

May 7, 2019

STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF THE SUNSET PARK SOUTH, SUNSET PARK 50TH STREET, CENTRAL SUNSET PARK, AND SUNSET PARK NORTH HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Good morning Chair Carroll and commissioners. I am Andrea Goldwyn, speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy is pleased to join elected officials and advocates to support designation of these four Sunset Park Historic Districts. They all merit this recognition for their fine architecture, strong sense of place, and their role in New York's history.

The four Districts comprise some 500 buildings, primarily row houses, along with several flats buildings and one religious property. They have a shared history, built at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, as the nearby waterfront was developed with industrial uses and new jobs. As the subway was completed and the recreational area Sunset Park established, the new houses built along these blocks became an attractive option to New Yorkers and especially to new residents, including Irish, German, Norwegian, Swedish, Italian, and Russian Jewish immigrants. As the 20th century concluded, these features were all still appealing, now to newer Latino and Asian immigrant populations.

The Districts are composed primarily of rows of limestone, brownstone, brick houses, some with projecting bays. These houses were built in the revival styles typical of the era: neo-Grec, Romanesque Revival, and Renaissance Revival. The historic height, scale, massing of these houses is largely intact, along with the masonry facades, elaborate cornices, and robust stoops. While there have been modest alterations, the sense of place along these rows remains evident. The Central Sunset Park District also includes the neo-Gothic style Park United Presbyterian Church (now Iglesia Presbiteriana Sion,) a handsome brick building. All of the Districts are within the boundaries of the Sunset Park State/National Register Historic District.

The Conservancy is happy to offer building owners assistance from our Technical Services, Historic Properties Fund, and Sacred Sites programs. As this neighborhood faces enormous development pressures, we thank the Commission for bringing these designations forward and urge a swift vote. and thank you for the opportunity to express the Conservancy's views.