

**TESTIMONY OF THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION BEFORE
THE CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING
AND MARITIME USES ON THE DESIGNATION OF THE BROOKLYN UNION
GAS COMPANY BUILDING IN BROOKLYN.**

July 25, 2011

Good morning Council Members. My name is Jenny Fernández, Director of Intergovernmental and Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation Commission. I am here today to testify on the Commission's designation of the Brooklyn Union Gas Company Building in Brooklyn.

On August 10, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Brooklyn Union Gas Company Building. Three people spoke in favor of designation, including a representative of the property owner as well as representatives of the Brooklyn Heights Association and the Historic Districts Council. The support of Brooklyn Community Board 2 was also read into the record during the public hearing. On May 10, 2011, the Commission voted to designate the building a New York City individual landmark.

Designed by noted architect Frank Freeman, the substantial neo-Classical style Brooklyn Union Gas Company Building was constructed in 1914 in Downtown Brooklyn as the new headquarters for the borough's oldest and most important utility company.

The Brooklyn Union Gas Company traces its origins to 1824 when a group of entrepreneurs including Joseph Sprague and Alden Spooner proposed establishing the Brooklyn Gas Light Company. The firm won its first major contract in 1849 when the municipality of Brooklyn engaged the company to provide street illumination for the growing city. As Brooklyn continued to expand, rival gas companies were formed to serve newly-urbanized neighborhoods such as Cobble Hill, Fort Greene, and Park Slope. Competition between the gas companies grew particularly heated in the 1880s but all seven of the major Brooklyn firms eventually merged in 1895 to form the Brooklyn Union Gas Company. Much of the building's architectural decoration is symbolic of the structure's role as the headquarters of an important gas company, depicting flaming torches and blazing oil lamps. The Brooklyn Union Gas Company moved to larger quarters on Montague Street in 1962 and the building was subsequently acquired by St. Francis College, which converted the structure into an academic facility.

The Commission urges you to affirm this designation.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 432 Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 7/25/11

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jenny Fernandez

Address: 1 Centre Street 9th Floor

I represent: LPC

Address: S/A

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