

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

1

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC
SITINGS AND DISPOSITIONS

----- X

Tuesday, September 10, 2024
Start: 11:08 a.m.
Recess: 11:43 a.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Room,
14th Floor

B E F O R E: Kamillah M. Hanks, Chair
Sandy Nurse, Acting Chair

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Justin Brannan
Amanda C. Farías
Oswald Feliz,
Christopher Marte
Sandy Nurse
Yusef Salaam

Other Council Members Attending: Restler

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

A P P E A R A N C E S

Lisa Kersavage - Executive Director
Landmarks Preservation Commission

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS
(BLANK PAGE)

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS 4

2 SERGEANT WONG: Sound test for the Subcommittee on
3 Landmarks, Public Sitings, and Dispositions. Today's
4 date is September 10, 2024; being recorded by Danny
5 Wong on the 14th floor Hearing Room.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Subcommittee on Landmarks,
7 Public Sitings, and Dispositions -- at this time we
8 would like everyone to silence cell phones and
9 electronic devices to avoid any interruptions.

10 Please, at no point approach the dais.

11 Chair, we are ready to begin.

12 ACTING CHAIRPERSON NURSE:

13 (GAVEL SOUND) (GAVELING IN)

14 Good morning, welcome to the meeting of the
15 Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings, and
16 Dispositions. I am Council Member Sandy Nurse, and I
17 will be today's Acting Chair of the Subcommittee.

18 I am joined today by my colleagues Council Member
19 Brannan and Council Member Marte. We will be joined
20 by Council Member Feliz online.

21 Before we begin with today's Agenda, I will
22 remind everyone that this meeting is being held in a
23 hybrid format. For members of the public who wish to
24 testify remotely, we ask that you first register
25 online, and you may do so now by visiting

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

5

1
2 www.Council.NYC.gov/landuse to sign up, and then sign
3 into the Zoom and remain signed in until you have
4 testified.

5 For anyone here with us today in person and
6 wishing to testify, if you have not already done so,
7 please see one of our sergeants to fill out a
8 speaker's card, and we will call your name at the
9 appropriate time.

10 For anyone wishing to submit written testimony on
11 the items being heard today, we ask that you please
12 send it via email landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov,
13 and to please indicate the Land Use number and/or
14 project name in the subject line of your email.

15 On today's Agenda, we will have a hearing on Land
16 Use Item Number 130, Brooklyn Edison Building, and
17 landmark designation in Council Member Restler's
18 district in Brooklyn; Preconsidered Land Use item
19 designation of the Willoughby Hart Historic District
20 in Council Member Ossé's district in Brooklyn.

21 We will also hold a number votes which we will do
22 as soon as we get a quorum.

23 (PAUSE)

24 ACTING CHAIRPERSON NURSE: I'd like to recognize
25 that Council Member Restler has joined us.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

6

(PAUSE)

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The Zoom host cannot hear the
panelist.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Give us one second, the
slides are out of order in the way that they want to
present. So, we're going to skip over to the public
hearing for Land Use 130, the proposed designation by
Landmarks Preservation Commission of the Brooklyn
Edison Building in Council Member Restler's district
in Brooklyn as a historic landmark.

Council Member Restler, do you want to say a few
words on your... on the project?

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Uh, thank you very much,
Chair Nurse.

The Edison Building, uh, 345 Adams is well-known
to, I think probably, certainly every member of the
City Council from Brooklyn, because that's where the
Board of Elections is. We have a number of city
agencies in there. It is a beautiful building, and
, you know, downtown Brooklyn has been undergoing
dramatic changes in recent decades. And, it is
important that we continue to recognize and celebrate
the rich architectural history of some of the
buildings that have made downtown Brooklyn great.

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS 7
2 AND DISPOSITIONS

3 I have been in close communication with the ,you
4 know, it's... for my colleagues' benefit, this is an
5 unusual ownership structure of the building, uh,
6 where the ground floor space is, or the first two
7 floors, I believe, were condo-ed out to a developer
8 to make them for dynamic retail spaces, and DCAS, the
9 City, owns the remainder of the building.

10 It is critically important to me that we preserve
11 the beautiful architecture of this building, and I
12 have been working with some of the civic associations
13 in the area, uh, to advance this goal - while also
14 ensuring that the retail spaces can be activated and
15 that we develop an effective plan with LPC (Landmarks
16 Preservation Commission) while this is under Council
17 review, uh, to ensure that these retail spaces can
18 be, uh, to the benefit of our community.

