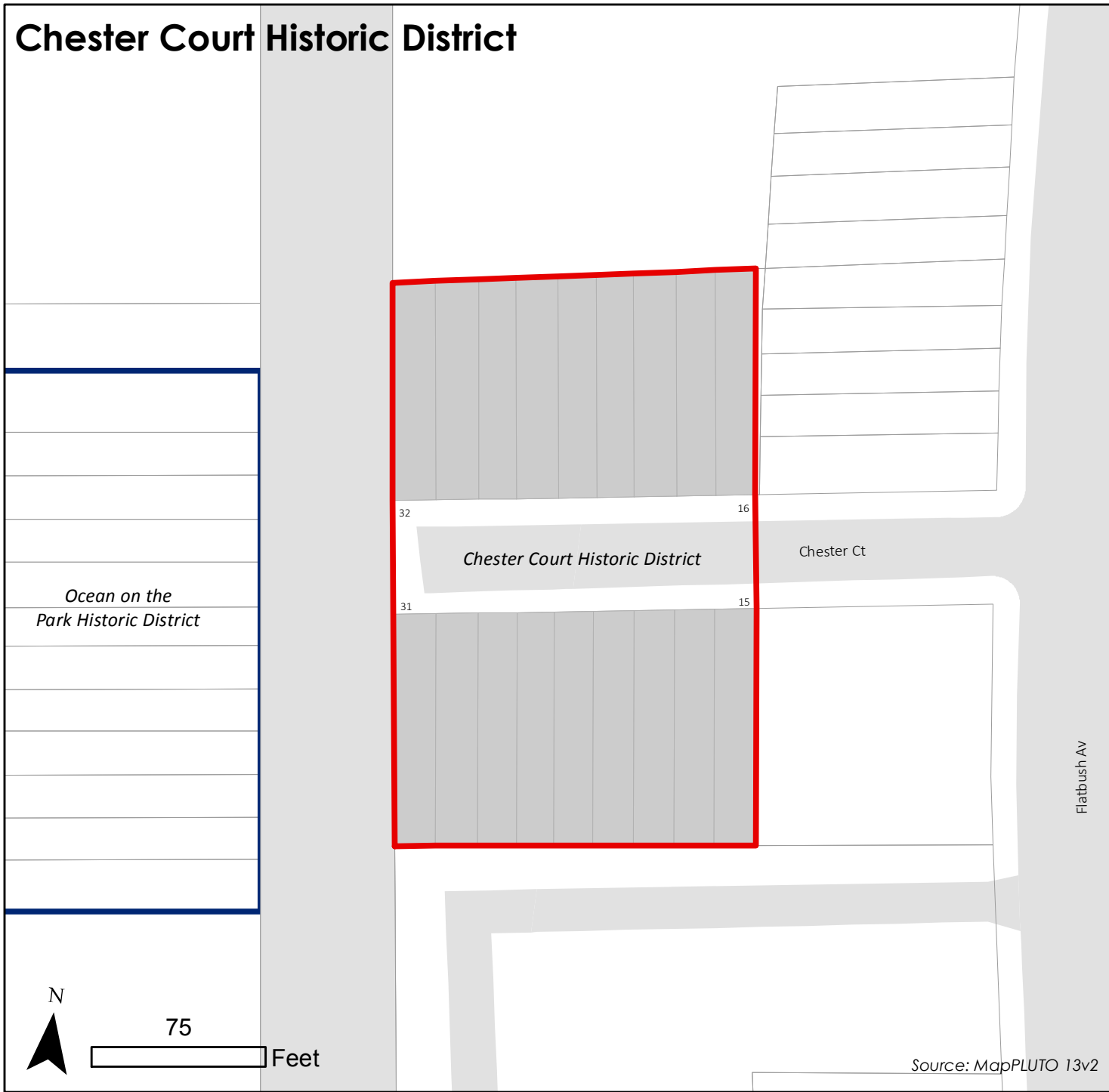
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHESTER COURT HISTORIC DISTRICT MAP .....	Facing Page 1
TESTIMONY AT THE PUBLIC HEARING .....	1
CHESTER COURT HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARIES .....	1
SUMMARY .....	2
THE HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHESTER COURT HISTORIC DISTRICT .....	3
<i>Flatbush</i> .....	3
<i>Peter J. Collins</i> .....	5
<i>Chester Court</i> .....	7
<i>The Design of Chester Court</i> .....	11
FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION .....	14
BUILDING ENTRIES .....	15
<i>Chester Court (odd numbers)</i> .....	15
<i>Chester Court (even numbers)</i> .....	24
ILLUSTRATIONS .....	Following Page 33

# Chester Court Historic District



Chester Court Historic District  
Borough of Brooklyn

Calendared: October 28, 2014  
Public Hearing:  
November 25, 2014  
Designated: December 16, 2014

- Chester Court Historic District
- Tax Lots in Proposed District
- Existing Historic Districts

**NYC**<sup>TM</sup>  
**Landmarks Preservation  
Commission**

Source: MapPLUTO 13v2

**TESTIMONY AT THE PUBLIC HEARING**

On November 25, 2014, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Chester Court Historic District (Item No. 1). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Seven people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, the Chester Court Block Association, Historic Districts Council, Lefferts Manor Association and Community Board Nine, and the Real Estate Board of New York. The public hearing was then closed and reopened to hear the testimony of Council Member Mathieu Eugene and of a representative of the Prospect Lefferts Gardens Neighborhood Association, both of whom spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to the proposed designation.

**CHESTER COURT HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARIES**

The Chester Court Historic District consists of the properties bounded by a line beginning at the southeastern corner of 16 Chester Court, then extending northerly along the eastern property line of 16 Chester Court, westerly along the northern property lines of 16 through 32 Chester Court, southerly along the western property line of 32 Chester Court, continuing southerly along a line extending from the western property line of 32 Chester Court to the western property line of 31 Chester Court, along the western property line of 31 Chester Court, easterly along the southern property lines of 31 through 15 Chester Court, northerly along the eastern property line of 15 Chester Court, and northerly across Chester Court to the point of beginning. The boundary description is intended to encompass the wall adjacent to the western edge of Chester Court between lot 168 (32 Chester Court) and lot 169 (31 Chester Court).

## SUMMARY

The Chester Court Historic District consists of a picturesque assemblage of 18 Tudor Revival style houses set in two opposing rows along a cul-de-sac, along with an original brick wall that terminates the block. It was designed and built in 1911-12 by Peter J. Collins (1866-1934), a prominent Brooklyn architect and developer who was born and raised in Brooklyn and served as the borough's Superintendent of Buildings. Although the Tudor Revival was well-established in Brooklyn by this time as a style for freestanding houses, it had not been widely used for row houses, and the Chester Court houses are likely among the earliest Tudor Revival style row houses in the borough, if not the entire city. Their design was inspired by the renowned timber-framed "black-and-white" or "magpie" buildings of Chester, England, which primarily date from the 16th and 17th centuries, and from the "Black-and-White Revival" of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Soon after their completion, the Chester Court houses were described as "unique in style" by the *Brooklyn Eagle*, which noted, "So quaint in character is the street ... that it has come to be known by its neighbors as 'Pommander [sic] Walk,'" after the then-popular romantic comedy set on a tiny 18th-century London street. Collins promoted the dwellings as "beautiful brick, English half timber and stucco one-family houses" set in the "most convenient location in the city," with modern conveniences and an "easy housekeeping plan" that minimized the need for servants.

Chester Court's houses are faced with Flemish-bond red brick at their first stories and stucco with false half-timbering above, alternating square-headed and round-headed openings at their first stories and angled and straight-sided oriels at their second stories. They remain remarkably well-preserved, as all of the houses retain their original clay-tile roofs and many retain their historic wood doors. The wall at the end of Chester Court, which is attributed to Collins, screens out the adjacent Brighton subway line and contributes to the sense of the district as a distinctive self-contained enclave. Constructed of red brick matching that of the Chester Court houses, it features Flemish-bond pilasters and recessed decorative panels laid in English bond. Today, Chester Court remains the inviting small street envisioned by Peter J. Collins more than a century ago, an unusually early grouping of row houses inspired by English medieval architecture that is strikingly unchanged from its early-20th-century appearance.



## THE HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHESTER COURT HISTORIC DISTRICT

### *Flatbush*<sup>1</sup>

The area now known as Flatbush was formerly home to the Canarsee band of the Lenape, whose principal settlement, Keskachane, was located near the intersection of modern-day Flatbush Avenue and King's Highway. A trail through the area, called Mechawanienk, along with its adjoining paths, provided the Canarsee with access to campsites along the shore for fish and shellfish, the woods for fuel and game, and arable land for agriculture.<sup>2</sup> The Dutch habitation of the area began around the mid-1630s when three plots known to the Dutch as "flats" were "purchased" from the Canarsee.<sup>3</sup> In 1652, Peter Stuyvesant, the Director General of the New Netherland colony, established the farming hamlet of Midwout or Midwood. By 1658, Midwout, or Flatbush, had become the county seat and an important market town. After the British took control of New Netherland in 1664, renaming it New York, the county seat was moved to Gravesend. In 1685, the county seat returned to the more centrally located Flatbush, its courthouse, school and Dutch Reformed church clustered around the present-day intersection of Church and Flatbush Avenues.

Up to and for most of the 19th century, Flatbush was largely rural, with a predominantly agricultural economy. Slave labor, which was established in Kings County soon after 1660, was a crucial component of this economy, and it was particularly widespread among the county's old Dutch families. By 1749, there were 783 slaves in Flatbush, and in 1790, the town had 390 slaves, about the same as its white male population. Male slaves generally worked as field hands, while female slaves toiled in domestic work; two-thirds of white households in Flatbush owned slaves at the end of the 18th century, a percentage exceeding that of South Carolina. Slavery thrived in Flatbush until 1827, when it was officially abolished in New York State.

