

**THE NEW YORK  
LANDMARKS  
CONSERVANCY**

September 24, 2019

**STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY  
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING THE PROPOSED INDIVIDUAL  
LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF THE:**

- **AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS BROOKLYN OFFICE, SHELTER, AND GARAGE, 233 BUTLER STREET, BROOKLYN;**
- **BROOKLYN RAPID TRANSIT COMPANY CENTRAL POWER STATION ENGINE HOUSE, 153 SECOND STREET, BROOKLYN;**
- **GOWANUS CANAL FLUSHING TUNNEL PUMPING STATION AND GATE HOUSE, 196 BUTLER STREET, BROOKLYN;**
- **SOMERS BROTHERS TINWARE FACTORY (LATER AMERICAN CAN COMPANY), 238-246 3RD STREET, BROOKLYN; AND**
- **MONTAUK PAINT MANUFACTURING COMPANY BUILDING, 170 SECOND AVENUE, BROOKLYN**

Good day Chair Carroll and Commissioners. I'm Andrea Goldwyn, speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy is pleased to join elected officials and local advocates in supporting designation of these five buildings as individual landmarks.

We appreciate that the Landmarks Commission has undertaken a study of Gowanus in conjunction with the current rezoning, and that these designations have been brought forward before that process is complete. However, we are disappointed that so few buildings are being heard. In an area with hundreds of unprotected sites, five seems insufficient. Our staff surveyed the area and found some 16 buildings that merit individual designation. The State Historic Preservation Office has determined that an historic district is eligible for listing.

These five sites under discussion today are low-scale, brick structures with connections to Gowanus' development in the late 19th and early 20th century. They retain their original height, scale, and massing, along with many attractive decorative details. The Conservancy is happy to offer support from our financial and technical assistance programs to the owner of these buildings.

The prominent backers of the ASPCA wanted to show the significance of their cause when they engaged the well-regarded firm of Renwick, Aspinwall & Tucker to design this neo-Romanesque-style office, animal shelter, and garage. Now a music and dining venue, it remains a local treasure.

The BRT Engine House and Gowanus Canal Flushing Tunnel Pumping Station were critical pieces of the infrastructure that triggered development of this area. The Engine House, planned by electrical engineer Thomas E. Murray, has lost its terra cotta roof, but the building is set to be reactivated and become a vital part of the Gowanus community. The Neo-Classical-style brick pumping station and brick gatehouse were completed in 1911. Remarkably, after a hiatus of over 50 years, the facility is once again in active service.

The American Can Factory and Montauk Paint Manufacturing Building are fine examples of Gowanus's industrial history. Both were designed in the American Round-Arch style, and have been adapted for contemporary use. The 1884 Somers Building houses artists and creative industries, while the 1908 Montauk building is now residential.

These five are good representatives of the century-old industrial character that makes this area so appealing and has sparked its revitalization, but given that so many sites are considered projected and potential development sites under the rezoning, we fear that much of historic Gowanus will be lost forever. We hope that the LPC will go back and consider additional sites for designation.

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