19 So, I have a number questions, but happy to hear
20 the presentation and go from there.

21 Thank you for the chance to comment, Chair Nurse.

22 ACTING CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, I will now
23 turn it back to the panelists for your presentation.

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: Good morning,
25 Acting Chair Nurse and Council members.

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS 8

2 My name is Lisa Kersavage, and I am the Executive
3 Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

4 And I appreciate the opportunity to testify today on
5 our recent designations.

6 The Brooklyn Edison Building is a distinguished
7 renaissance revival style office building designed by
8 McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin for the Brooklyn Edison
9 Company and built between 1922 and 1926. Highly
10 visible from Adams Street, Columbus Park, and Fulton
11 Streets, the monumental building is a notable
12 landmark in the civic and commercial center of
13 downtown Brooklyn.

14 Next slide.

15 At the public hearing on June 4, 2024, three
16 people testified, including representatives of the
17 Downtown Brooklyn Association, Historic Districts
18 Council, who spoke in favor of the designation. The
19 owner of the commercial condominium unit did not
20 oppose designation, but emphasized their concerns
21 about the flexibility in making necessary changes to
22 the commercial storefronts. And, the Commission also
23 received two letters in support, including from
24 Council Member Restler and a representative of the
25 Brooklyn Heights Association.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

9

1 The Brooklyn Edison Building is located at 345
2 Adams Street on the corner of Willoughby, Pearl and
3 Adams Streets.
4

5 Next slide.

6 The Edison Electric Illuminating Company of
7 Brooklyn was established in 1889 to provide
8 electricity to the homes and businesses of Brooklyn.
9 After a merger in 1919, the company was formally
10 reorganized as the Brooklyn Edison Company. After the
11 completion of the subways lines in the 1920s, growth
12 in residential development increased the demand for
13 additional electricity capacity in Brooklyn. To
14 answer this demand, the Brooklyn Edison Company
15 required a larger building as its headquarters and
16 commissioned one of the most prominent architectural
17 offices of the era, McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin, to
18 design it.

19 Next slide.

20 Located on the prominent corner Willoughby and
21 Pearl Streets, the Brooklyn Edison Building was
22 designed and constructed in two phases. The first
23 phase took place in 1922 to `23, and the building
24 expanded northwards in 1926 doubling its footprint.
25

1 Designed in the Renaissance Revival style, the
2 building features a tripartite configuration with
3 rusticated stone base, brick and stone middle
4 section, and double setback crown responding to the
5 requirements of the 1916 zoning law. It is richly
6 ornamented with Renaissance Revival style elements,
7 particularly focused at the street level and its
8 roofline.
9

10 Next slide.

11 Originally located on the southeast corner of its
12 block, during the construction of the Brooklyn Civic
13 Center and the expansion of Adams Street in the 1950,
14 the western half of the block was removed and the
15 urban setting changed. Following demolition of the
16 adjacent buildings, the ground floor of the Brooklyn
17 Edison Building's west façade became exposed. The
18 building was adapted to the changing streetscape by
19 moving its main entrance to Adams Street in the mid-
20 1960s.

21 In 2009, commercial owners, Muss Development LLC,
22 created retail spaces with new storefronts along
23 Adams that interpreted and replicated historic
24 features on Willoughby and Pearl Street with modern
25 materials, activating the street frontage facing the

1
2 Civic Center. LPC recognizes that these new
3 storefronts are non-historic, which allows
4 flexibility into the future.

5 Next slide.

6 Despite the change to the city grid around it,
7 and changes on the lower stories of the west façade,
8 the building retains its historic form and character.
9 Highly visible from many vantage points in its
10 monumentally and prominent massing, incorporating
11 highly intact Renaissance Revival style elements, is
12 further emphasized after the change in the urban
13 fabric of downtown Brooklyn.

14 Recently, a comprehensive restoration of the
15 building facades was completed under the ownership of
16 DCAS. The building continues to serve as an office
17 building with commercial activities on its first and
18 second floors.

