

David Teitelbaum was a founding member of "Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts".

Founded in 1982, "Friends" is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving the architectural legacy, livability and sense of place of the Upper East Side of Manhattan by monitoring and protecting its six historic districts and 126 landmarked buildings. Friends reviews and responds to Landmark Preservation Commission and other city actions affecting the Upper East Side and initiates action to protect areas and buildings that do not enjoy landmark protection. It educates the public about the benefits of historic preservation and appropriate urban planning, responds to residents' concerns about landmark laws and encourages compliance with those laws. Through effective advocacy and educational programs for schoolchildren and adults, Friends acts as a steward to safeguard the future of all Upper East Side Historic Districts and the designated and contributing buildings that make those districts special.

David Teitelbaum was not only an important member of "Friends". He played a special role in New York City by finding new uses for historic structures that were no longer economically viable. One of those structures was the Barbizon Hotel at 63rd Street and Lexington Avenue. Built in the 1920s, the Barbizon had a long history as a place to house proper young women in a sheltered environment. That was not an economically viable use by the late 1970s. Mr. Teitelbaum with his partners turned the Barbizon into a hotel in 1981. It has remained a commercial property ever since. He also provided in rooms of the Barbizon an office for Friends, its first office.

Friends has requested that the New York Landmarks Preservation Commission designate the Barbizon a New York City Landmark. The Commission has indicated that it is considering the request, a first step toward protecting this wonderful structure. Designation would represent formal governmental recognition of the Barbizon as a historic structure worthy of protection, a fact that David Teitelbaum recognized and acted upon over 30 years ago.

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