

The Full Treatment

Bloomingtondale Project Bites Off a Big Piece

The Bloomingdale Conservation Project, with the promise of a one-year, \$25,000 grant-in-aid from the City, has roped off another piece of the Upper West Side for "the full treatment".

They have extended their sway south to the north side of 96th Street, Riverside Drive to Amsterdam Avenue; the northern boundary of the conservation district remains the south side of 104th Street.

"The treatment," aimed at conserving good buildings and improving the lot of those who live in the bad, consists of pressuring lead-footed landlords with violations resulting from cellar-to-roof inspections; the relocation of families illegally crammed into one-room flats; a thriving pre-school program, which, during the summer in Riverside Park, saw some 3,000 children and 1,000 parents taking part each month; English classes for Spanish-speaking persons; tenant education, and a public health program.

Ninety-ninth Street, laced with bad SROs, some of whose tenants have aroused the anger and fear of neighboring residents, replaces 103rd Street as the district's pilot block.

There, the full force of the conservation techniques honed sharp in the project's two years of existence will be applied by city agencies, neighborhood volunteers and the professional staff.

The new director of the project, Barbara Oliver, tall and quick to

smile, indicates some of the accomplishments that have just begun to lift the air of decay from Bloomingdale. (Miss Oliver replaces Juliet Brudney, who now becomes the area supervisor for four Upper West Side conservation districts including Bloomingdale.)

The most obvious, of course, is the coming demise of 103rd Street's seven-story monster, the Hotel Armstrong, which will make way for a 130-apartment addition to the low-income Frederick Douglass Houses.

Also, the Housing Authority has begun to renovate a row of buildings on 103rd Street between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue, one on 101st Street and another on 104th. Next to the Hotel Marseilles, on 103rd Street, a private landlord, on his own initiative, has refurbished two badly run-down brownstones into attractive buildings with small class-A apartments.

Fifty buildings in the area have been inspected and reinspected from cellar to roof, the number of outstanding violations steadily diminishing as recalcitrant landlords have been brought to heel. Many facades have been painted or steam cleaned.

The Riverside Play Group, a pre-school program for both children and parents, is counted among the project's major accomplishments. The program will move from Riverside Park to its winter quarters in the Children's Aid Society Building in the Fred-

erick Douglass Houses on October 16th. The hours are 10:30 to 1 p.m.

Relocation, according to the new director, has been carefully handled; the charges of callousness and irresponsibility that are frequently leveled against private developers and the City for mismanagement of relocation are not valid in Bloomingdale. In every instance, families who had to be relocated were placed in standard apartments (albeit many times in Brooklyn or the Bronx). Volunteers checked the condition of, and often rejected, apartments made available by the City's Department of Real Estate.

Heretofore, the Master Institute of United Arts has been the largest contributor: \$30,000 in two years, plus office space in the Master Hotel; United Neighborhood Houses and Grosvenor Neighborhood House have also sponsored the project.

The Hotel Paris has given, rent-free, a three-room suite overlooking West End Avenue.

Frank Horch continues as the project's chairman of the board; Ethel Keshner replaces Miss Oliver as the assistant director.