19 Next slide.

20 The Brooklyn Edison Company was central to the
21 borough's electrification needs and stands as a
22 testament to the transformative impact of
23 technological advancements in electricity production
24 in Brooklyn's urban development.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

12

1 The architecturally and historically significant
2 building continues to provide a monumental backdrop
3 to Brooklyn Civic Center with an elaborate design and
4 setback massing that recall the time of construction.
5

6 Thank you, and I am happy to answer questions.

7 ACTING CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you.

8 I would now like to recognize any colleagues if
9 you have any questions?

10 Okay, Council Member Restler?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you. Thanks so
12 much, uh ,you know, it's in my lifetime that, uh,
13 downtown Brooklyn changed dramatically. And, the
14 presence of the Marriot, the retail spaces on Adams
15 in this building were critical components of kind of
16 the revitalization of... maybe that's not the perfect
17 word - but were critical components of kind of the
18 new era of development in downtown Brooklyn.

19 And, I just have a couple kind of related
20 questions.

21 The current owner of the kind of condo retail
22 space, Muss Development, removed the façade on the
23 Adams Street side and created replica to look the
24 Pearl and Willoughby side of the building.
25

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

13

1 Could you confirm that LPC agrees that the Adams
2 side of the building was the back of the historical
3 building and does not intend to seek any changes or
4 require future repairs that are consistent with the
5 current design?
6

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: Yes, so, it is true
8 that the front of the building was on... was on Pearl
9 Street, historically, and the urban renewal, as I
10 said, did change the views of the building. So, it
11 exposed kind of the back. And ,you know, as I said,
12 the retail was a re-creation, we recognized that in
13 our... all of the three, uh, the hearing and two
14 public meetings, to the council members, and in our
15 designation report. So, that is part of the record
16 that allows for flexibility for those retail
17 storefronts.

18 Our staff met with the owner onsite, and we had a
19 really helpful tour of the site. We talked about, uh,
20 future regulation, the potential of master plans, and
21 other ways to provide ,you know, flexibility but also
22 timeliness in issuing permits for those retail...
23 which we agree really activates that street.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: That is helpful to hear,
25 but just, to ask the question plainly, recognizing

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

14

1 that Adams was the back of the building, you're not
2 intending -- Landmarks Preservation Commission is not
3 intending any future repairs that are inconsistent
4 with the current design?
5

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: Well, the ,you
7 know, the back of the building is a huge - it's a big
8 building.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Yes.

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: So ,you know, it's
11 the upper floors and the ground floor. And the way
12 LPC regulates is ,you know, we regulate the whole
13 building, but we recognize for storefronts that
14 there's often been alterations to its base, and that
15 storefronts have special needs. So, our rules allow
16 for a lot... our staff to issue permits that can be
17 expedited, they can be fast. Uhm, so, we recognize
18 the needs of business and... (CROSS-TALK)

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I...

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: I talked to them...
21 (CROSS-TALK)

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And, I do want to get
23 into the storefront-specific issues with you, but I
24 do just want to try to make sure that we're saying
25 the same thing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

15

1 As a result of urban renewal, Adams kind of
2 became the main entrance for the building, as it
3 opened up the Adams Street side, and Columbus Park,
4 et cetera. But, you're not intending to require
5 future repairs that are inconsistent with the current
6 design with regard to kind of the historical nature
7 of where the original entrance was or anything to
8 that effect?
9

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: I'm not sure what
11 you mean with inconsistent.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Well, you know, I think
13 we're, you know, I'm certainly happy to see a
14 landmark designation that, you know, maintains the
15 current design and structure broadly. And, I can get
16 into the specifics on the retail spaces. But
17 sometimes, I worry that when we designate a building,
18 we then look back to some picture from 1922 and say,
19 we need to recreate that picture from 1922 and hold
20 the building owner accountable for a redesign that's
21 gonna recreate a 1922 image. And I'm sure 1922 was a
22 great year in Brooklyn, but, you know, it can feel
23 random.

24 And, so, I just want to make sure we're not
25 require... because the previous entrance of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

16

1 building was on Pearl Street, not on Adams, we're not
2 going back to some previous design from a different
3 era that we're imposing on this building and saying,
4 you're gonna have to recreate this... that's
5 inconsistent with the current design.
6

7 Does that make sense? Did I say that more
8 plainly?

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: Well, LPC never
10 mandates a certain design. You know, people come with
11 the changes that they want to make to us. And, in
12 this case, because we so clearly documented the
13 changes to this building in our designation report,
14 and that's what the Commission voted on, we recognize
15 that those storefronts on Adams were not historic. We
16 are very clear about that, and that allows for future
17 flexibility for those storefronts. But, we regulate
18 every building the same ,you know, we don't, uh, it's
19 not a different set of regulations for each building
20 we designate. But, we never mandate that somebody has
21 to do restorative work. And, in this case... (CROSS-
22 TALK)

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Although, I... if you
24 were to...

