

FORT GREENE / CLINTON HILL, BROOKLYN

# FORT GREENE AND CLINTON HILL

A MUSEENYC WALKING TOUR · FREE, AND NOT SPONSORED BY ANYONE

|                                               |                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>DISTANCE</b><br>2.6 miles                  | <b>TIME</b><br>2.5 hours                                                                                                                  |
| <b>STOPS</b><br>11, 7 private (sidewalk only) | <b>START</b><br>BAM, Peter Jay Sharp Building (B/D/N/Q/R/2/3/4/5 to Atlantic Av-Barclays)                                                 |
| <b>END</b><br>Pratt Institute campus          | <b>MAP</b><br><a href="https://museenyc.com/tours/06-fort-greene-clinton-hill/map">museenyc.com/tours/06-fort-greene-clinton-hill/map</a> |

*Almost no tourists, and it is one of the most beautiful neighborhoods in New York. Fort Greene was laid out in the 1840s and its row houses are intact block after block. Clinton Hill next door was where Brooklyn's oil and shipping money built freestanding mansions. Both have been centers of Black middle-class and artistic Brooklyn for generations.*

## ROUTE CARD

Screenshot or tear off this page. Full detail for each stop follows.

|                                                                                        |                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> BAM Peter Jay Sharp Building<br>PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY         | <b>7</b> Brooklyn Masonic Temple<br>PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY  |
| <b>2</b> Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church<br>PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY | <b>8</b> Underwood Park and the Steele House                               |
| <b>3</b> South Portland Avenue<br>PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY                | <b>9</b> Emmanuel Baptist Church<br>PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY  |
| <b>4</b> Fort Greene Park                                                              | <b>10</b> Clinton Avenue mansions<br>PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY |
| <b>5</b> Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument                                                 | <b>11</b> Pratt Institute campus and Sculpture Park                        |
| <b>6</b> Washington Park row<br>PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY                  |                                                                            |

Private stops include people's homes: no gates, no doorways, no photographing into windows.

## GETTING THERE AND BACK

**START** 2/3/4/5/B/D/N/Q/R to Atlantic Av-Barclays Ctr, or C to Lafayette Av, one block from BAM.

**FINISH** G at Clinton-Washington Aves, two blocks from Pratt. Or B38/B54 bus on DeKalb and Myrtle.

**ALONG THE  
ROUTE**

C train along Fulton St. G train along Lafayette and Fulton at Clinton-Washington and Classon.  
Buses: B38 on DeKalb and Lafayette, B69 on Washington and Vanderbilt, B26 on Halsey and Fulton, B54 on Myrtle.

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### Cutting it short

Every walk here has exits. Good ones on this route:

- After stop 3 (South Portland): C at Lafayette Av, one block.
  - After stop 5 (Monument): B38 on DeKalb, or G at Fulton St.
  - After stop 8 (Underwood Park): G at Clinton-Washington Avs, right there.
  - After stop 11 (Pratt): G at Classon Av or Clinton-Washington Avs.
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## THE WALK

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### 1 BAM PETER JAY SHARP BUILDING

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

The Brooklyn Academy of Music dates to 1861 and moved into this 1908 Renaissance Revival building after a fire. It has been the city's main house for experimental theater and dance for fifty years: Pina Bausch, Peter Brook, Philip Glass, the Next Wave Festival. The Harvey Theater two blocks away was left deliberately in its distressed state.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.68617, -73.97760

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### 2 LAFAYETTE AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

**Walk:** East on Lafayette Ave four blocks to South Oxford St.

**Or ride:** C train Lafayette Av, or B38 bus along Lafayette.

An 1862 Romanesque church that ran an abolitionist pulpit and a station on the Underground Railroad, and in the 1960s became a base for civil rights organizing in Brooklyn. Ten of the windows are La Farge and Tiffany. The congregation is still active and still activist.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.68690, -73.97270

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### 3 SOUTH PORTLAND AVENUE

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

**Walk:** One block east, then walk South Portland Ave between Lafayette and DeKalb.

**Heads up:** The tree canopy meets overhead. Best block in Brooklyn. Slow down.

Between DeKalb and Lafayette. An unbroken row of 1860s Italianate brownstones under a full canopy of London plane trees that meets overhead. Spike Lee shot here repeatedly. Walk it slowly and look at the stoops and the ironwork, then look up.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.68790, -73.97380

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## 4 FORT GREENE PARK

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Walk:** North on South Portland to DeKalb Ave, cross into the park at Washington Park.

Walt Whitman campaigned for this park as editor of the Brooklyn Eagle, and Olmsted and Vaux designed it after Central and Prospect Parks. The hill was Fort Putnam in 1776 during the Battle of Brooklyn. The Saturday greenmarket at the north end is a real neighborhood one.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.69150, -73.97400

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## 5 PRISON SHIP MARTYRS' MONUMENT

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Walk:** Climb the main stair to the summit. The column is at the top.

