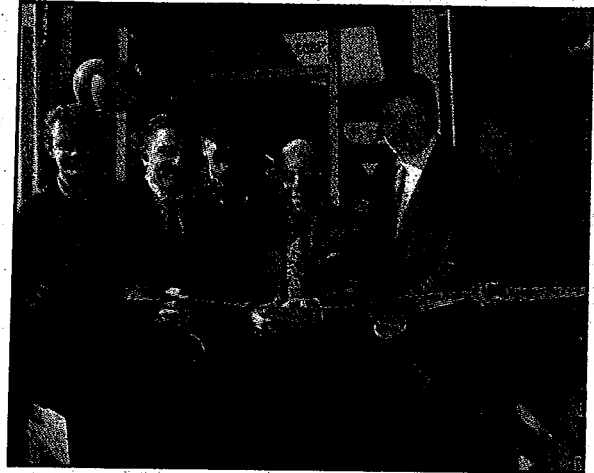


Nate's drops bulletproof glass

Pharmacy's changes reflect nabe's improved image



Nate's Pharmacy and Surgical Supplies has undergone a "remarkable" transformation. Photos by Ted Levin

Owners Boris Natenzon (second from left) and Bernie Glezerman (second from right) snip the ribbon alongside Borough President Marty Markowitz (third from right), and SBIDC officials Josh Keller, Stewart Mann and Elizabeth Demetriou (from left).

BY GARY BUISSO

For years, Bernard Glezerman was hearing Red Hook loud and clear: "Mr. Pharmacist, tear down this wall!"

On Nov. 3, Glezerman and business partner Boris Natenzon answered the neighborhood with the re-opening of their shop, Nate's Pharmacy and Surgical Supplies — without the thick pane of bulletproof glass that for years separated customers from staff.

"It's hard to talk to someone through glass, let alone bulletproof glass," said Glezerman, a pharmacist originally from Bergen Beach. "The neighborhood

needed that face to face interaction," he added. "We wanted to service customers in a way that didn't feel like a prison."

But doing so would be costly, he soon learned. Taking down the glass would turn out to be cost prohibitive, but Glezerman remained undaunted, reaching out the Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Center (SBIDC), a business advocacy group that ultimately helped him secure a \$42,000 grant from the state's Main Street Program.

"It's a sign of the times changing for the better and a sign of a revitalizing

commercial corridor," said Josh Keller, SBIDC's executive director.

Elizabeth Demetriou, SBIDC's director of revitalization and development, said her group helped the pharmacy apply for the grant through the Department of Housing and Community Renewal, and administered the funds, which are available to local businesses for a variety of renovations. The public funding was added to the total cost of renovation, which was about \$200,000, according to Glezerman.

The shop, located at 376 Van Brunt Street, is part of a chain of six independent

full service pharmacies. Glezerman and Natenzon, of Bensonhurst, took over the business in 2003, when Nate's Pharmacy purchased the property.

The pharmacy was originally opened in the late 1980s, when the Red Hook was a crime filled neighborhood on the brink. Things got even worse in the 1990s, when Life magazine dubbed it the crack cocaine capital of America. Nowadays, of course, Red Hook is considerably safer, and periodically touted as the next big thing. "The neighborhood is changing, and we wanted to change with it," Glezerman said.

tion but attributed the move to the work of an energized and highly motivated citizenry fed up with overdevelopment.

"The climate is improving because citizens are demanding more," Samarás said.

The developers of the site now have two options,

according to the DOB: revise their building plans, or appeal to the Board of Standards and Appeals for a variance that allows them to maintain the height of the existing structure.

Hammerman is hopeful that the DOB's action will deter other developers from trying to construct

projects that do not conform to Carroll Gardens' existing profile.

"This will definitely send a message out there that this community means business when it comes to preserving its neighborhood character," he said.

De Blasio, the new public advocate-elect, hopes

that it will, pointing out that there are still roughly 13 blocks in Downtown Brooklyn that have zoning regulations comparable to Midtown Manhattan.

"This is a win for the residents of Carroll Gardens and clearly sends a message to developers city-wide," said de Blasio.

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