

**THE NEW YORK
LANDMARKS
CONSERVANCY**

February 13, 2018

**STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF
PUBLIC SCHOOL 109 (NOW EL BARRIO'S ARTSPACE PS109), 215 EAST 99TH STREET,
MANHATTAN AS AN INDIVIDUAL LANDMARK**

Good day, Chair Srinivasan and Commissioners. I am Andrea Goldwyn speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy is very pleased to support designation of PS 109.

PS 109 is part of the extraordinary portfolio of turn-of-the-century Schools Superintendent C.B.J. Snyder. The Collegiate Gothic edifice, which dates to 1899, features the qualities that make Snyder schools so significant. Their mission is embedded into the structure: the construction is rigorous; the plan affords abundant light and air; the picturesque façade tells the neighborhood that this is a grand, special place. As a school, PS 109, was an oasis of learning; in its current use, it is a haven for artists needing affordable housing.

The Conservancy has been a longtime advocate for PS 109. When the City let the building deteriorate in the late 90s and began to dismantle it, we led the charge to save it. We worked to halt the demolition. We conducted research to have it listed on the National Register of Historic Places. We publicized the plight of this and other abandoned Snyder schools. We engaged an engineer to survey the dilapidated structure and issue a report which found that it could be reused. And some 15 years later we celebrated its renaissance and the determination of Artspace and its partners in completing this restoration.

As the City undertakes a rezoning in East Harlem, we thank the Commission for bringing this designation forward, providing this additional layer of protection, and formally recognizing one of this neighborhood's finest buildings.

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