

Operation Rescue Flowerpot

Joey Skee (May 12, 2013)



Historic Preservation, Italian-American Style

On March 15th, I drove around southern Brooklyn with my friend and colleague Anthony Scotto photographing Italian-American yard shrines for my forthcoming book on vernacular religious spaces in New York City.

At the end of this grand tour, Anthony showed me a decorated flowerpot in front of an abandoned house at 1466 80th Street in Dyker Heights. You can see the flowerpot in situ in the [current Google map](#) [2].) Back in September, Anthony had driven me around the neighborhoods of Dyker Heights and Bensonhurst to document this little-known Italian-American folk art, which I subsequently



blogged about here.

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Flower Pot Emergency! That house on the next block with planter in the walk has been demolished! It's surrounded by a plywood wall.

Three hours later he wrote:

Just walked by work site. Planter is intact but partially buried under rubble. I need to intervene, but don't know how. The site is secured with a padlock. I don't sense much respect for these artifacts.

Planter is completely covered in rubble!

I'm confident that it's still intact, but they're taking the whole house down.

The workers have left for the day. I don't know if they'll be responsive.

On May 6th, Anthony contacted me again via text:

Standing in front of demoed house--there are actually 2 planters!

They're intact (appear to be) and one we saw has been lifted.

I'm waiting for the workers to appear. They just hauled some stuff to dumpster but now they're in back somewhere.

Damn! They are not coming out. The dumpster is full; maybe they're waiting for truck. I need to leave now...

~~And then in Anthony's~~
And then in Anthony's office sent me this photo:



This rescue mission may seem frivolous to some. All this energy spent on two simple objects. And



Historic Preservation and the Italian American Presence in New York City

**A symposium presented by
The John D. Calandra
Italian American Institute
Queens College, CUNY**

**Saturday, May 11, 2002
1:00–5:30 PM**

**The Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall
The Graduate Center, CUNY
365 Fifth Avenue (between 34th and 35th Streets)
Manhattan**

Admission: Free