

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS,  
PUBLIC SITING AND MARITIME USES

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July 11, 2016  
Start: 11:27 a.m.  
Recess: 1:28 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway-Committee Rm., 16<sup>th</sup> fl.

B E F O R E: Peter A. Koo  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Annabel Palma  
Deborah L. Rose  
Rosie Mendez  
Stephen T. Levin  
Inez D. Baron  
Ben Kallos  
Corey D. Johnson  
David G. Greenfield

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

John Jurenko  
Vice President for Intergovernmental Relations  
and Planning of NYC Health & Hospitals

Gregory Calliste  
Chief Executive Officer at Woodhull Hospital

Doctor Rosa Gil  
CEO of Comunilife, Inc.

Lauren George  
Director of Intergovernmental Affairs at  
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Michael Owen  
Community Outreach Program Manager at Landmarks  
Preservation Commission

Simeon Bankoff  
Historic Districts Council

Henry Euler  
Bayside Historical Council

Robert Rubin  
Owner of Ahles House

Jordan Most  
Representing Robert Rubin, Sheldon Lobel, P.C.

Frank Prial

Vanderbilt Cemetery Association; Architect with  
Beyer Blinder Belle

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

John Casson  
Historic Districts Council

Judith Lief  
Park Slope Civic Council; REBNY

Peter Bray  
Park Slope Historic District Committee



2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Good morning. Good  
3 morning. I am Council Member Koo, Chair of the  
4 Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime  
5 Uses. We are joined today by Council Members Palma,  
6 Mendez, Kallos, and Johnson. We will be holding  
7 public hearings and voting on ten items today, eight  
8 landmark designations, one historic district  
9 designation, and one hospital lease. We will start  
10 with Pre-considered LU Application Number 20165648  
11 HHK for the approval of a hospital lease pursuant to  
12 the Health & Hospitals Corporation Enabling Act. This  
13 will facilitate the development of a six-story  
14 building with 89 studio apartments for low income  
15 individuals. This proposed development is located in  
16 Council Member Cornegy's district, and he submitted a  
17 letter in support of the designation. I will now  
18 open the public hearing for this item. Doctor Rosa  
19 Gil and Gregory Calliste from Woodhull Hospital and  
20 John Jurenko from NYC Health & Hospitals. Please  
21 identify your name and start. Thank you.

22 JOHN JURENKO: Good morning. My name is  
23 John Jurenko, and I'm the Vice President for  
24 Intergovernmental Relations and Planning for New York  
25 City Health & Hospitals. Thank you for the

2 opportunity to testify in support of a proposed lease  
3 agreement between HHC and Comunilife, Incorporated  
4 for a parcel of land located on the campus of NYC  
5 Health & Hospitals/Woodhull at 179 Throop Avenue.

6 I'm joined here today by representatives of New York  
7 City Health & Hospitals/Woodhull and Comunilife, Mr.  
8 Greg Calliste and Doctor Rosa Gil, and we have  
9 colleagues from HPD in the crowd as well. Comunilife  
10 is a community-based health and housing services  
11 provider that serves more than 3,000 New Yorkers each  
12 year. They own or manage more than 1,600 units of  
13 supported transitional and permanent housing, operate  
14 a full service mental health clinic which provides  
15 23,000-plus outpatient visits annually and also  
16 operates the Life is Precious Program, a suicide  
17 prevention program for girls. As some of you know,  
18 New York City Health & Hospitals has engaged in  
19 several collaborations with housing providers and  
20 developers to create affordable, supportive and  
21 sustainable housing on parcels of land that is no  
22 longer needed for healthcare services. This proposed  
23 lease would allow New York City Health & Hospitals  
24 and Comunilife to proceed with the construction of a  
25 six-story building containing 89 units of housing.

2 Thirty-five of the units would be for low income  
3 individuals, and 54 units would be for low income  
4 individuals living with mental illness who are  
5 appropriate for independent living in the community.

