

## **Stephen Chu Opening Remarks**

Good afternoon and thank you Speaker Adams, Chair Powers and members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify before you. It is a great honor to be re-nominated for the position of Commissioner on the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Having served as a commissioner for over two years now, I have gained experience and a better understanding of how to carry out the responsibilities of an LPC Commissioner. It has been a collaborative and rewarding experience working with my fellow commissioners and LPC staff to enforce the Landmarks Law in this constantly growing, evolving and adaptive city of ours.

As an architect, I have had the fortune to work for some of the city's most important institutions and had a hand in several of the historically significant projects in NYC over the past 30 years. I am currently a Partner at Ennead Architects--formerly Polshek Partnership-- where I have been employed since 1996. My mentor and former employer, the late James Polshek, founded the firm on principles rooted in the tradition of respect for context and belief that making architecture is an inherently civic act that comes with great social responsibility. He taught me that a building must belong to its community and reminded us of the positive power of public space. These are principles that have guided me throughout my years in practice.

I believe that the experience I've gained in the practice of Architecture will continue to be beneficial to the Commission. In the past year, I've learned much about the process and dynamics of the Commission and how to carry out its mission to protect New York City's architecturally, historically, and culturally significant buildings and sites. Some areas where I feel that I have brought insight and value are:

- Understanding the perspective of architects coming to the commission and the challenges they may face technically and programmatically. I also understand the flexibility they can have in implementing a design. There are many variables that need and should be considered when dealing with sensitive historic context.

- Be able to analyze the architectural, and therefore historical, characteristics of a building and/or streetscape, and apply that knowledge to designing appropriate new architecture.
- Knowledge of construction methods, schedule and budget and their impact on the project at hand
- Experience in designing various building typologies: cultural, educational, commercial and civic, I can bring some insight into the issues and factors involved in each building type and how they may affect its historic settings
- Understand the value of proportion, scale and harmony. They are characteristics that should be recognized in the historical context and reflected in the new work.
- A belief that design concept and execution are equally important in a design proposal
- An understanding that the changing needs of the city, its institutions, residents and visitors require upgraded facilities that must be accommodated in their historic context

I can only hope that the skills and experience I've gained continue to serve and be useful to the Commission and the people of NYC.

NYC is the past, present and future. I understand that it needs to evolve, adapt and change. That it can continue its tradition of being diverse, progressive, inclusive and stay vibrant and relevant into the future. If appointed, I will do my best to apply the law to preserve and protect sites that reflect diversity and history in all 5 boroughs and ensure that they remain relevant and vibrant in future years to come.

It is an honor to have served the past year on the Landmark Preservation Commission. I take very seriously the responsibility of preserving the history and culture of this great city. It is my desire to continue to play a role in the stewardship of this great city as it continues to adapt and evolve to meet the needs of the city and its diverse population.

Thank you for your consideration of my nomination and I welcome any questions.