

**THE NEW YORK
LANDMARKS
CONSERVANCY**

August 19, 2013

STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING, AND MARITIME USES REGARDING THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF THE BIALYSTOKER CENTER AND HOME FOR THE AGED, 228 EAST BROADWAY, NEW YORK AS AN INDIVIDUAL LANDMARK

Good morning Chair Lander and Council Members. I am Blaire Walsh, speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy.

The Conservancy joins elected officials, community members, and local preservationists in supporting designation of the Bialystoker Center as an individual landmark. We believe this building merits designation for both its rich history and its distinguished architecture.

The Bialystoker Center served vital community needs for nearly 80 years as home for the aged, as a social center offering religious services, and as a gathering place for the Bialystokers, one of New York's largest Jewish immigrant groups. Funds raised from those immigrants ensured the building would be completed to serve as a residence for the elderly, in the neighborhood they called home. Along with the nearby landmarked Bialystoker synagogue, the Center is part of the immigrant experience that defines New York's cultural heritage.

It is also an attractive 1931 Art Deco tower. Decorated with Moorish-style terra cotta ornament, the Bialystoker Home is a contributing building within the Lower East Side National Register Historic District. The structure itself connects architecture to history, with symbols at the entrance representing the 12 tribes of Israel, a motif often found in synagogue decoration. The golden brick façade is intact, and there have been few alterations.

We thank the Landmarks Commission for acting swiftly to designate this significant site, which is so deeply connected to its community, and urge the Council to affirm that designation today.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Conservancy's views.