6 Comunilife will provide onsite case management  
7 services as well as 24-hour building security. They  
8 will be responsible for the cost associated with the  
9 construction of the building and the development and  
10 operation of the housing program. In addition, the  
11 annual rent will be 75,000 dollars per year. New  
12 York City Health & Hospitals Board of Directors  
13 conducted a public hearing in Brooklyn on January  
14 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 with respect to the proposed leasing, and  
15 the Board of Directors subsequently authorized the  
16 leasing of the property on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

17 Thank you for your consideration on this proposed  
18 lease. I will now turn to Comunilife for a brief  
19 presentation.

20 ROSA GIL: Good morning, Council Members,  
21 and thank you so much for giving us the opportunity  
22 to present to you what I think is a very innovative  
23 and a good thing for the community. As Mr. Jurenko  
24 said, this is a building that is located on Throop  
25 Avenue and Park Avenue, and it will have six-story

2 building. We will provide the social service  
3 component by having case managers in the building and  
4 we will help those individuals who are challenged by  
5 mental illness to keep their appointments in the  
6 hospital and to make sure that their needs will be  
7 met. The remaining apartments would be for persons  
8 from the community who made the criteria of 60  
9 percent area median income or less. And this is a  
10 building that we have presented to the community, and  
11 we have gotten input from them, and we have made  
12 changes accordingly to their input. And I think that  
13 this is a good project that also will enable and help  
14 our colleagues at Woodhull. So perhaps I can turn  
15 this over to Executive Director.

16 GREGORY CALLISTE: Good morning,  
17 everyone. I'm Gregory Calliste. I'm the Chief  
18 Executive Officer at Woodhull Hospital. This project  
19 is a win/win/win for Woodhull Hospital, it is for the  
20 community, and it is for the patients. At this point  
21 in time several, you know, very often we have a lot  
22 of patients who are stuck at Woodhull who have mental  
23 health conditions, but the only reason why they are  
24 there is because of disposition problems. We can't  
25 get suitable housing for them in the community. So



2 this project will actually enable us to be able to  
3 discharge patients based on their need. Once we have  
4 taken care of their healthcare needs, we would be  
5 able to discharge them into the community. So, I see  
6 this as a win/win for everyone.

7 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Any members  
8 have any questions? So, seeing no questions. Thank  
9 you.

10 JOHN JURENKO: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Are there any more  
12 members from the public who wish to testify on this  
13 item? Seeing none, I will now close the public  
14 hearing on this item. We will now move onto landmark  
15 designations in historic districts on our calendar.  
16 Because of the number of items we have today, we are  
17 going to start with the presentation from Landmarks  
18 Preservation Commission on all of the items. After  
19 LPC has completed their testimony, we will give  
20 members of the public opportunity to testify on each  
21 item separately. I will turn over to LPC for  
22 testimony on landmarked historic district  
23 designations. We have Lauren George and Mr. Michael  
24 Owen from LPC. Please identify yourself and start.

2 LAUREN GEORGE: [off mic] Sorry, one  
3 moment. Yeah. Sorry for the delay on that. Let me  
4 just get this started. But just to begin, I'm Lauren  
5 George, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and  
6 Community Affairs at Landmarks Preservation  
7 Commission New York City. Thank you so much for the  
8 opportunity to speak with you today. Wanted to first  
9 go through the explanation of our backlog project.  
10 Thank you. One moment. So, in July of 2015, the LPC  
11 initiated an 18-month plan to-- in collaboration with  
12 a wide cross-section of stakeholders to address a  
13 backlog of 95 properties that were calendared prior  
14 to 2010, but not acted upon. Eighty-five percent of  
15 these sites were calendared more than 20 years ago.  
16 The Backlog Initiative allowed for extensive public  
17 comment period followed by four special public  
18 hearings. Commissioners heard over 12 hours of  
19 verbal testimony from more than 300 speakers and  
20 received additional written testimony submitted by  
21 the public. Based on extensive feedback and LPC  
22 research Commissioners decided to prioritize 30  
23 properties for designation by the end of 2016,  
24 putting them on the path to becoming NYC landmarks.  
25 The remaining sites were removed from the calendar as

