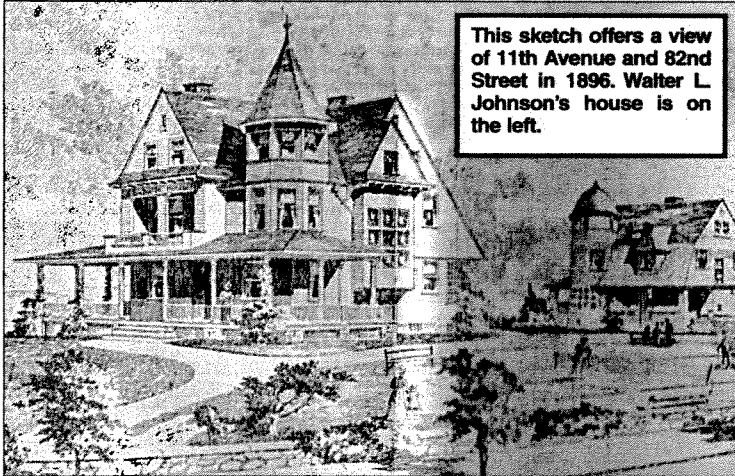


Board 10 OKs New Name For Dyker Heights Street Corner



This sketch offers a view of 11th Avenue and 82nd Street in 1896. Walter L. Johnson's house is on the left.

By PAULA KATINAS

The neighborhood of Dyker Heights, established in the late 19th century as a gated community for the well-to-do, is seeking to pay tribute to its roots by naming one of its street corners after the man who founded the area.

The local historian who is pushing for the street corner dedication passed his first hurdle on May 18 when Community Board 10 voted unanimously to approve the idea and sent it on to the City Council for consideration.

Dyker Heights was founded by Walter L. Johnson, who lived in a house on what is now the corner of 11th Avenue and 82nd Street from

1888 to 1910.

Christian Zaino, a medical student who founded the Dyker Heights Historical Society, is calling for the corner where Johnson lived to be named after him.

Johnson developed Dyker Heights in 1895. He built houses, installed gas lines, planted sugar maple trees and was the new community's main proponent.

The community board followed the recommendation of its Traffic and Transportation Committee to give the renaming a green light.

If the City Council approves, a sign will be placed at the corner reading, "Walter L. Johnson Corner. Developer Of Dyker Heights."

Walter L. Johnson was the man

who founded Dyker Heights as a community.

He called it Dyker Heights after the Dyker Meadow and Beach, which the community overlooked, according to Zaino, who has done a great deal of research into the community's history.

Zaino spoke about the community's history at a recent meeting of the Dyker Heights Civic Association.

It's not clear where the name Dyker Meadow and Beach came from, Zaino said.

The Dyker in Dyker Meadow might have been a reference to the Van Dyke family, whose members built dikes, according to Zaino.

Johnson developed Dyker Heights as a community for the upper classes, according to Zaino, who said the neighborhood was

located next door to Bensonhurst, another area where the wealthy lived and played.

"Bensonhurst used to be called 'Bensonhurst By The Sea.' People thought it was beautifully developed," Zaino said.

Fran Vella-Marrone, president of the civic association, said Dyker Heights was originally "like a gated community."

The original boundaries of the community were 10th Avenue to 13th Avenue and from 79th Street to 86th Street, Zaino said.

Johnson also donated the land on which St. Philip's Episcopal Church now stands at 1072 80th St. The civic association holds its meetings in the church hall.

Vella-Marrone said the civic association fully supported Zaino's effort to get the corner renamed.