



New York City Council Land Use Committee
Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings, and Disposition
250 Broadway, 14th floor
New York, NY 10007

*Testimony in Support of the Designation of the
Lesbian Herstory Archives, 484 14th Street, Brooklyn,
as a New York City Landmark*

Thursday, February 23, 2023

My name is Amanda Davis and I am the project manager of the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, an award-winning and nationally recognized cultural heritage initiative founded by historic preservationists in 2015 to document historic places connected to the LGBTQ community in the city's five boroughs.

The Project strongly supports the designation of the Lesbian Herstory Archives as a New York City Landmark, the first LGBTQ historic site to be designated in Brooklyn. When we launched our website with an inaugural 100 sites several years ago, the Lesbian Herstory Archives was included. Its resources, particularly its archival photographs, have also been invaluable to our Project in documenting many of the 430-plus sites on our website.

With a history that spans nearly fifty years – thirty of those years in Park Slope – the Lesbian Herstory Archives is likely the first, long-standing, lesbian-specific community space in New York City. It is also an early example of a group run by and for lesbians. The Archives was born out of a need to provide a voice for lesbians, who often felt underrepresented and unheard in gay male-dominated groups, and to connect emerging lesbian artists and writers with more established ones, at a time when lesbians were less visible in mainstream culture. Access to previously unknown lesbian-affirming literature, ephemera, and other archival items has also empowered women and linked them with their past.

The Lesbian Herstory Archives' location in Park Slope also speaks to the importance of the neighborhood to LGBTQ history. By the 1990s, Park Slope was popular with lesbians and their families as a place to live and find community, and several lesbian-associated groups and businesses, including the Archives, operated there. As a result, the designation of the Lesbian Herstory Archives building as a New York City Landmark also highlights and celebrates Park Slope's historic significance to the lesbian community.

The NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project asks that the City Council's Subcommittee on Landmarks approves this landmark designation.

Thank you.