25

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

17

1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: We... we were very
2 clear about the need for flexibility and these
3 buildings... (CROSS-TALK)

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Great...

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: these storefronts
6 have been recreated.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I think that sometimes
8 the staff review of exactly this banister or exactly
9 this window frame, or whatever the heck it is, it can
10 feel like it's a mandate. It... You may not use that
11 language, and that may not be the way that you think
12 about it, but I think for an applicant going through
13 a process, they may not feel like they have the
14 latitude that, uh, it sounds like you're describing
15 in your answer.

16 But, I, I, I do, I digress, I... Well, I don't
17 really, I just wanted to clarify that point. It
18 sounds like we're on the same page.

19 I just want to dig down a little more on the
20 storefronts, if that's okay?

21 It's critical we kind of ensure that these stores
22 are able to continue to operate effectively in these
23 spaces, and that, when there's turnover, we're able
24

25

1
2 to fill these spaces and have a vibrant, dynamic
3 mixed-use commercial corridor here.

4 And, I think we just want to understand in the
5 creation of kind of a master plan with the owner and
6 with the business, you know, for the... for the
7 storefronts, do you intend to set policies?

8 Are you kind of committed to setting policies
9 around backlit signage, signage size requirements,
10 awning and color requirements -- so that those are
11 certainties for businesses that are coming in -- and
12 what they need to comply with to be able to
13 understand kind of the approvals that are in place
14 for them to be able to kind of set up their facade
15 appropriately?

16 And, I think you've said this, but I just want to
17 kind of affirm, LPC is committed to working with Muss
18 on a new storefront plan that addresses these issues
19 and removes any uncertainty for future tenants?

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: Yeah, We talked to
21 the property owner, we went on-site, and we talked
22 about master plans, set examples of master plans. You
23 know, the way those work is that, uh, it is an
24 application from the property owner, it's not
25 something that we can create.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

19

1 But, it can either be approved by the staff, if
2 it meets our staff level rules, uh, which ,you know,
3 it sounded like most of the issues that the property
4 owners are interested in could meet our staff level
5 rules. If they don't, then it would just be reviewed
6 by our commission.
7

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay.

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: Uhm, and, then, it
10 allows for, uh, staff approval... (CROSS-TALK)

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: So, you're not able at
12 this time to ,like, make a commitment that it would
13 be staff level approval for something like this?

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: Not without seeing
15 what the application is...

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Yeah...

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: no.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay.

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: Yeah.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And, do you think backlit
21 signage, signage size requirements, and awning color
22 requirements are reasonable expectations to have
23 incorporated into the master plan?

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: Those are things
25 that are typically in a master plan for sure.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

20

1 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay.

2
3 Well, that's all helpful. I am appreciative of
4 your patience with me today and your patience in
5 working with Muss. They have been very appreciative
6 of your time and insight and expertise. I know you
7 met with my staff as well...

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: Mm-hmm

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: so thank you for that.

10 I think this is a good project and a good
11 designation and good for downtown Brooklyn. I just
12 want to make sure that we have sensible policies in
13 place to protect the commercial storefronts and make
14 sure that we can continue to have those as vibrant
15 spaces in our community.

16 So, thank you very much, and thank you for the
17 time, Chair Nurse.

18 ACTING CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Council
19 Member.

20 I am going to recognize Council Member Oswald
21 Feliz is joining us online, Council Member Salaam is
22 here. Is there anyone else that has any questions
23 regarding this... okay, great.

24

25

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

21

1 So, we will... Thank you for... thank you
2 panelists, and we will close this portion of the
3 hearing.
4

5 Are there any members of the public that would
6 like to testify?

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, there are not.

8 UNKNOWN: (INAUDIBLE)

9 ACTING CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Oh, that's right,
10 you're doing two, sorry.

11 All right, so, just one second, I want to see
12 where we are in terms of members.

13 (PAUSE)

14 ACTING CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay, so, I now open
15 the public hearing for Preconsidered LU items, the
16 proposed designation by Landmarks Preservaion
17 Commissioner of the Willoughby Hart Historic District
18 in Council Member Ossé's district in Brooklyn. We
19 already went over this a little bit. So, I am going
20 to ask the panelist to begin.

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: Okay. And, we just
22 need the slides. Okay, next slide, please.