Agriculture remained the backbone of Flatbush's economy well after Emancipation; as late as the 1880s, "Flatbush and the other rural Dutch towns in Kings County were known as the 'Market Garden of America.'"<sup>4</sup> At the same time, transportation and infrastructure improvements, including the 1883 opening of the Brooklyn Bridge, were spurring the town's transformation into a major center of suburban development.<sup>5</sup> Also enticing residential developers was Prospect Park, the celebrated Olmsted & Vaux work that attracted visitors from throughout the area following its 1873 completion.<sup>6</sup> The area's key railroad improvement was

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<sup>1</sup> This section is largely adapted from the introductory essay to Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Fiske Terrace-Midwood Park Historic District Designation Report* (LP-2208) (New York: City of New York, 2007), prepared by Michael Caratzas; and LPC, *Ocean on the Park Historic District Designation Report* (LP-2334) (New York: City of New York, 2009), prepared by Marianne S. Percival. Other sources include John B. Manbeck, Ed., *The Neighborhoods of Brooklyn* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1998), 116-122.

<sup>2</sup> Mechawanienk ran along a similar route to today's King's Highway.

<sup>3</sup> "Purchases" that the Europeans deemed outright transfers of property were, to Native Americans, more akin to leases or joint tenancy contracts allowing them continuing rights to the property.

<sup>4</sup> Marc Linder and Lawrence C. Zacharias, *Of Cabbages and Kings County: Agriculture and the Formation of Modern Brooklyn* (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1999), 3.

<sup>5</sup> Also significant was the opening of Flatbush Avenue between Brooklyn and downtown Flatbush in 1858. The Brooklyn Bridge (John A., Washington, and Emily Roebling, 1867-83) is a designated New York City Landmark.

<sup>6</sup> Prospect Park is a designated New York City Scenic Landmark.

the 1878 opening of the Brooklyn, Flatbush & Coney Island Railroad, the forerunner of today's Brighton (Q and B) subway line, which adjoins the Chester Court Historic District on its west.<sup>7</sup> The railroad, which originally linked Brighton Beach with the Long Island Rail Road's Flatbush Avenue terminal, was reorganized in 1887 as the Brooklyn and Brighton Beach Railroad. In 1896, a link was constructed to the Fulton Street Elevated, permitting through service to the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge; in 1901, the newly electrified line, recently acquired by the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company, was extended over the bridge, providing a direct link to Park Row in Lower Manhattan.<sup>8</sup>

Scattered residential development was occurring in Flatbush by the late 1870s, but the first major construction of freestanding suburban-type houses began in 1886 when Richard Ficken, a local entrepreneur, began the lavish Tennis Court development just south of Prospect Park. Similar projects initiated by various developers soon followed, including Prospect Park South, Ditmas Park, Fiske Terrace, and Midwood Park, which were started between 1899 and 1905.<sup>9</sup> Closer to Chester Court, in 1893, James Lefferts subdivided his family farm into 600 lots for the construction of Lefferts Manor, a high-grade middle-class residential development now contained within the Prospect-Lefferts Gardens Historic District.<sup>10</sup> Row houses first appeared in Flatbush soon afterward, when a group of four Romanesque Revival/Renaissance Revival style residences was constructed in 1895 at 185-191 Lincoln Road, just outside of Lefferts Manor but within the Prospect-Lefferts Gardens Historic District. Between 1897 and 1899, over 160 dwellings of various types were constructed in this area of Flatbush. Construction ground to a halt following the Panic of 1903, but picked up beginning in 1905 and continued unabated until 1911, the year Chester Court was begun.

Continuing transportation improvements fueled the urbanization of Flatbush in the early 20th century. An extensive upgrade of the Brighton Beach Line completed in 1908 eliminated all grade-crossings and expanded the line from two tracks to four between Brighton Beach and Church Avenue.<sup>11</sup> Between 1916 and 1920, the portion of the line between Church Avenue and the Prospect Park station was expanded to four tracks and a new tunnel was completed under Flatbush Avenue linking that station with a new DeKalb Avenue station, from which passengers could continue to Manhattan over the Manhattan Bridge or through the Montague Street tunnel.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The railroad, whose southern terminus was a grand hotel constructed by the railroad company at Brighton Beach, traveled through Flatbush to the approximate location of today's Prospect Park subway station, at the intersection of Flatbush Avenue and Empire Boulevard. From there, it headed northeast over the route of today's Franklin Avenue Shuttle, before swinging west at Atlantic Avenue to travel along tracks that were leased from the Long Island Rail Road. See Brian J. Cudahy, *How We Got to Coney Island: The Development of Mass Transportation in Brooklyn and Kings County* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 87-92.

<sup>8</sup> "Through Bridge Trains Beginning Next Monday," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, January 14, 1901, 20. The Fulton Street Elevated was shut down in 1940 following the opening of the Fulton Street subway line.

<sup>9</sup> For additional information, see LPC, *Prospect Park South Historic District Designation Report* (LP-0979) (New York: City of New York, 1979); LPC, *Ditmas Park Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1236) (New York: City of New York, 1981); and LPC, *Fiske Terrace-Midwood Park Historic District Designation Report*.

<sup>10</sup> The Lefferts Manor development was bounded by Lincoln Road, Fenimore Street, Flatbush Avenue and Rogers Avenue.

<sup>11</sup> "Brighton Beach Line Completed; Elimination of Grade Crossings," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, April 12, 1908, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Cudahy, 209-14; "Preparing Brighton Beach Line for Subway Traffic," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 30, 1916, 17; "New Subway Opening," *Brooklyn Life* (July 31, 1920), 15. The present-day Franklin Avenue line linking the

As Flatbush became more convenient for commuters, many freestanding houses were replaced by large apartment buildings. New residents, including Jews from the crowded neighborhoods of Williamsburg, Brownsville, and the Lower East Side, were drawn to Flatbush from throughout the region; in 1929, one-third of Flatbush's 400,000 residents were Jewish. After World War II, Flatbush attracted immigrants from the Caribbean, East Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Soviet Union, and Central America. From 1970 to 1980, Flatbush changed from 85% white to 80% non-white as it became a major destination for immigrants from Haiti and other Caribbean countries, including Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and the Dominican Republic. As in other Brooklyn neighborhoods, the white population has been increasing in recent years. From 2000 to 2010 in the area surrounding Chester Court, the white population quintupled, while the Asian population doubled and the black population fell by 20%.<sup>13</sup>

*Peter J. Collins*<sup>14</sup>

The architect and builder of Chester Court, Peter J. Collins, was born in Brooklyn in 1866 to Irish immigrants Catherine and Peter Collins. Both his father and his uncle, William Flanagan, were well-known Brooklyn builders. Although census records show Peter J. Collins employed as

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Prospect Park station with Fulton Street is a relic of the original Brooklyn, Flatbush & Coney Island right-of-way, its use drastically cut back after the Brighton Line was rerouted into the new Flatbush Avenue tunnel.

<sup>13</sup> This census tract extends from the Brighton subway line eastward to Flatbush Avenue, and from Lincoln Road southward to Parkside Avenue.

<sup>14</sup> Sources for this section include "Dull Times in Real Estate Market—The Week Without a Feature," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 23, 1902, 8; "To Announce Men To-Day," *New York Tribune*, December 17, 1903, 4; "Regan, Collins, O'Keefe Appointed by Littleton," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 22, 1903, 1; "Two M'Laughlin Men: Littleton Announces Some of His Appointments," *New York Tribune*, December 23, 1903, 5; "City Officials Act to Make Theatres Safe," *New York World*, January 5, 1904, 1; "Closes Galleries of Six Brooklyn Theatres," *New York Times*, January 10, 1904, 8; "To Safeguard Theaters," *New York Times*, February 11, 1904, 9; "Putty 'Rivets' Found in Brooklyn Buildings," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 5, 1904, 1; "Brooklyn Using Fake Rivets," *New York Times*, March 6, 1904, 20; "Peter Collins" (Obituary), *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 6, 1904, 3; "Probe Church Horror," *New York Tribune*, March 1, 1905, 9; "Peter J. Collins' Superior Brick Two-Family Houses" (Advertisement), *New York Times*, August 25, 1906, 12; "Back from Europe," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, February 10, 1907, 33; "Changes of Residence," *Brooklyn Life* (November 28, 1908), 17; "Charming One-Family Houses" (Advertisement), *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 27, 1911, 13; "Charming Flatbush Homes" (Advertisement), *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 30, 1911, 12; "Type of Eighteen Stucco Houses to Be Erected at Sea Gate," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 3, 1911, IV:12; "Mary Fabian Collins" (Obituary), *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 18, 1912, 2; "Peter J. Collins Very Ill," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 14, 1912, 1; "Big Flatbush Deal: 20 Houses to Be Built on Lefferts Property by P.J. Collins," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 19, 1914, II:7; "Plan 20 New Homes for Rutland Road," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 21, 1914, 8; "Peter J. Collins' Rutland Road Houses" (Advertisement), *Brooklyn Life* (October 23, 1915), 37; "New Rutland Road Dwelling Sold," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 18, 1915, 15; "Peter J. Collins' Brick One-Family Houses" (Advertisement), *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 24, 1916, IV:18; "Burglars Get \$1,000 in P.J. Collins' Home," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 22, 1919, 4; "One Builder, on Single Job, Spends \$150,000 over Estimate; Another Beats Costs by Building in Ohio—What's the Answer?," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 22, 1920, II:1; "To Finish Court House Before Contract Time," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 21, 1931, D1; "Lay Stone of New Court," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 21, 1931, 2; "Peter J. Collins, Architect, Dies at Age of 68 Years," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, November 26, 1934, 15; "Peter J. Collins: Ex-Superintendent of Buildings in Brooklyn Dies at 68," *New York Herald Tribune*, November 27, 1934, 23; "Peter J. Collins Sr.: Former Superintendent of Buildings in Brooklyn," *New York Times*, November 27, 1934, 21; "Peter J. Collins Estate \$70,292," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, January 24, 1940, 11; "Frank C. Collins, Architect; Funeral Set for Tomorrow," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, February 20, 1951, 9; LPC, *Prospect-Lefferts Gardens Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1024) (New York: City of New York, 1979); and United States Census (Brooklyn, Kings County, New York, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930).

