



Left:

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

Above:

Left to right:

Josephine Baldizzi in doorway of 97 Orchard Street, circa 1990

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

Rosaria Baldizzi before immigrating to America

Management Alternatives



OVERVIEW

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Resource Protection

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

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

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

Interpretation and Visitor Experience

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

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

Visitor Use and Facilities

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Cooperative Action

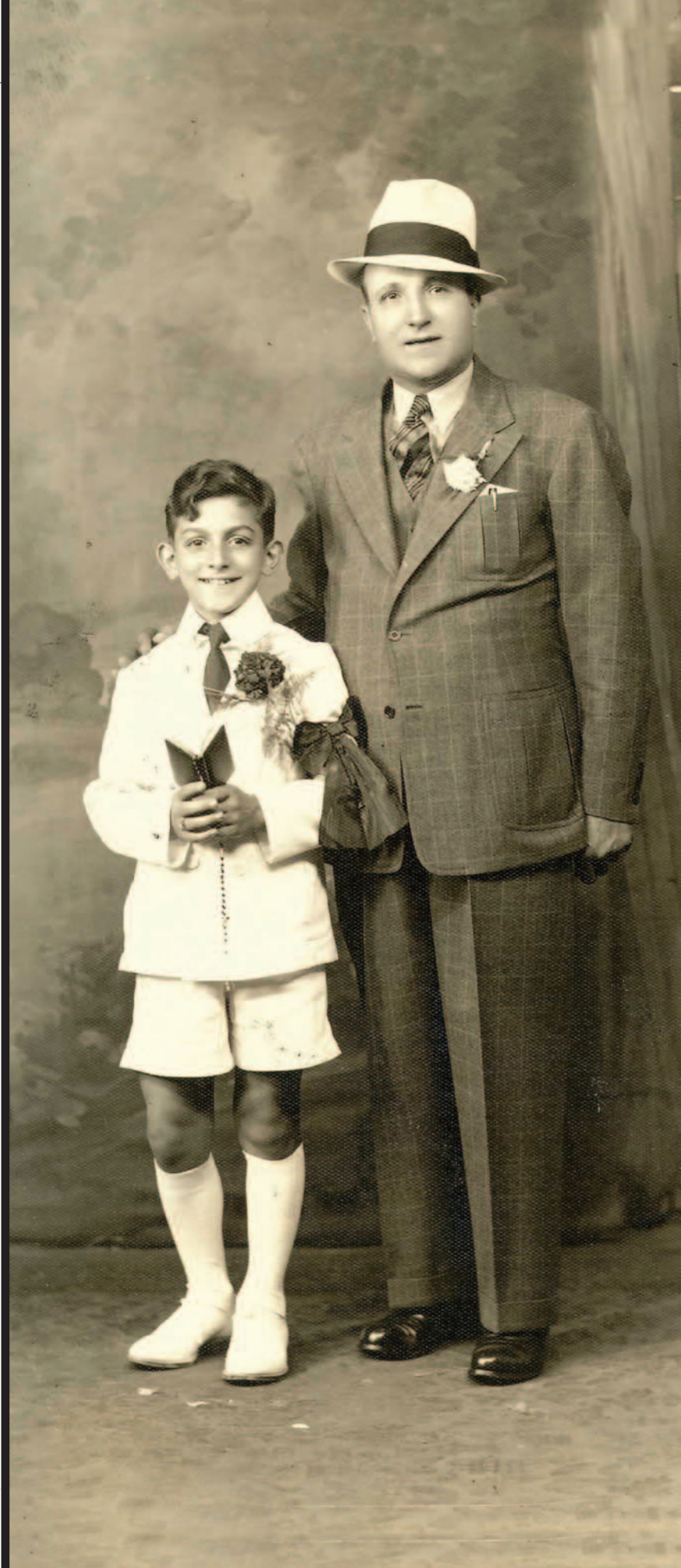
The Secretary of the Interior's role and the NPS relationship with the historic site continue to be funded through the budget line of Operations of the National Park Service. This funding is presently set at \$95,000 per year, subject to any annual congressional across-the-board rescissions. Through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

MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS

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

Resource Protection

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



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

Interpretation and Visitor Experience

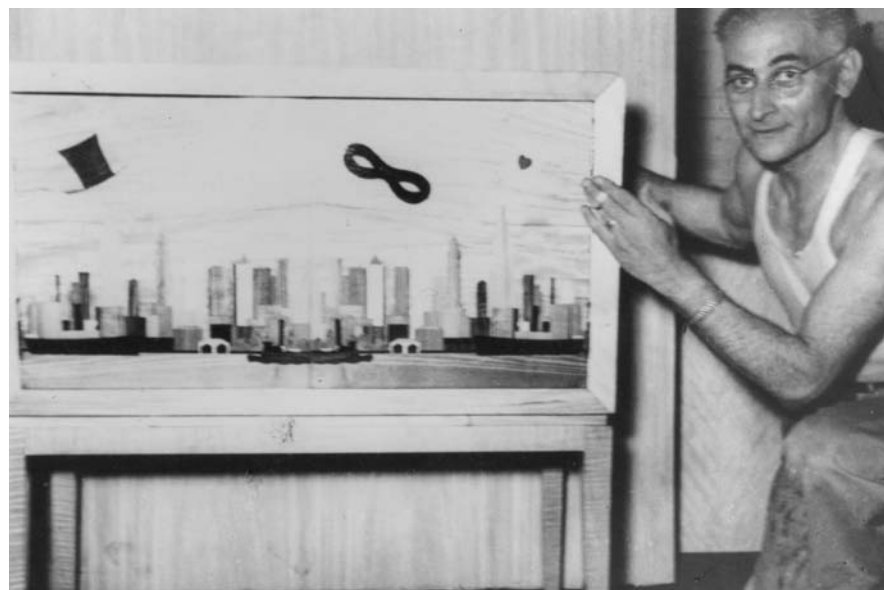
- Visitors are provided sufficient preliminary orientation to fully appreciate the tenement's historic context and significance.
- Visitors to all National Parks of New York Harbor sites understand the historic significance of the Lower East Side Tenement.
- Interpretive programs link 97 Orchard Street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

Visitor Use and Facilities

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

Cooperative Action

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



Left to right:

Adolfo Baldizzi in Italian military WWI uniform

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

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

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

Resource Protection

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

Interpretation and Visitor Experience

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

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

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

Visitor Use and Facilities

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

Cooperative Action

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MANAGEMENT ZONING

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