2 not a priority, based on their lack of merit or site-  
3 specific issues, such as their relative significance,  
4 alterations that have reduced site's historical  
5 features, or the presence of other regulatory  
6 controls that would protect the structures from  
7 alteration or demolition. The Commission prioritized  
8 properties in all five boroughs representing a  
9 variety of building ages and typologies that reflect  
10 the diversity of the City. We're on track to  
11 complete these designations by the end of this  
12 calendar year. The first property we are looking at  
13 today is the Schofield House. The William H.  
14 Schofield House was part of the backlog hearing on  
15 October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Six people spoke in support of  
16 the hearing and the Commissioner received several  
17 letters in support of designation. This transitional  
18 Italianate style farmhouse was constructed around  
19 1860 as part of the estate of William Schofield, a  
20 member of one of the first families to settle City  
21 Island. The house is located at the corner of  
22 Schofield Street and William Avenue in this section  
23 of City Island, which was first settled as an English  
24 settlement in 1654 when the English Crown granted  
25 Thomas Pell [sp?] ownership of the Island. City

2 Island was privately owned until 1819 when it became  
3 part of the town of Pelham in Westchester County. In  
4 1896 residents of the City Island voted to become  
5 part of New York City Proper. This house represents  
6 the period of progress for the island when it began  
7 to transition to a suburban residential community,  
8 concurrently developing from farmland to industries  
9 unique to the island, such as oyster fishing and ship  
10 building which played an important role during the  
11 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The house has undergone a  
12 recent sensitive restoration by its current owners,  
13 and the addition they added is appropriate to the  
14 style of the house. Sixty-five Schofield Street is  
15 one of the earliest and most intact examples of the  
16 transitional Italianate style on City Island  
17 significant for its association with this prominent  
18 early City Island Family known for their connection  
19 to the Island's oyster industry. Accordingly, LPC  
20 urges you to affirm this designation today. Okay,  
21 next up we have Greenwood Cemetery, the Fort Hamilton  
22 Parkway Entrance and the Chapel. Greenwood Cemetery  
23 was considered as part of the backlog hearing on  
24 October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The entire cemetery, all of lot  
25 one shown here, was calendared and heard several

2 times before. At the backlog hearing there was  
3 general support for the designation of selected  
4 buildings but not the entire cemetery. Two  
5 individuals representing the cemetery spoke against  
6 designation of the entire site. Greenwood is an  
7 active cemetery, and the bulk of the 478 acres  
8 consists of 46,000 separate lots and 100,000  
9 monuments owned by an estimated 200,000 living  
10 owners. Last year, they had 1,200 burials and erected  
11 200 new monuments. Given the potential complications  
12 of regulating an active cemetery, LPC designated only  
13 selected buildings and features of the lot and  
14 removed the rest of the lot from the calendar. The  
15 designated buildings before you today are the most  
16 architecturally significant in the cemetery. The  
17 Fort Hamilton Parkway Entrance is located on the  
18 southeastern side of the cemetery. It includes not  
19 only the buildings but also the brownstone gate  
20 posts, the iron gates, the low wall, and associated  
21 fencing. It was designed by Richard Mitchell Upjohn  
22 and built in 1876. The Chapel is located near the  
23 main entrance at Fifth Avenue and 25<sup>th</sup> Street and  
24 consists of the building and the front stairs. It  
25 was designed by Warren and Wetmore and built in 1911.

2 Greenwood Cemetery was established in 1838 as one of  
3 the country's earliest and largest rural picturesque  
4 cemeteries influenced by the English Garden Movement.

5 The Gothic Revival style was an integral part of  
6 cemetery design and was used at this time in

7 memorials, monuments and structures. Both the Fort

8 Hamilton Parkway entrance and the Chapel continue

9 this gothic revival tradition that began during the

10 cemetery's early development. This style is

11 particularly evident in the main entrance gates shown

12 here center and New York City landmark since 1966.