a store clerk at the age of 13, he later attended St. John's College (now St. John's University), which was then located in Brooklyn, and was "one of the first to complete the architectural course at the Pratt Institute."<sup>15</sup> He entered the building business around the age of 20, first apprenticing with his uncle, and later working in partnership with his cousin Peter F. Delaney. After his partnership with Delaney ended in 1900, Collins specialized in "the designing and erection of the finest equipped private residences to be found in Brooklyn" according to the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, which noted in 1902 that Collins, Delaney, and Flanagan had "done most of the building of fine private houses in recent years" in Park Slope.<sup>16</sup>

In December of 1903, Collins was chosen by Borough President-elect Martin W. Littleton to serve as Brooklyn's Superintendent of Buildings beginning in 1904. At that time, Collins was described as "a civil engineer and architect and a practical builder."<sup>17</sup> Following Chicago's Iroquois Theater fire on December 30, 1903 which killed more than 600 people, 19 Brooklyn theaters were inspected by the Buildings Department and Collins closed six theater galleries over safety concerns. Collins' inspectors also discovered the use of putty "rivets" in Brooklyn buildings, which were described as "merely a dab of putty on a beam or girder at a point where a real rivet should be."<sup>18</sup> Following the 1905 collapse of the Fleet Street African Methodist Episcopal Church which resulted in the deaths of 11 congregants and injuries to many others, Collins was sued for negligence by several of the injured and by those who had lost family members, although the resolution of these cases is unclear.<sup>19</sup>

After finishing his term as Superintendent of Buildings, Collins returned to home building, including the construction in 1906 of "superior brick two-family houses" with "artistic, original, and attractive fronts" on 49th Street between 11th and New Utrecht Avenues.<sup>20</sup> In 1907, he married the former Mary Fabian Reilly; they would have two sons together, Peter J. Collins Jr. and Archibald. In the following year, the Collinses moved from 9 Prospect Park West into an impressive new Tudor Revival style house at 135 Westminster Road in Prospect Park South designed by Collins' younger brother Frank, an architect who worked for a number of architectural firms over the course of his career, including Carrère and Hastings.<sup>21</sup> In 1911, Peter J. Collins entered into a brief partnership with another Brooklyn builder, Richard P. Sherlock, and the two completed a row of "charming one-family houses" with limestone fronts on East 5th Street between Church Avenue and Albemarle Road.<sup>22</sup> Later that year, working on his own,

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<sup>15</sup> "Regan, Collins, O'Keefe Appointed by Littleton."

<sup>16</sup> "Regan, Collins, O'Keefe Appointed by Littleton"; "Dull Times in Real Estate Market—The Week Without a Feature."

<sup>17</sup> "Two M'Laughlin Men: Littleton Announces Some of His Appointments."

<sup>18</sup> "Brooklyn Using Fake Rivets." According to this article, "This false and dangerous work ... had been found only in small buildings, the larger buildings in the borough having been found to be, for the most part, honestly constructed."

<sup>19</sup> The suits contended that the collapse resulted from inadequate inspection by the Buildings Department. Although they were intended to "establish whether or not a public official is personally liable for accidents that happen through the neglect of subordinates in his department," their outcomes do not appear to have been reported in the press. "Church Collapse Suits," *New York Tribune*, June 4, 1905, 5.

<sup>20</sup> "Peter J. Collins' Superior Brick Two-Family Houses."

<sup>21</sup> This house is within the Prospect Park South Historic District.

<sup>22</sup> "Charming One Family Houses"; "Charming Flatbush Homes."

Collins designed 18 freestanding stucco houses for Brooklyn's private Sea Gate community.<sup>23</sup> Following the construction of the Chester Court houses in 1911 to 1912, and the death of his wife Mary in the latter year, Collins constructed two rows of single-family houses on nearby Rutland Road that were essentially identical to those of Chester Court.<sup>24</sup> By 1916, he completed another row, in the Federal Revival style, along both sides of Caton Avenue west of East 4th Street, and by 1921, he finished the row houses at 94-116 Rutland Road which combine Georgian, Federal, and Tudor Revival style elements.<sup>25</sup> As these houses were being constructed, Collins told the press that he planned to "lay off" following their completion.<sup>26</sup> For a time, Collins served as President of the Prospect Park South Association, a homeowners' group that was formed to prevent commercial incursions into the neighborhood.

The 1930 Census places Collins at his home on Westminster Road with both his sons, his sisters Penelope and Loretta, and his brother Frank. In 1930-32, Peter and Frank, as Collins & Collins Architects, completed the Renaissance Revival style Brooklyn Central Court Building at the corner of Smith and Schermerhorn Streets. Peter J. Collins died at his home in November of 1934 at the age of 68, and was buried in Calvary Cemetery in Queens.

### *Chester Court*<sup>27</sup>

The site of the Chester Court Historic District was once owned by Jeremiah Vanderbilt, a descendant of Jan Aertsen Vanderbilt, and may have been part of a land patent granted by Peter Stuyvesant in 1661. The Vanderbilt holdings, which extended westward from what is now Flatbush Avenue, remained intact for several generations until the death of John Vanderbilt, great-great-grandson of Jan Aertsen, in 1812, when it was divided between his surviving sons

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<sup>23</sup> Whether these houses were ultimately built is unknown.

<sup>24</sup> These houses are within the Prospect-Lefferts Gardens Historic District.

<sup>25</sup> The houses at 96-116 Rutland Road are within the Prospect-Lefferts Gardens Historic District.

<sup>26</sup> "One Builder, on Single Job, Spends \$150,000 over Estimate; Another Beats Costs by Building in Ohio—What's the Answer?"

<sup>27</sup> Portions of this section are adapted from LPC, *Ocean on the Park Historic District Designation Report*. Other sources include "Old Vanderbilt Homestead, Which Is to Be Dismantled," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 28, 1911, 9; "In the Field of Realty and Building Activity," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 2, 1911, 16; "New Street for Flatbush," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 10, 1911, II:2; "New Street for Flatbush" and "New Houses for Flatbush Section," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 28, 1911, III:4; "Peter J. Collins Very Ill"; "Old Flatbush Homes are Disappearing Fast," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 24, 1911, II:3; "Peter J. Collins' Chester Court Houses" (Advertisement), *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 22, 1912, 12; "Legal Notices," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 6, 1912, 13; "Peter J. Collins' Chester Court Houses" (Advertisement), *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 6, 1912, 11; "Largest Public Improvement Calendar of Year—Real Estate News," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 13, 1912, II:8; "Two Architectural Periods in Flatbush History," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 3, 1912, II:8; "City May Get Flatbush Relic," *New York Sun*, August 11, 1912, 11; "Houses in Chester Court, Flatbush, Sold," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 15, 1912, IV:8; "Chester Court One Family Houses" (Advertisement), *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, April 23, 1913, 14; "Chester Court" (Advertisement), *Brooklyn Daily Standard Union*, May 3, 1913, 41; "Real Estate News: Big Flatbush Deal," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 19, 1914, II:7; "Plan 20 New Homes for Rutland Road"; "Servant Problems Solved by Builders," *New York Sun*, February 8, 1917, 15; "The Jeremiah Vanderbilt House," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 17, 1925, C6; "Apartment House to Replace Old Landmark of Flatbush," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 25, 1926, 1; "Flatbush Project in \$2,100,000 Building Plans," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 29, 1926, D1; United States Census (Brooklyn, Kings County, New York, 1920, 1930, 1940); and Daniel E. Sutherland, *Americans and Their Servants: Domestic Service in the United States from 1800 to 1920* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1981). On the proliferation of small apartments in Brooklyn, see "Brooklyn's Apartment House Development Active on the Heights and Prospect Park," *New York Times*, August 28, 1910, X10.

Jeremiah (1778-1853) and John (1794-1843). Jeremiah and John continued to farm the family land with slave labor into the 1820s. In the late 19th century, the construction of Prospect Park consumed much of the western portion of the former Vanderbilt lands, which were further divided when the Brooklyn, Flatbush & Coney Island Railroad obtained easements to lay its line from Lincoln Road to Parkside Avenue.

Peter J. Collins completed the acquisition of properties for his Chester Court development in 1911.<sup>28</sup> Among Collins' acquisitions was the Jeremiah Vanderbilt House, also known as the "old Vanderbilt homestead," a wood-framed, gambrel-roofed structure that was believed to date from the late 18th or early 19th century; located just north of where Chester Court was to be cut through, the Vanderbilt house was considered "one of the few remaining landmarks of Flatbush."<sup>29</sup> Although Collins stripped its interior, selling its mantels, doors, and other furnishings to an antiques collector, he soon proposed donating the house for use as a museum.<sup>30</sup> His efforts never came to fruition, however, and although the house continued to stand for many years, serving as an automobile repair shop in the mid-1920s, it was ultimately demolished. In 1926, another Collins parcel at the southwest corner of Flatbush Avenue and Chester Court was sold to a group of builders who constructed a six-story apartment house.<sup>31</sup>

The new development was announced in September of 1911 in the *Brooklyn Eagle*, which stated that Collins had "taken out plans for the opening of a street ... on which he will erect 18 one-family houses. They will be designed after houses Mr. Collins saw in Chester, England last summer. The new street will extend from Flatbush Avenue to the Brighton Beach Railroad and will be called Chester Court."<sup>32</sup> One month later, the *Eagle* elaborated on Collins' plans, explaining that Chester Court would be cut through "64 feet north of Fenimore Street" and that the houses were "to be of tapestry brick lower part and stucco with half timbering in the upper half. A brick wall will be built at the blind end of the street."<sup>33</sup> A rendering accompanying the

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<sup>28</sup> Property records in the Brooklyn City Register's office show Collins conveying these properties to his Brighton Building Company, but the company's name did not appear on Department of Buildings filings or in advertisements for the Chester Court development, which was billed as "Peter J. Collins' Chester Court Houses."