**Heads up:** The crypt below holds the remains of 11,500 prison-ship dead. Almost nobody knows.

More Americans died on British prison ships moored in Wallabout Bay than in every battle of the Revolution combined. Their remains were collected and interred in a crypt here. Stanford White designed the column in 1908. It is the tallest freestanding Doric column in the world and almost nobody in New York knows what it commemorates.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.69150, -73.97470

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## 6 WASHINGTON PARK ROW

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

**Walk:** Down the east side of the park to Washington Park street, between DeKalb and Myrtle.

The stretch of Cumberland Walk facing the park was the neighborhood's prestige address in the 1860s. Second Empire mansards, tall stoops, deep cornices. Richard Wright wrote part of Native Son at 175 Carlton nearby.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.69020, -73.97270

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## 7 BROOKLYN MASONIC TEMPLE

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

**Walk:** South to Lafayette Ave, then east to Clermont Ave.

**Or ride:** B38 bus along DeKalb and Lafayette.

Lafayette and Clermont. Built as a Masonic hall in a stripped Greek style with unusually colorful terra-cotta detailing. It spent years as a hardcore and indie rock venue, which is a very Brooklyn second act.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.68900, -73.97000

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## 8 UNDERWOOD PARK AND THE STEELE HOUSE

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Walk:** East on Lafayette Ave six blocks to Washington Ave. About 10 minutes.

**Or ride:** B69 bus up Washington Ave, or G train to Clinton-Washington Aves.

The park was the garden of the Underwood typewriter family's estate. Across the street, the Joseph Steele House at 200 Lafayette is a white clapboard Greek Revival farmhouse from around 1812, wildly out of place and completely intact. One of the oldest wood houses left in Brooklyn.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.68990, -73.96700

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## 9 EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

**Walk:** One block east on Lafayette Ave to St James Pl.

**Heads up:** Called the Standard Oil Church locally. Pratt paid for it.

Lafayette and St. James. Pratt, of Standard Oil, paid for a church that looks like it was lifted out of Normandy: twin towers, rose window, yellow sandstone. Locally it is called the Standard Oil Church.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.68870, -73.96680

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## 10 CLINTON AVENUE MANSIONS

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

**Walk:** South on St James Pl to Clinton Ave, then walk Clinton north between DeKalb and Willoughby.

**Heads up:** Freestanding mansions on deep lots, all private. This was the Gold Coast.

Walk Clinton Avenue between DeKalb and Willoughby. Pratt's own house at 232 and the four he built as wedding presents for his sons are all still standing, along with a run of freestanding Victorian mansions on deep lots. This block was called the Gold Coast of Brooklyn.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.68900, -73.96600

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## 11 PRATT INSTITUTE CAMPUS AND SCULPTURE PARK

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Walk:** East on DeKalb Ave or Willoughby Ave to Hall St. The campus gate is on your left.

**Heads up:** Campus is open to the public. Ask at the gate about seeing the old steam plant.

Charles Pratt founded the school in 1887 to teach practical arts. The campus is open to the public and functions as a large rotating sculpture garden. The East Building still houses the oldest continuously operating privately owned steam-power plant in the country, with its original Ames engines running behind glass. Ask at the gate about seeing it.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.69130, -73.96350

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## COMBINING THIS WITH OTHER TOURS

- [Tour 13 \(Prospect Park: The Greatest Hits\)](#) starts at Grand Army Plaza, two stops south of BAM on the 2/3 from Atlantic Av-Barclays Ctr. Fort Greene in the morning, Prospect Park after lunch.
- [Tour 2 \(Brooklyn Heights\)](#) ends at Borough Hall, 15 minutes west of BAM on foot. Run Tour 2 in the morning and this one after lunch.
- [Tour 9 \(Two Bridges\)](#) ends in Chinatown, but if you bail at Fulton Ferry you are 20 minutes from BAM on the A/C plus a short walk.

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## WALKING NAVIGATION LINKS

Google caps a directions link at ten points, so the route is split. Open a segment on your phone and it starts walking navigation.

- [Stops 1–10](#)
- [Stops 10–11](#)

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## THE MAP

Open the MUSEENYC map for this walk at [museenyc.com/tours/06-fort-greene-clinton-hill/map](https://museenyc.com/tours/06-fort-greene-clinton-hill/map). Every pin carries its own walking directions, transit alternative and notes.

- **Green pin** = open to the public.
- **Orange pin** = private, look from the sidewalk. Several are people's homes: no gates, no doorways, no photographing into windows.

The orange line is a straight-line guide between stops, not the walking route. Use the navigation links for turn-by-turn.

### MUSEENYC

MUSEENYC writes guides to New York museums, neighborhoods and walks. Nothing here is sponsored, nothing is paid placement, and no one pays to be included.

Questions about a stop, a closure, or anything else on this walk? Reach MUSEENYC at [museenyc.tours@gmail.com](mailto:museenyc.tours@gmail.com) or [@museenyc](https://www.instagram.com/museenyc) on Instagram. More walks at [museenyc.com/tours](https://museenyc.com/tours).