

“Murray Hill still is a quiet enclave,” said Diane Bartow, the president of the neighborhood association and a 30-year resident of the area. At the same time, she said, “we’ve gone from — I hate to use this term — ‘senior’ to junior, and that in and of itself is a good thing.”

It was the neighborhood’s architectural grandeur and quiet that beckoned to Susan B. Adams, 59, a freelance editor and writer who moved to Murray Hill in the mid-1970s. After living for years in a town house walk-up on 36th Street, Ms. Adams moved a few blocks away in 1997, paying \$175,000 for an 800-square-foot one-bedroom co-op on Park Avenue at 38th Street. Describing the deal as “a veritable steal,” she estimates that even in today’s market, the unit would sell for more than \$500,000.

“A friend once told me that New York is a bunch of small villages, really,” said Ms. Adams, who today is co-editor of Murray Hill Life, a newsletter and frequents local favorites like Barbès, a Moroccan restaurant on 36th Street. “I find that Murray Hill certainly is one of those villages.”

The neighborhood skews younger now than it did 10 years ago, and it is growing up physically, too. Far from immune to the building boom of the last few years, Murray Hill continues to sprout new towers that mix in with the old, from the spires along the East River to wide new luxury apartment houses on 34th Street, and even an understated high-rise at 45 Park Avenue designed by Costas Kondylis. Others are still under construction, or stopped midrise, a source of angst for some residents.

Aside from the bar scene on Third Avenue, some locals have grouched lately about East Side Access, a long-term construction project that will route [Long Island Rail Road](#) trains to [Grand Central Terminal](#). Until recently, said Toni Carlina, the district manager of Community Board 6, workers were jackhammering on Park Avenue with floodlights until the early morning hours, though after many board meetings, the noise now ends earlier.

WHAT YOU’LL FIND

It is commonly held that the younger, more bar-centric area south of the neighborhood in the upper 20s and lower 30s is part of Murray Hill; after all, the Murray Hill Diner sits at 33rd and Lexington, and a bar called the Hill, reportedly backed by reality TV stars, packs them in at Third and 29th. But longtime locals (and their community board) will tell you that Murray Hill begins at 34th Street and extends to 42nd Street; its other boundaries are Madison Avenue and the East River.

Above all, contrasts make the area distinctive: Town houses abut white-brick buildings, which abut office and apartment towers. The common theme is that there is no common theme.

Of the town houses remaining in what was once a bastion of 19th-century high society, several are stunners; a small historic district was created in 2002 and then enlarged to protect them. A few Gilded Age palaces remain, too, like the building that is now the Polish Consulate, on Madison Avenue at 37th Street, and an 1891 McKim, Mead & White house at Park Avenue and 35th Street, now a co-op for a few lucky residents. Just off 36th Street is another small wonder, at Sniffen Court, an alley of 10 Civil War-era carriage houses.

“There are nice little pockets of quiet everywhere,” Ms. Adams said.