<sup>29</sup> "Old Vanderbilt Homestead, Which Is to Be Dismantled." The address of the house was 610 Flatbush Avenue. Photos of this house exist in the collections of the Museum of the City of New York and New-York Historical Society.

<sup>30</sup> "Mr. Collins believes that very soon the last relic of old Flatbush will be removed, so rapidly are the landmarks disappearing from the old town," the *Brooklyn Eagle* reported, "and anxious to see at least one of them preserved as a reminder of the past history of the section, he has decided to present the Vanderbilt house to the city" ("Two Architectural Periods in Flatbush History").

<sup>31</sup> This resulted in the demolition of an old freestanding wood house described by the *Eagle* as "the old Becker homestead." Collins' purpose in purchasing property that extended to Flatbush Avenue was that he initially intended to erect apartment houses fronting on Flatbush Avenue after Chester Court was completed.

<sup>32</sup> "Old Vanderbilt Homestead, Which Is to be Dismantled." For unknown reasons, accounts in the *Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* indicate that Collins filed the plans for the houses on the south side of Chester Court in the fall of 1911, and for those on the north side of Chester Court in the summer of 1912. See *Real Estate Record and Guide Brooklyn-Long Island Edition* (October 28, 1911), 361, which gives the plan number for the south-side houses as 6607-11; and the same journal (July 6, 1912), 35, which gives the plan number for the north-side houses as 4056-12. Information written on the property folders at the Brooklyn Department of Buildings concurs with NB 6607-11 for the south-side houses, but gives the NB number for the north-side houses as 3624-12. The folders contain almost no construction records.

<sup>33</sup> "New Street for Flatbush."

article (Figure 1) showed a group of five Chester Court houses, matching, with only minor differences, their completed condition.

Work proceeded rapidly on the development. The first advertisements started appearing in the *Eagle* by June of 1912, when a large advertisement touted Chester Court's location "one block south of Prospect Park Express Station, Brighton Beach 'L'.... Most convenient location in the city." The dwellings themselves were "beautiful brick, English half timber and stucco one-family houses," each with "nine large rooms and bath; electric lights; steam heat; parquet floors; tiled kitchen and baths; laundry and extra toilet in cellar; maid's room and billiard room on third floor." Priced at \$7,750, the houses were said to be "equal to any \$9,500 house in Flatbush."<sup>34</sup>

These advertisements also promoted the houses' "easy housekeeping plan." This term appears to have originated around 1909, when the Brooklyn developer Realty Associates promoted its new "easy housekeeping homes" on Sterling Street between Rogers and Nostrand Avenues.<sup>35</sup> "Easy housekeeping dwellings," the *New York Sun* explained, "need no maids to keep them in order."<sup>36</sup> Indeed, they were largely a response to the "servant problem," a much-commented-upon trend of the early 20th century in which servants had become too scarce or expensive for many homeowners.<sup>37</sup> The easy housekeeping formula combined an efficient plan—including the removal of spaces that had previously been needed to maintain appropriate distance between the family and its "help"—with labor-saving technologies such as steam heat, gas stoves, electric irons, and vacuum cleaners. In contrast to the compartmentalized interiors of the past, this new kind of home was open: "the housekeeper can go 'right through' it," the *Sun* explained,

and when the house is tidied up it stays that way. The basement laundry is a decided feature, for it removes all the terrors of wash day and ironing day with their confusion, odors, heat, and damp.... But arrangement is not the only thing that makes 'Easy Housekeeping' homes attractive. Parquet floors make heavy carpets and much sweeping quite unnecessary. Tiled bathrooms and kitchens need to be wiped up but once in a while to be spick and span....<sup>38</sup>

In July of 1912, the City of New York officially changed its street map to include the new Chester Court. In December of that year, the *Eagle* reported that two houses—23 and 25 Chester Court—had been sold. Advertisements for Chester Court promoting the houses as "ideal homes for medium-sized families" continued into the fall of 1913. In the spring of 1914, the *Eagle* described the Chester Court houses as "unique in style," saying that they "combine the old English suburban exterior with the American arrangement of rooms. So quaint in character is the street, which extends from Flatbush Avenue to the Brighton Beach Railroad, that it has come to

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<sup>34</sup> "Peter J. Collins' Chester Court Houses," June 22, 1912.

<sup>35</sup> See "Easy Housekeeping" (Advertisement), *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 9, 1909, 9.

<sup>36</sup> "Servant Problems Solved by Builders."

<sup>37</sup> This resulted from several socioeconomic trends, including the increasing expense of urban living, broadening homeownership among the middle and upper-middle classes, and the opening up of new occupational opportunities to women—especially white women—for whom domestic service had long been a job of last resort. In the early 20th century, live-in servants toiled in one of the least desirable, most-stigmatized jobs in the country: on-call at all hours, they lacked freedom and privacy, their working and private lives controlled by their employers.

<sup>38</sup> "Servant Problems Solved by Builders."

be known by its neighbors as ‘Pommander [sic] Walk,’” after the then-popular romantic comedy set on a tiny street in 18th-century London.<sup>39</sup>

Early on, the Chester Court houses were typically occupied by small families with one or two children and headed by men who worked in professional occupations. None of their wives worked outside the home. The heads of household included, in 1920, the superintendent of a lighting company, Arthur Tizley, in No. 15; a glass manufacturer, James W. Wilson, in No. 19; two lawyers in general practice, Edward J. Connelly and Joseph A. Bennett, in Nos. 23 and 24, respectively; and a paper merchant, John Wight, in No. 29. Most of the street’s residents were American-born, although Tizley had immigrated from England and Wilson from Canada. In keeping with the marketing of Chester Court’s “easy housekeeping” homes, eight of the street’s 18 families made do without live-in servants. Those that did often found them through classifieds in the *Brooklyn Eagle*; As was typical, these advertisements frequently specified applicants of particular races or ethnic backgrounds, reflecting employers’ personal preferences and the stereotypes of the time.<sup>40</sup> One 1912 want ad for 23 Chester Court requested an “experienced Polish, Swedish, Norwegian, or German girl”; another from 1918 for 18 Chester Court began “Girl, general housework, white.”<sup>41</sup> Many of Chester Court’s servants were native New Yorkers, but others were immigrants from Switzerland, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, and Lithuania. In 1920, Virginia-born Mary Hurt, a 24-year-old servant at 26 Chester Court, was the street’s only African-American resident.

Although the residential makeup of Chester Court remained similar through the 1920s, it changed during the 1930s. No longer primarily the province of young families, Chester Court housed many older widows or couples along with their grown children, perhaps reflecting the hardships of the Depression. While most of those living on Chester Court still had white-collar jobs, they were generally less-lucrative than those of 20 years before. In No. 26, Albert E. Smith, a 54-year-old accountant, lived with his wife Lillian, his sister-in-law Ruth Harwood who worked in a bookstore, and four lodgers: Fred F. Morgan, a commercial artist in a sign shop; his wife Irene, who worked in a furniture store; M.J. Hop, an insurance clerk; and Muriel M. Robinson, a teletype operator. During World War II, Second Lieutenant Warren W. Paradies of 17 Chester Court was killed in action in Italy.<sup>42</sup> Following the war, the street began to mirror, more closely, Flatbush’s increasing diversity. By 1948, 29 Chester Court was the home of Rabbi Joseph H. Paymer—who, for the past 35 years, had led Congregation Ahavath Achim at 151

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<sup>39</sup> “Plan 20 New Homes for Rutland Road.” Pomander Walk, the Tudoresque 1921 row house development and designated New York City Landmark on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, is named after the same play. See LPC, *Pomander Walk Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1279) (New York: City of New York, 1982), prepared by Marjorie Thau.

<sup>40</sup> On this issue, see Sutherland, 26-44. As Sutherland explains, among most employers of domestic servants, “a generally recognized hierarchy in the order of English, Scots, Scandinavians, Germans, Welsh, and Swiss existed, but there was no clear preference.” Protestant servants were in greater demand than Catholics, and “servants boasted of their nationality in personal ads, just as they did of their Protestantism, whenever they thought it would earn them a job.” Many employers were influenced less by ethnic prejudices than by a desire to employ servants whose nationalities and religious beliefs matched their own, given the intimate contact between employers and servants and the significant role servants played in child care. African-American servants were often preferred by Southern homeowners as a means of “preserving traditional master-servant relationships,” according to Sutherland.

<sup>41</sup> “Wanted—Help—Females” (Advertisement), *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, November 3, 1912, IV:11; “Wanted—Help—Females” (Advertisement), *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, November 9, 1918, 12.

<sup>42</sup> “28 Boro and L.I. Men Are Killed in Action,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, April 13, 1944, 20; “Boro Bombardier and Infantryman Killed in Italy,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, April 13, 1944, 20.



Woodruff Avenue—and by the late 1950s, families of Latino and East Asian background had settled on the street.<sup>43</sup> Caribbean immigrants began purchasing homes on the street by the mid-1970s.<sup>44</sup> Between 2003 and 2005, novelist Colson Whitehead, winner of a 2002 MacArthur “genius grant,” and his wife, writer Natasha Stovall, owned the house at 28 Chester Court.<sup>45</sup>

### *The Design of Chester Court*<sup>46</sup>

The construction by developers of “courts” and “places”—short mid-block streets cut into the existing urban grid and flanked by picturesque row houses—has a long history in Brooklyn. Some, like Chester Court, are cul-de-sacs, while others continue through their blocks to link the streets at either end. These developments represented a tiny fraction of Brooklyn row house construction in the 19th and early 20th centuries; the vast majority of row houses were developed in the conventional manner, on lots of approximately 20-by-100-feet fronting on established streets and avenues. For homeowners, these tiny streets provided the feeling of a private enclave in the city, close to urban amenities but removed from the traffic and noise of surrounding streets. Creating this sense of oasis was especially desirable when developments adjoined busy thoroughfares or railroad rights-of-way. For developers, constructing courts and places made sense when the parcels they owned were of a size or shape that was unsuitable for conventional row house development. In these cases, grouping houses around a short midblock street permitted developers to fit more houses onto a parcel than they otherwise could, making more-efficient use of the land.<sup>47</sup> In the case of Chester Court, setting the development back from

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<sup>43</sup> Residents in 1958 included Marcial Moreno-Pascual at 18 Chester Court, Ted P. Yrizarry at 22 Chester Court, and Alice E. Tiam, Ping Chon Tiam, and Tsang Sing at 20 Chester Court, according to the address telephone directory of that year.