23 Okay, good morning, Acting Chair Nurse, and
24 Council Members, my name is Lisa Kersavage, I am the
25 Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation

1 Commission, and I appreciate the opportunity to
2 testify today.
3

4 The Willoughby Heart Historic District, which was
5 designated on June 25th, consists of two blocks of
6 cohesive historic streetscapes with row houses built
7 between the early 1870s and 1890s representing the
8 early development of the Bedford Stuyvesant
9 neighborhood in the late 19th century.

10 The Willoughby Heart Historic District, which you
11 can see with the red label, is located in the
12 northwest corner of the Bedford Stuyvesant
13 Neighborhood in the vicinity of the Clinton Hill and
14 Bedford Stuyvesant Historic Districts. It was
15 identified by LPC in various surveys over many years,
16 and after having designated larger historic districts
17 in the neighborhood, LPC restudied the area and
18 prioritized it for designation. In addition to our
19 internal studies, LPC received a request for
20 evaluation, from two block associations, for a
21 historic district encompassing the area that we had
22 found to merit designation.

23 Next slide.
24
25

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

23

1 The district is bounded by Nostrand Avenue to the
2 east, Marcy Avenue to the west, Willoughby Avenue to
3 the north, and Hart Street to the south.

4
5 LPC held three Owner Information Sessions in
6 advance of calendaring and after. At each one, we
7 provided an explanation of why the historic district
8 is significant and answered questions about our
9 review process for typical alterations, including
10 rear yard extensions. We also offered and held many
11 one-on-one meetings with individual property owners.
12 We also responded to concerns about timing by
13 postponing two public meetings.

14 Throughout the designation process, and at our
15 public hearing on Tuesday, June 11th, the Commission
16 received written and verbal testimony from property
17 owners both in support and in opposition of the
18 historic district. Elected official support included
19 Council Member Ossé, State Senator Brisport, and New
20 York State Assemblymember Zinerman.

21 Organizations supporting the district included
22 Brooklyn Community Board Three, the New York
23 Landmarks Conservancy, Historic Districts Council,
24 Save Harlem now, and others.

25

1 I will note that the full reporting of the
2 testimony is included in the Historic Districts
3 Designation Report.
4

5 Next slide.

6 The Willoughby Hart Historic District was
7 historically part of a community known as Cripple
8 Busch, which was developed in the mid-17th century,
9 along the historic Cripple Busch Road, that connected
10 the settlement of Bedford Corners to Newtown in
11 Queens, which we can see in this 1886 map. The land
12 immediately within the district was later part of
13 Henry Bourne's property.

14 Development in this area started slowly in the
15 1870s with one group of houses on Willoughby that are
16 mostly still intact. The rest of the row houses in
17 the district were designed, constructed, and planned
18 by a small group of builders, owners, and local
19 Brooklyn architects such as Thomas E. Greenland,
20 Arthur Taylor, and Isaac Reynolds.

21 As you can see here in the 1880 map in the
22 center, and 1898 map on the left, by the mid-1880s,
23 the blocks have been nearly fully developed. And by
24 1898, all of the buildings in the district were
25 constructed, which you can see in pink.

1
2 Next slide.

3 The district is characterized by long consistent
4 rows of preserved row houses. Many of the early
5 inhabitants of these houses were Jewish immigrants
6 from Russia, many of whom were also local business
7 owners. The homes were owner occupied until the 1920s
8 when most were split between multiple families who
9 rented space.

10 By the mid-20th century, the African American
11 community grew here as it did in the larger Bedford
12 Stuyvesant neighborhood. And in 1969, of the 250,000
13 people living in Bedford Stuyvesant, 80 percent were
14 Black and 10 percent were Puerto Rican.

15 Next slide.

16 In the 1960s, the Central Brooklyn Coordinating
17 Council lobbied Senator Robert F. Kennedy to visit
18 Bedford Stuyvesant and worked with his staff to form
19 the first federally funded community development
20 corporation in the country, the Bedford Stuyvesant
21 Development and Service Corporation, which focused on
22 restoration largely carried out by local men learning
23 skilled trades. Number 485 Willoughby Avenue and the
24 five adjoining row houses were restored as part of
25 this program.

1
2 Next slide.

3 Shown here is our analysis and the building dates
4 and styles represented in the district. All the row
5 houses were built during the last three decades of
6 the 19th century, during a time of transition from
7 farmland to dense residential development.

