

The Grashorn Building



Restored Grashorn Building

1104 Surf Avenue

Built: ca. 1889

Threatened with demolition by Thor Equities in the summer of 2010.

Built around 1889, the Grashorn building once housed a hardware store and grocery owned by Henry Grashorn, a prominent Coney Island businessman. For over 60 years Grashorn's hardware store met the unique needs of amusement ride operators, carrying supplies needed for the maintenance and repair of Coney Island's mechanical rides and games.

The Grashorn was designed in the Second Empire style and although many of the exterior details are no longer visible, the form of the building is unchanged. The distinct mansard roof with four dormer windows remains and the interior is largely intact, strongly suggesting that restoration is a viable option. It is also notable that the wood-framed building, originally covered with clapboard siding and wooden ornamentation survived the many fires that destroyed similar buildings in Coney Island. It stands as a monument to what much of Coney Island looked like at the turn of the century, before fireproof materials became the norm for construction.



Grashorn Building, ca. 1890



Grashorn Building today

Henderson's Music Hall



Restored Henderson's Music Hall

3001- 3032 Stillwell Avenue

Built: ca. 1899

Threatened with demolition by Thor Equities in the summer of 2010.

Henderson's Music Hall was one of Coney Island's most important venues for theater, live music and vaudeville acts, providing indoor entertainment that rivaled that of Manhattan's theater district. Originally developed in 1881 by Coney Island impresario, Fred Henderson, the music hall expanded by 1899, but was lost to a fire in its first year. Henderson rebuilt immediately afterwards, this time using fireproof materials to execute the design by architect John B. Elfatrik, much of which remains today. The austere Neo-Classical elements still visible include the original bracketed cornice, brick piers and decorative brick paneling.

Until it closed in 1926, Henderson's Music Hall brought some of the most popular contemporary American and international acts to perform at Coney Island. Among the many prominent performers that graced the stage at Henderson's, it was here in 1907 that Harpo Marx first performed with his brothers Groucho and Gummo. When the appeal of vaudeville began to fade the building continued to showcase the popular tastes of day, when it became the home of another legendary Coney Island establishment, the World of Wax Musee, which occupied the spot until 1984. This building has proven to be a highly adaptable space, with a history of showcasing the most popular forms of entertainment – from the spectacular vaudeville acts at the turn of the century – to the less refined wax museum. In planning for the return of popular amusements to Coney Island, it is imperative that this irreplaceable relic be preserved and reactivated as a future showcase.



Henderson's Music Hall, ca. 1900



Henderson's Music Hall today



Thor Equities proposal for Henderson's site