



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 BEDFORD STUYVESANT/ EXPANDED STUYVESANT HEIGHTS HISTORIC DISTRICT IN BROOKLYN

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

The Conservancy strongly supports the designation of the expanded Stuyvesant Heights Historic District. We are pleased to join with residents, public officials, and preservationists in doing so. The interest in this extension came from the community, and the designation followed dozens of meetings where residents and owners heard from their own neighbors, the Commission, and advocates, and asked many, thoughtful questions.

Like the original Stuyvesant Heights District, the extension is an extraordinary collection of architectural treasures with attractive streetscapes and a vivid sense of place. The groups of houses and apartments that comprise the District feature a dazzling array of the styles from the late 19th and early 20th century. While there have been alterations, the rows retain their low scale, original materials, and attractive details. The sense of place is heightened by the strong sense of community, with landscaping that competes for the greenest block in Brooklyn and families that have owned their homes for generations.

The Conservancy knows this area well. Over the years, we have received over 350 inquiries from Bedford Stuyvesant residents, gone on dozens of site visits and spoken at community meetings. We've completed over 20 projects funded by low-interest loans to homeowners and grants to religious properties. Those were mostly within the Stuyvesant Heights District; and there is little doubt that this designation will spur more applications and more restoration.

Designation of this expanded District is long overdue. The Stuyvesant Heights community initiated it, supported it, and achieved it. Now we urge the Council to affirm it.

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