8 The most common architectural style is Neo-Grec,
9 seen throughout the district and employed throughout
10 the phase of the development. Row houses, featuring a
11 combination of Neo-Grec and Second Empire-stylistic
12 features, are among the earliest buildings
13 constructed, and a row of Romanesque Revival style
14 and Queen Anne style houses on Hart Street among the
15 latest. The consistency in age and style creates a
16 distinctly cohesive streetscape.

17 Next slide.

18 ACTING CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Uh, one moment, we're
19 going to... Is it okay if we're going to call for a
20 vote?

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: Sure.

22 ACTING CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Just because we have
23 members who are in other hearings.

24 So, we're just going to pause on the public
25 hearing piece.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

27

1 We will now vote to approve the designation of
2 the following sites by Landmarks Preservation
3 Commission:

4 LU 129, the designation of the Temple Court, now
5 the Beekman Hotel Atrium in Council Member Marte's
6 district in Manhattan; LU 108, the designation
7 Heckscher Building, now the Crown Building, in
8 Council Member Power's district in Manhattan; Land
9 Use Item 131; the designation of Frederick Douglass
10 Memorial Park, in Council Member Carr's district in
11 Staten Island.

12 Council Member Marte, do you have anything you
13 want to say? Okay, great.

14 Members of the subcommittee who have questions or
15 remarks about today's items, please let me know.

16 I now call for a vote to approve LUs 108, 129,
17 and 131. Counsel, please call the roll.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Brannan?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Aye

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Feliz, who's
21 online?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: (NO RESPONSE)

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I don't know if he's able to
24 unmute?
25

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS 28

2 Council Member Feliz online? Are you able to give
3 your vote?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: (NO RESPONSE)

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Uh, okay, Council Member
6 Marte?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: I vote aye.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Acting Chair Nurse?

9 ACTING CHAIRPERSON NURSE: I vote aye.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Salaam?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: I vote aye.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And, then, we'll leave it open
13 for one minute.

14 So far with a vote of four in favor, the items
15 are approved. Do you want to leave the vote open?

16 ACTING CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay, we will leave it
17 open, but we will turn it back to you all. Sorry for
18 the brief intermission.

19 Can we get the slides again?

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: Okay, and here you
21 can see examples of the Second Empire, Neo-Grec, and
22 Romanesque Revival styles.

23 Next slide.

24 After calendaring, there was permitting activity
25 at DOB (Department of Buildings) that LPC monitored,

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

29

1 including resurfacing rear and rooftop additions and
2 facade repair. In voting to approve the district, the
3 LPC commissioners were apprised of and consider those
4 permits. Today, the district has good integrity
5 overall, with consistent historic streetscapes, and
6 minor alterations to some properties that do not
7 detract from the strong historic architectural
8 character, streetscape integrity, and sense of place
9 consistent with similar historic districts.
10

11 Thank you, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

12 ACTING CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, one second.

13 And, we do have one question. Wondering if the
14 homeowners will still be able to make additions to
15 the back of their homes after the historic district
16 is designated?

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERSAVAGE: Sure. Our rooftop
18 and rear yard additions are very common applications
19 at the Landmarks Commission, some of which can even
20 be approved by staff, others that go to our
21 Commission. So some, if they follow the rules, even
22 our staff can just approve them in an expedited
23 fashion. But otherwise, you know, we have hearings
24 most Tuesdays, and oftentimes, rooftop and rear yard
25 additions are on the agenda. So it's something that

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

30

1 we very commonly see in row house districts such as
2 this one.
3

4 ACTING CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Okay, thank you for
5 that.

6 Are there any remote public participants who wish
7 to testify and have not already done so?

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: There are no public... there
9 are no members of the public.

10 ACTING CHAIRPERSON NURSE: There being no other
11 members of the public who wish to testify -- or
12 members, uhm, regarding the Preconsidered LU item for
13 the designation of the Willoughby Hart Historic
14 District, the public hearing is now closed, thank you
15 so much, panelist, and sorry for the disruption.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The final vote for the Land
17 Use items 108, 129, and 131, is 4 in the affirmative,
18 0 abstentions, no negative, and all items are
19 referred to the full Land Use Committee.

20 ACTING CHAIRPERSON NURSE: Thank you, Counsel.

21 That concludes today's business. I would like to
22 thank the members of the public, my colleagues,
23 staff, committee counsel, Land Use staff, and the
24 Sergeants at Arms for your participation today.
25

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

This meeting is hereby adjourned.

(GAVEL SOUND) (GAVELING OUT)

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date September 14, 2024