<sup>44</sup> In 1973, Manfred L. Morgan and Diana Oliva Morgan purchased the house at 16 Chester Court. According to Morgan’s 2012 obituary, he was born in St. Vincent, raised in Trinidad, and spent his early adulthood in Aruba. A carpenter by trade, Morgan worked for the Carpenters’ Union in Brooklyn. New York City Department of Finance, Office of the City Register, Reel 639, Page 632 (June 4, 1973); Ancestry.com, *U.S. Cemetery and Funeral Home Collection* (Provo, Utah: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 2011).

<sup>45</sup> New York City Department of Finance, Office of the City Register, Documents 2003062700063002 (June 23, 2003) and 2005121302239001 (December 1, 2005).

<sup>46</sup> Elizabeth Fagan contributed research to this section. Sources include Richard K. Morriss, *The Buildings of Chester* (Dover, New Hampshire: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1993).

<sup>47</sup> Among the earliest “places” in Brooklyn was Warren Place in Cobble Hill, planned in 1878 as a private courtyard enclosed by iron gates and free of vehicular traffic. Designed by William Field & Son for housing reformer Alfred Tredway White, the 26 narrow two-story houses were constructed as cottages for working-class families. Warren Place is within the Cobble Hill Historic District. Ten years later, cookware magnate Florian Grosjean constructed 36 Queen Anne style row houses on two half-block cul-de-sacs in Bedford-Stuyvesant, which he named Alice and Agate Courts. Built on an unusually deep parcel that was unsuitable for conventional row house development, Alice and Agate Courts were set perpendicular to Atlantic Avenue, shielding homeowners from the noise and cinders of the Long Island Rail Road line that ran down its middle. The houses were designed by Walter M. Coots. See LPC, *Alice and Agate Courts Historic District* (LP-2309) (New York: City of New York, 2009), prepared by Tara Harrison. Later row house developments along courts and places in Brooklyn include the turn-of-the-century Revere, Hampton, and Virginia Places in Crown Heights North (within the proposed Crown Heights North III Historic District) and the circa-1915 Van Sicklen and Schenck Courts in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Perhaps the largest collection of these kinds of developments is in Bay Ridge, which has about two dozen, most dating from between the World Wars. Notable examples in Bay Ridge include the neo-Tudor style Louise Terrace, circa 1927; the Tudor Revival style Bay Cliff Terrace, also circa 1927; the Tudor Revival style Wogan Terrace, circa 1928; and Madeline Court, a dead-end street framed by neo-Tudor houses, constructed circa 1929. Bay Ridge also has several “walks,”

Flatbush Avenue along a new street that dead-ended at the Brighton subway line limited residents' exposure to these noisy thoroughfares.<sup>48</sup> The brick wall at the end of Chester Court linking the court's westernmost houses is an original feature of the development, and is presumed to have been designed by Peter J. Collins. This wall, which is harmonious in design with the Chester Court houses, blocks the view of the adjacent subway line and adds to the sense of Chester Court as a private enclave of uniform design.

Chester Court takes its name from the city of Chester, England, which Collins visited in the summer of 1910, and which served as the inspiration for his design. The city is known for its historic timber-framed buildings known as "black-and-white" or "magpie" buildings for their white stucco facades and black timber framing. Many of these buildings were built in the 16th and 17th centuries, but most are products of the so-called Black-and-White or Timber-Framed Revival, which spanned from the mid-19th century into the early 20th century and was part of the broader Tudor Revival movement. During this period, many Chester buildings that had been "Georgianized" or classicized in the 18th century were restored to their original appearance, and many new buildings—designed, most prominently, by John Douglas and Thomas M. Lockwood—were constructed with false half-timbered facades to mimic the original black-and-white buildings. Despite their imitative nature, Douglas' and Lockwood's buildings were finely detailed and beautifully designed, faced with intricate carvings and strapwork.

Although Collins' design borrows only loosely from traditional Chester architecture, Chester's "Nine Houses," which were constructed as almshouses around 1650, may have provided a direct inspiration.<sup>49</sup> Unusual for black-and-white houses in their use of masonry, their ground stories are of brick with quoined stone entrance enframements. The jettied timber-framed second stories of the Nine Houses are supported by large carved wood brackets, as are their triangular attic gables, which are filled with false half-timbering and crowned by finials. The uniformity and repetitiveness of the gables creates a rhythm that is strikingly similar to that of the Chester Court houses.<sup>50</sup> By 1911, when Collins designed Chester Court, the Tudor Revival was well-established in the United States as a style for freestanding suburban and country houses; just nearby, in Prospect Park South, several impressive Tudoresque houses had already been completed, including 183 Argyle Road (John J. Petit, 1907), 165 Argyle Road (John B. Slee, 1905), and Collins' own residence at 135 Westminster Road (Frank C. Collins, 1908). Even so, it was unusual at that time for the Tudor Revival style to be adapted to the urban form of the Brooklyn row house, and it is fitting that in doing this, Collins looked for inspiration to the city of Chester, where black-and-white architecture had been a feature of the cityscape for centuries. Although Tudor Revival row houses would spread throughout Brooklyn through the 1920s, Chester Court is likely among the earliest Tudor Revival style row house developments in Brooklyn, if not the entire city.<sup>51</sup>

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which, like Warren Place, are clustered around a narrow courtyard and closed to vehicular traffic. These include Lafayette Walk, Hamilton Walk, and Barwell Terrace.

<sup>48</sup> Because of this arrangement, only two houses front directly on the subway line, many fewer than if the houses had been arranged parallel to the line.

<sup>49</sup> Only six of the Nine Houses survive.

<sup>50</sup> Chester Court's rooflines are also reminiscent of that of Chester's Stanley Palace (1591; restored and extended in the 1930s), which features similarly repetitive gables.

<sup>51</sup> In addition to Peter J. Collins' essentially identical rows on Rutland Road in Prospect-Lefferts Gardens, later Tudor Revival style row house developments in Brooklyn include the group at East 23rd Street and Foster Avenue

The Chester Court Historic District comprises two facing rows, each with nine single-family houses. The houses have Flemish-bond-brick first stories; second-story stucco oriels supported by wood brackets, with false half-timbering; and third-story stucco gables with false half-timbering. All also have red Spanish-tile roofs, which are likely meant to recall England's historic red pantile roofs. There are three different types of houses, which are arranged symmetrically on each side of the street in an A-B-C-B-A-B-C-B-A pattern. The "A" houses have square-headed first-story openings, angled oriels—each with four windows—and false half-timbering within their gables; as the terminating and central houses of each row, their gables are slightly higher than the other houses'. On the "B" houses, the first-story openings are crowned by round double-rowlock arches, the oriels are straight-sided—each with three windows—and the gables contain both false half-timbering and curved strapwork. The "C" houses are similar at their first stories to the "A" houses, but have three-window angled oriels and more-elaborate half-timbering within their gables. Both the "A" and "C" houses also have wood brackets supporting their third-story gables. The terminating wall of Chester Court, which extends between the front facades of Nos. 31 and 32, is constructed of red brick laid primarily in running bond, with Flemish-bond pilasters and English-bond recessed decorative panels. At the center of the wall is a round-headed parapet containing a plain round medallion.<sup>52</sup>

More than a century after their construction, the houses of the Chester Court Historic District remain remarkably well-preserved. The only house to experience a substantial alteration is 15 Chester Court, where in 1956, the stoop and main entrance were relocated, a basement door opening was created in the former stoop location, and the first story was rebuilt using new brick. These changes occurred as part of the conversion of the house from a single-family residence to four apartments.<sup>53</sup> Many of the houses retain their original wood doors, and some retain their historic one-over-one first-story, six-over-one or eight-over-one second-story, and six-over-one third-story, double-hung windows. All of the houses also retain their original tile roofs, and nearly all have their original iron stoop railings. The Chester Court wall also remains nearly intact, although it has been partially repointed with Portland cement.<sup>54</sup> Many of the houses have been re-stuccoed in colors ranging from white to tan to yellow, and their half-timbering and strapwork have been painted various colors, including black, brown, and red. Given Collins' affinity for the black-and-white architecture of Chester, it may be assumed that the houses were originally of white stucco with black half-timbering.

Today, the Chester Court Historic District remains the picturesque enclave that Peter J. Collins envisioned more than a century ago. Almost completely historically intact, this remarkable assemblage of Tudor Revival row houses is strikingly unchanged from its early-20th-century appearance and remains a fine example of the rich diversity of Brooklyn's historic domestic architecture.

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in Flatbush (William T. McCarthy and Frank E. Kelly, c. 1923), and the previously mentioned Bay Cliff Terrace (c. 1927) and Wogan Terrace (c. 1928) in Bay Ridge.

<sup>52</sup> Although the wall was built by Collins as an original feature of the Chester Court development, its current ownership has not been conclusively determined. In recent years, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which owns the adjacent subway line, has performed repairs to the wall.

<sup>53</sup> Department of Buildings, Borough of Brooklyn, City of New York, alteration record 2290-1956.

<sup>54</sup> The medallion at the center of the parapet is surfaced with cement, which does not appear to be original. The circa-1939 New York City "tax photos" for 31 and 32 Chester Court show the medallion's historic condition; at that time, the medallion appeared to be coated with textured stucco.

## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this area, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Chester Court Historic District contains buildings and other improvements which have a special character and a special historic and aesthetic interest and value and which represent one or more eras of the history of New York City and which cause this area, by reason of these factors, to constitute a distinct section of the city.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Chester Court Historic District consists of a picturesque assemblage of 18 Tudor Revival style houses set in two opposing rows along a cul-de-sac, along with an original brick wall that terminates the block; that it was designed and built in 1911-12 by Peter J. Collins, a prominent Brooklyn architect and developer who served as the borough's Superintendent of Buildings; that the Chester Court houses are likely among the earliest Tudor Revival style row houses in the borough; that their design was inspired by the renowned timber-framed "black-and-white" or "magpie" buildings of Chester, England; that the *Brooklyn Eagle* noted, shortly after Chester Court's completion, that it had come to be known as "Pommander [sic] Walk" for its "quaint" character; that the Chester Court houses remain remarkably well-preserved, retaining all of their original clay-tile roofs and many of their historic wood doors; that the wall at the end of Chester Court, which is constructed of red brick matching that of the Chester Court houses and is attributed to Collins, contributes to the sense of the district as a distinctive self-contained enclave; and that Chester Court remains the inviting small street envisioned by Peter J. Collins more than a century ago, strikingly unchanged from its early-20th-century appearance.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Historic District the Chester Court Historic District, consisting of the properties bounded by a line beginning at the southeastern corner of 16 Chester Court, then extending northerly along the eastern property line of 16 Chester Court, westerly along the northern property lines of 16 through 32 Chester Court, southerly along the western property line of 32 Chester Court, continuing southerly along a line extending from the western property line of 32 Chester Court to the western property line of 31 Chester Court, along the western property line of 31 Chester Court, easterly along the southern property lines of 31 through 15 Chester Court, northerly along the eastern property line of 15 Chester Court, and northerly across Chester Court to the point of beginning. This boundary description is intended to encompass the wall adjacent to the western edge of Chester Court between lot 168 (32 Chester Court) and lot 169 (31 Chester Court).

Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair

Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin, Michael Goldblum, John Gustafsson, Christopher Moore,  
Adi Shamir-Baron, Roberta Washington, Commissioners

## BUILDING ENTRIES

### CHESTER COURT (ODD NUMBERS)

#### 15 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 177  
Date: c. 1911-12  
Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins  
Original Owner: Brighton Building Company  
Type: Row house  
Style: Tudor Revival  
Stories: 3 and basement  
Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile

*Significant Architectural Features:* Stucco second-story angled oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering, wood strapwork, and four square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable supported by wood brackets, with false half-timbering and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Basement and first story reconstructed using new brick; first-story window openings relocated and main entrance moved from east to west side of first story; new stoop with new railings constructed in front of relocated main entrance; light fixtures, mailboxes, intercom, iron door gate, and metal awning at relocated main entrance; water meter reader on east face of stoop; east basement window opening enlarged into basement entrance; light fixture and metal awning at basement entrance; panning surrounding second-story window; third-story gable window opening enlarged vertically

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court).

*Site Features:* Non-historic railing at basement steps in areaway

North Facade: Designed (historic, basement and first story altered and brick replaced)

*Stoop:* Replaced stoop (gate under stoop - removed)

*Door(s):* Replaced primary door

*Windows:* Replaced (upper stories); replaced (basement)

*Security Grilles:* Not historic (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Concrete

East Facade: Not designed (historic)

*Facade Notes:* Parged; third-story window openings; non-historic metal exhaust pipes and louvers

South Facade: Not designed (historic) (partially visible)

*Facade Notes:* Metal awning and terrace enclosure visible from Chester Court



## 17 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 176

Date: c. 1911-12

Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins

Original Owner: Brighton Building Company

Type: Row house

Style: Tudor Revival

Stories: 3 and basement

Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile

*Decorative Metal Work:* Historic iron stoop railings

*Significant Architectural Features:* Flemish-bond brick basement and first story with soldier coursing; first-story door and window openings crowned by double-rowlock round arches; stucco second-story straight-sided oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering, wood strapwork, and three square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable with wood strapwork and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Light fixture, intercom box, small sign, and address plaque adjacent to main entrance; electrical boxes at western end of basement; intercom box, address plaque, and mailbox at basement, adjacent to understoop opening; window boxes beneath first-story windows

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court).

*Site Features:* Planting bed; steps to understoop opening in areaway

North Facade: Designed (historic)

*Stoop:* Resurfaced stoop (gate under stoop - removed)

*Door(s):* Original primary door

*Windows:* Replaced (upper stories); replaced (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Red brick and concrete



## 19 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 175

Date: c. 1911-12

Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins

Original Owner: Brighton Building Company

Type: Row house

Style: Tudor Revival

Stories: 3 and basement

Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile



*Decorative Metal Work:* Historic iron stoop railings

*Significant Architectural Features:* Flemish-bond brick basement and first story with soldier coursing; first-story door and window openings crowned by soldier-brick lintel course; stucco second-story angled oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering, wood strapwork, and three square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable supported by wood brackets, with wood strapwork and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Doorbell on main-entrance frame; light fixture at main entrance; water meter reader at basement; conduit at western end of basement and first story; alarm box on oriel

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court).

*Site Features:* Historic iron railing at basement steps in areaway

North Facade: Designed (historic)

*Stoop:* Original stoop (historic gate under stoop)

*Door(s):* Possibly historic primary door

*Windows:* Replaced (upper stories); possibly historic (basement)

*Security Grilles:* Not historic (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Concrete

## 21 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 174

Date: c. 1911-12

Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins

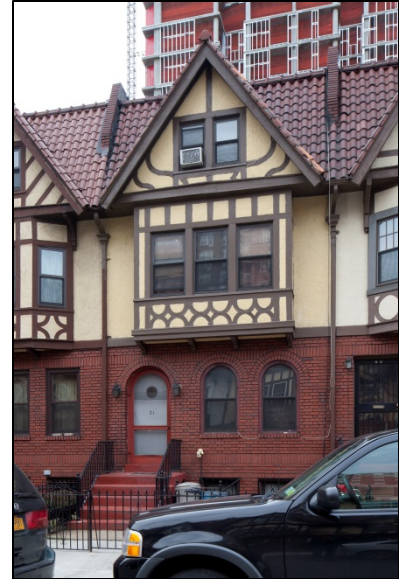
Original Owner: Brighton Building Company

Type: Row house

Style: Tudor Revival

Stories: 3 and basement

Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile



*Decorative Metal Work:* Historic iron stoop railings

*Significant Architectural Features:* Flemish-bond brick basement and first story with soldier coursing; first-story door and window openings crowned by double-rowlock round arches; wood brickmolds at basement and first story; stucco second-story straight-sided oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering, wood strapwork, and three square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable with wood strapwork and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Main-entrance storm door; address numerals on main-entrance door; light fixtures flanking main entrance; pipes extending through concrete patch at western end of basement; railing in front of east basement window; water meter reader on frame of west basement window; light fixture with conduit adjacent to understoop opening

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court).

*Site Features:* Planting bed; historic iron railing at basement steps in areaway

North Facade: Designed (historic)

*Stoop:* Painted stoop (historic gate under stoop)

*Door(s):* Original primary door

*Windows:* Replaced (upper stories); replaced (basement)

*Security Grilles:* Not historic (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Concrete



## 23 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 173

Date: c. 1911-12

Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins

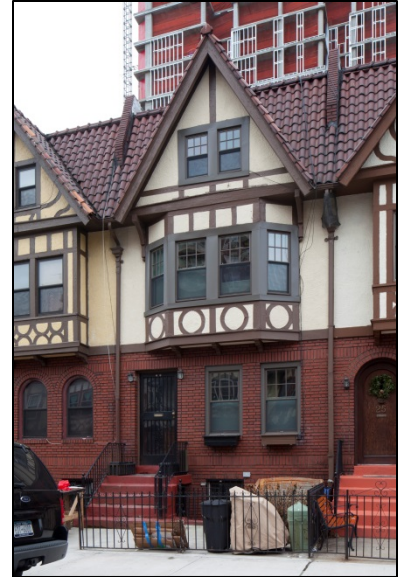
Original Owner: Brighton Building Company

Type: Row house

Style: Tudor Revival

Stories: 3 and basement

Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile



*Decorative Metal Work:* Historic iron stoop railings

*Significant Architectural Features:* Flemish-bond brick basement and first story with soldier coursing; first-story door and window openings crowned by soldier-brick lintel course; stucco second-story angled oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering, wood strapwork, and four square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable supported by wood brackets, with false half-timbering and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Main-entrance security gate; doorbell and light fixtures at main entrance; water meter reader at basement; meter at basement, adjacent to understoop opening; window boxes at first-story windows; panning surrounding second- and third-story windows

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court).

*Site Features:* Planting bed; historic iron railing at basement steps in areaway

North Facade: Designed (historic)

*Stoop:* Resurfaced stoop (gate under stoop - removed)

*Door(s):* Original primary door

*Windows:* Replaced (upper stories); replaced (basement)

*Security Grilles:* Not historic (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Concrete

## 25 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 172

Date: c. 1911-12

Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins

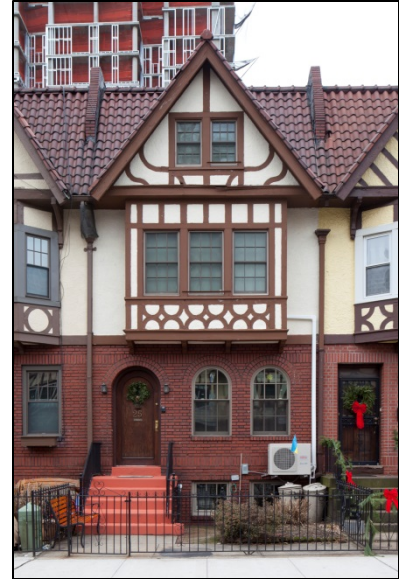
Original Owner: Brighton Building Company

Type: Row house

Style: Tudor Revival

Stories: 3 and basement

Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile



*Decorative Metal Work:* Historic iron stoop railings

*Significant Architectural Features:* Flemish-bond brick basement and first story with soldier coursing; first-story door and window openings crowned by double-rowlock round arches; stucco second-story straight-sided oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering, wood strapwork, and three square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable with wood strapwork and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Sun ornament on main-entrance door; intercom box and light fixtures at main entrance; air-conditioning unit on brackets, with electrical box and conduit, at western end of first story; water meter reader at basement; light fixture at basement, adjacent to understoop opening; mesh covering upper portion of leader head and downspout

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court).

*Site Features:* Planting bed; historic iron railing at basement steps in areaway

North Facade: Designed (historic)

*Stoop:* Painted stoop (gate under stoop - replaced)

*Door(s):* Original primary door

*Windows:* Replaced (upper stories); replaced (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Brick pavers and concrete

## 27 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 171

Date: c. 1911-12

Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins

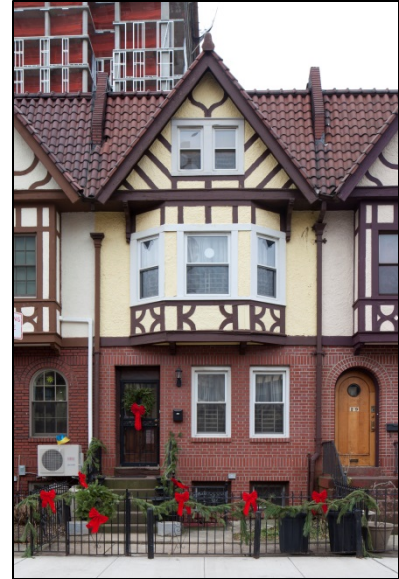
Original Owner: Brighton Building Company

Type: Row house

Style: Tudor Revival

Stories: 3 and basement

Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile



*Decorative Metal Work:* Historic iron stoop railings

*Significant Architectural Features:* Flemish-bond brick basement and first story with soldier coursing; first-story door and window openings crowned by soldier-brick lintel course; stucco second-story angled oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering, wood strapwork, and three square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable supported by wood brackets, with wood strapwork and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Main-entrance storm door; light fixture, doorbell, and mailbox at main entrance; water meter reader at basement; doorbell on frame of east basement window; panning surrounding second- and third-story windows; upper portion of downspout missing

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court).

*Site Features:* Planting bed; historic iron railing at basement steps in areaway

North Facade: Designed (historic)

*Stoop:* Original stoop (gate under stoop - replaced)

*Door(s):* Replaced primary door

*Windows:* Replaced (upper stories); replaced (basement)

*Security Grilles:* Not historic (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Concrete

## 29 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 170

Date: c. 1911-12

Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins

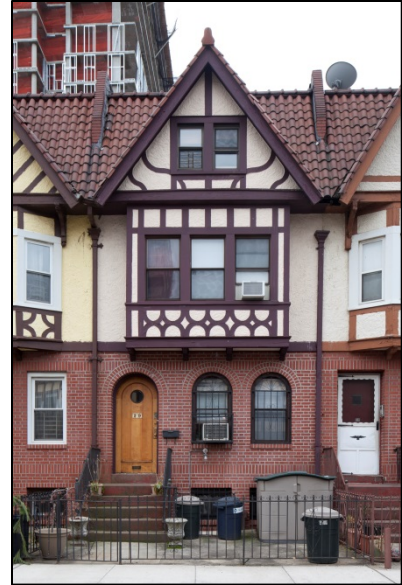
Original Owner: Brighton Building Company

Type: Row house

Style: Tudor Revival

Stories: 3 and basement

Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile



*Decorative Metal Work:* Historic iron stoop railings

*Significant Architectural Features:* Flemish-bond brick basement and first story with soldier coursing; first-story door and window openings crowned by double-rowlock round arches; stucco second-story straight-sided oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering, wood strapwork, and three square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable with wood strapwork and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Address plaque on main-entrance door; mailbox adjacent to main entrance; water meter reader at basement; light fixture with conduit below central first-story opening; panning surrounding second- and third-story windows

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court).

*Site Features:* Historic iron railing at basement steps, and non-historic plastic trash enclosure, in areaway

North Facade: Designed (historic)

*Stoop:* Resurfaced stoop (historic gate under stoop)

*Door(s):* Original primary door

*Windows:* Replaced (upper stories); replaced (basement)

*Security Grilles:* Not historic (upper stories); not historic (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Concrete

### 31 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 169

Date: c. 1911-12

Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins

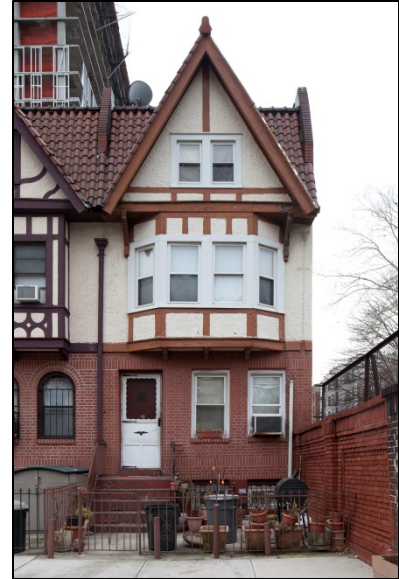
Original Owner: Brighton Building Company

Type: Row house

Style: Tudor Revival

Stories: 3 and basement

Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile



*Decorative Metal Work:* Historic iron stoop railings

*Significant Architectural Features:* Flemish-bond brick basement and first story with soldier coursing; first-story door and window openings crowned by soldier-brick lintel course; stucco second-story angled oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering and four square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable supported by wood brackets, with false half-timbering and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Main-entrance storm door; intercom box on main-entrance reveal; water meter reader at basement; light fixture at basement, adjacent to understoop opening; panning surrounding second- and third-story windows; circular wood strapwork elements removed from below second-story windows; east gable bracket missing pendant; rooftop satellite dish

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court); west facade possibly visible from adjacent subway line.

*Other Structures on Site:* Brick wall extending from 31 to 32 Chester Court along western border of Chester Court; see separate entry

North Facade: Designed (historic)

*Stoop:* Resurfaced stoop (gate under stoop - replaced)

*Door(s):* Original primary door

*Windows:* Replaced (upper stories); replaced (basement)

*Security Grilles:* Not historic (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Concrete

## CHESTER COURT (EVEN NUMBERS)

### 16 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 160  
Date: c. 1911-12  
Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins  
Original Owner: Brighton Building Company  
Type: Row house  
Style: Tudor Revival  
Stories: 3 and basement  
Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile



*Decorative Metal Work:* Historic iron stoop railings

*Significant Architectural Features:* Flemish-bond brick basement and first story with soldier coursing; first-story door and window openings crowned by soldier-brick lintel course; stucco second-story angled oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering, and four square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable supported by wood brackets, with wood strapwork and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Screen door at main entrance; light fixture above main entrance; water meter reader at basement; storm sashes at first-, second-, and third-story windows

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court).

*Site Features:* Historic iron railing at basement steps in areaway

South Facade: Designed (historic)

*Stoop:* Painted stoop (gate under stoop - replaced)

*Door(s):* Replaced primary door

*Windows:* Historic (upper stories); replaced (basement)

*Security Grilles:* Not historic (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Concrete

East Facade: Not designed (historic) (partially visible)

*Facade Notes:* Parged, with window openings; alarm box at first story; parged front chimney; brick rear chimney

## 18 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 161

Date: c. 1911-12

Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins

Original Owner: Brighton Building Company

Type: Row house

Style: Tudor Revival

Stories: 3 and basement

Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile

*Decorative Metal Work:* Historic iron stoop railings

*Significant Architectural Features:* Flemish-bond brick basement and first story with soldier coursing; first-story door and window openings crowned by double-rowlock round arches; wood window brickmolds at basement and first story; stucco second-story straight-sided oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering, wood strapwork, and three square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable with wood strapwork and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Water meter reader at basement, adjacent to understoop opening; panning surrounding third-story windows

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court).

*Site Features:* Brick raised planting bed; historic iron railing at basement steps in areaway

South Facade: Designed (historic)

*Stoop:* Original stoop (gate under stoop - replaced)

*Door(s):* Original primary door

*Windows:* Replaced (upper stories); replaced (basement)

*Security Grilles:* Not historic (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

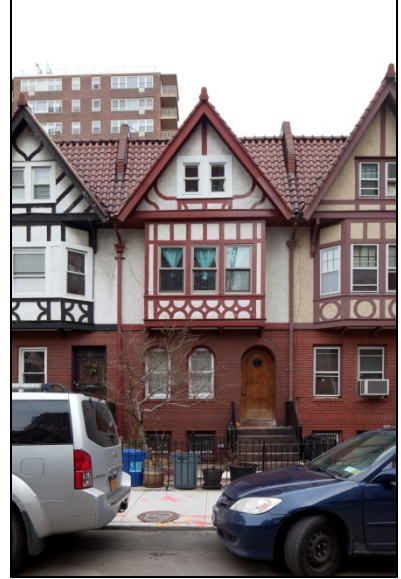
*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Concrete



## 20 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 162

Date: c. 1911-12

Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins

Original Owner: Brighton Building Company

Type: Row house

Style: Tudor Revival

Stories: 3 and basement

Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile

*Decorative Metal Work:* Historic iron stoop railings

*Significant Architectural Features:* Flemish-bond brick basement and first story with soldier coursing; first-story door and window openings crowned by soldier-brick lintel course; stucco second-story angled oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering, wood strapwork, and three square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable supported by wood brackets, with wood strapwork and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Main-entrance door gate; water meter reader at basement, adjacent to understoop opening; panning surrounding second- and third-story windows

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court).

*Site Features:* Historic iron railing at basement steps in areaway

South Facade: Designed (historic)

*Stoop:* Painted stoop (possibly historic gate under stoop)

*Door(s):* Altered or replaced primary door

*Windows:* Replaced (upper stories); replaced (basement)

*Security Grilles:* Not historic (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Concrete





## 22 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 163

Date: c. 1911-12

Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins

Original Owner: Brighton Building Company

Type: Row house

Style: Tudor Revival

Stories: 3 and basement

Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile

*Decorative Metal Work:* Historic iron stoop railings

*Significant Architectural Features:* Flemish-bond brick basement and first story with soldier coursing; first-story door and window openings crowned by double-rowlock round arches; historic wood brickmolds at basement; stucco second-story straight-sided oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering, wood strapwork, and three square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable with wood strapwork and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Main-entrance security gate; water meter reader at basement; camera at second story

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court)

*Site Features:* Planting bed; historic iron railing at basement steps in areaway

South Facade: Designed (historic)

*Stoop:* Resurfaced stoop (gate under stoop - removed)

*Door(s):* Possibly historic primary door

*Windows:* Replaced (upper stories); replaced (basement)

*Security Grilles:* Not historic (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

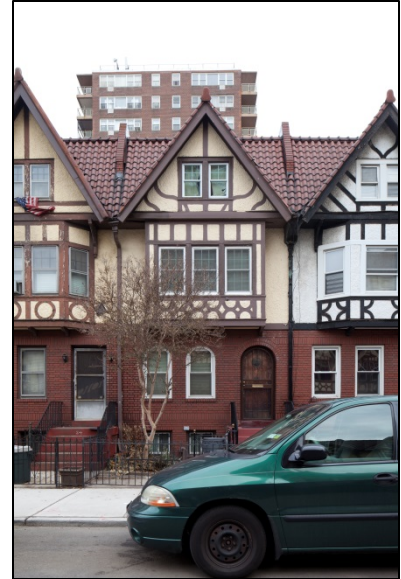
*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Concrete



## 24 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 164

Date: c. 1911-12

Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins

Original Owner: Brighton Building Company

Type: Row house

Style: Tudor Revival

Stories: 3 and basement

Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile

*Decorative Metal Work:* Historic iron stoop railings

*Significant Architectural Features:* Flemish-bond brick basement and first story with soldier coursing; first-story door and window openings crowned by soldier-brick lintel course; stucco second-story angled oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering, wood strapwork, and four square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable supported by wood brackets, with false half-timbering and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Main-entrance storm door; light fixtures flanking main entrance; water meter reader at basement, adjacent to understoop opening; storm sashes at all windows on first through third stories

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court).

*Site Features:* Planting bed; historic iron railing at basement steps in areaway

South Facade: Designed (historic)

*Stoop:* Painted stoop (gate under stoop - replaced)

*Door(s):* Original primary door

*Windows:* Historic (upper stories); possibly historic (basement)

*Security Grilles:* Not historic (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Concrete



## 26 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 165

Date: c. 1911-12

Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins

Original Owner: Brighton Building Company

Type: Row house

Style: Tudor Revival

Stories: 3 and basement

Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile



*Decorative Metal Work:* Historic iron stoop railings

*Significant Architectural Features:* Flemish-bond brick basement and first story with soldier coursing; first-story door and window openings crowned by double-rowlock round arches; wood brickmolds at first story; stucco second-story straight-sided oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering, wood strapwork, and three square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable with wood strapwork and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Light fixture with conduit and storm-door frame (door removed) at main entrance; light fixture with conduit and water meter reader at basement, adjacent to understoop opening; mesh at east basement window; storm sashes at two west second-story windows

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court).

*Site Features:* Planting bed; historic iron railing at basement steps in areaway

South Facade: Designed (historic)

*Stoop:* Original stoop (gate under stoop - removed)

*Door(s):* Original primary door

*Windows:* Historic (upper stories); possibly historic (basement)

*Security Grilles:* Not historic (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Concrete

## 28 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 166

Date: c. 1911-12

Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins

Original Owner: Brighton Building Company

Type: Row house

Style: Tudor Revival

Stories: 3 and basement

Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile

*Decorative Metal Work:* Historic iron stoop railings

*Significant Architectural Features:* Flemish-bond brick basement and first story with soldier coursing; first-story door and window openings crowned by soldier-brick lintel course; stucco second-story angled oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering, wood strapwork, and three square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable supported by wood brackets, with wood strapwork and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Doorbell at main entrance; alarm box above main entrance, under oriel; electrical box, light fixture, and water meter reader at basement, adjacent to understoop opening; conduit extending from basement light fixture and electrical box to underside of oriel; storm sashes at all window openings on first through third stories

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court).

*Site Features:* Planting bed; historic iron railing at basement steps in areaway

South Facade: Designed (historic)

*Stoop:* Resurfaced stoop (gate under stoop - removed)

*Door(s):* Possibly historic primary door

*Windows:* Replaced (upper stories); replaced (basement)

*Security Grilles:* Not historic (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Concrete



### 30 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 167

Date: c. 1911-12

Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins

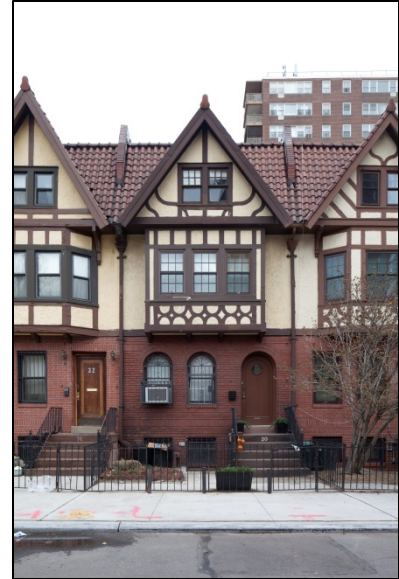
Original Owner: Brighton Building Company

Type: Row house

Style: Tudor Revival

Stories: 3 and basement

Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile



*Decorative Metal Work:* Historic iron stoop railings

*Significant Architectural Features:* Flemish-bond brick basement and first story with soldier coursing; first-story door and window openings crowned by double-rowlock round arches; first-story brickmolds; stucco second-story straight-sided oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering, wood strapwork, and three square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable with wood strapwork and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Mailbox at main entrance; water meter reader between basement windows; mesh covering basement windows

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court).

*Site Features:* Planting bed; historic iron railing at basement steps in areaway

South Facade: Designed (historic)

*Stoop:* Original stoop (gate under stoop - replaced)

*Door(s):* Original primary door

*Windows:* Mixed (upper stories); possibly historic (basement)

*Security Grilles:* Not historic (upper stories); not historic (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Concrete

### 32 Chester Court

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026, Lot 168

Date: c. 1911-12

Architect/Builder: Peter J. Collins

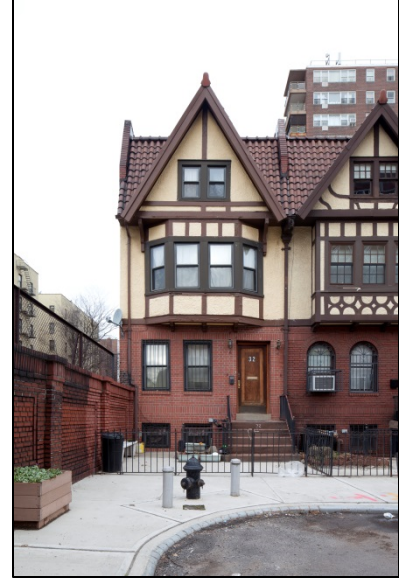
Original Owner: Brighton Building Company

Type: Row house

Style: Tudor Revival

Stories: 3 and basement

Material(s): Red brick; stucco; wood; red clay tile



*Decorative Metal Work:* Historic iron stoop railings

*Significant Architectural Features:* Flemish-bond brick basement and first story with soldier coursing; first-story door and window openings crowned by soldier-brick lintel course; stucco second-story angled oriel with wood brackets, false half-timbering, wood strapwork, and four square-headed window openings; pedimented stucco gable supported by wood brackets, with false half-timbering and two square-headed window openings

*Alterations:* Window missing from main-entrance door (door replaced or altered); mailbox and light fixtures at main entrance; water meter reader and light fixture at basement, adjacent to understoop opening; satellite dish at western end of first story; circular wood strapwork elements removed from below second-story windows; panning surrounding second- and third-story windows

*Building Notes:* One of 18 row houses constructed in two facing rows along the north and south sides of Chester Court (16 to 32 and 15 to 31 Chester Court); west facade possibly visible from adjacent subway line.

*Site Features:* Historic iron railing at basement steps in areaway

*Other Structures on Site:* Brick wall extending from 31 to 32 Chester Court along western border of Chester Court; see separate entry

South Facade: Designed (historic)

*Stoop:* Original stoop (gate under stoop - replaced or altered)

*Door(s):* Altered primary door

*Windows:* Replaced (upper stories); replaced (basement)

*Security Grilles:* Not historic (upper stories); not historic (basement)

*Roof:* Original (pitched - red clay tile)

*Notable Roof Features:* Intersecting gables; angled brick chimney

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

*Areaway Wall/Fence Materials:* Non-historic iron areaway fence and gate

*Areaway Paving Material:* Concrete



**(No number) Chester Court**

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 5026

Building Name: Wall along western boundary of Chester Court

Date: c. 1911-12

Architect/Builder: Attributed to Peter J. Collins

Original Owner: Peter J. Collins

Type: Wall

Style: Arts and Crafts

Material(s): Red brick

*Significant Architectural Features:* Brick laid primarily in running bond, with Flemish-bond pilasters and English-bond recessed decorative panels; projecting round parapet at center

*Alterations:* Medallion within projecting parapet resurfaced with cement; wall partially repointed with Portland cement

*Building Notes:* Wall extends from western edge of front facades of Nos. 31 and 32 Chester Court (lots 169 and 168), through areaways of these properties, and along western edge of Chester Court; wall, including parapet and medallion, visible in circa-1939 “tax photos” for 31 and 32 Chester Court; medallion appears at that time to have been of textured stucco.

East Facade: Designed (historic)

*Sidewalk Material(s):* Concrete

*Curb Material(s):* Concrete

# NEW HOUSES FOR FLATBUSH SECTION.



Part of a Row of Dwellings to Be Erected on Site of Old Vanderbilt Property in Chester Court, a New Street Now Being Opened.

Figure 1

“New Houses for Flatbush Section,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 28, 1911, III:4





Figure 2  
Chester Court Historic District, looking west  
*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2014*



Figure 3

North Side of Chester Court (Nos. 32 to 16), looking northwest

*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2014*



Figure 4  
South Side of Chester Court (Nos. 15 to 31), looking southwest  
*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2014*



Figure 5  
East face of Chester Court wall  
*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2014*