13 The Fort Hamilton Parkway entrance was designed by

14 Richard Mitchell Upjohn, as I said, well known for

15 his skill in adapting Gothic Revival Style to various

16 building types. The entrance is an excellent example

17 of high Victorian Gothic popular during the post-

18 Civil War years. The brownstone residence at the

19 entrance features tall, tower-like sections, arched

20 windows, decorative dormers, and a front and rear

21 ornamental wooden porches. Also shown in the

22 photograph are the inner gates, posts and fencing

23 installed as part of the entrance complex, and map

24 here shows the landmark site that was designated

25 around the residence. The visitor's lounge features

2 decorative carved details and stained glass as well  
3 as four sculptured panels illustrating the four ages  
4 by John Moffitt. The Greenwood Cemetery Chapel,  
5 built from 1911 to 1913 designed by eminent [sic]  
6 architectural firm of Warren and Wetmore, best known  
7 for Grand Central Terminal 1903 to 1913. The Chapel  
8 is an excellent example of late Gothic-inspired  
9 building with both arts massing giving it a pavilion-  
10 like presence within the landscape embellished with  
11 delicate carved ornaments and stained glass windows  
12 with delicate stone tracery. The Chapel and Fort  
13 Hamilton Parkway Entrance buildings and features have  
14 excellent integrity of materials and design, and  
15 today these structures remain significant examples of  
16 Gothic-Revival style harmonious incorporate into a  
17 rural picturesque cemetery landscape. Accordingly,  
18 LPC urges you to affirm this designation. Moving on  
19 to the next item, the Van Sicklen House at 27  
20 Gravesend Neck Road in Brooklyn. The backlog hearing  
21 for the Van Sicklen House took place on October 8<sup>th</sup>,  
22 2015. The owner did not testify at the hearing, but  
23 subsequently sent a letter expressing opposition to  
24 the designation. At the hearing there were eight  
25 speakers in support of the designation, and the

2 Commission also received many written submissions in  
3 support. The Van Sicklen House is among the oldest  
4 surviving Dutch-American houses in Brooklyn, and the  
5 only known extant 18th-century house largely of stone  
6 construction in the borough. Located in the historic  
7 town center of Gravesend, the house is linked to the  
8 earliest colonial history of Brooklyn and that it  
9 occupies part of the lot of the home of Lady Deborah  
10 Moody who founded Gravesend in 1640. In 1702, farmer  
11 and property owner, Ferdinandus Van Sicklen, Jr.,  
12 acquired the land around this house. Members of the  
13 Van Sicklen Family built the house in sections,  
14 beginning in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and occupied it  
15 for the following 200 years. In the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century  
16 when the rear additions were added, the roof was re-  
17 centered to a gently sloping pitch and wide spring  
18 eaves creating a profile that's typical of mid to  
19 late 18<sup>th</sup> century Dutch-American houses. Other 18<sup>th</sup>  
20 century features that make it an excellent example of  
21 Dutch-American style include its low proportions,  
22 rectangular plan, gabled end-walls in the location of  
23 door and window openings on the western façade. In  
24 1904, the house was acquired by realtor William Platt  
25 who made extensive alterations, including the



2 addition of dormer windows, incorporating decorative  
3 elements inspired by the Colonial Revival style in  
4 the prevalent arts and crafts movement at the time.

5 The Platts were responsible for popularizing the  
6 longstanding idea that this had been the ancient home  
7 of Lady Deborah Moody. Agency research concluded  
8 that despite the alterations made in the early  
9 1900's, the house largely retained its 18<sup>th</sup> century  
10 form, massing, proportions, and a large degree of its  
11 original window openings, and a number of significant  
12 architectural elements such as its spring eaves.

13 Additionally, its subsequent alterations are  
14 significant in their own right, reflecting changes in  
15 aesthetics over time. The house remains on the  
16 original site and is located across the street from  
17 the Gravesend Van Sicklen Cemetery. The structure is  
18 one of the few remaining buildings that represent the  
19 early history of Gravesend, a significant New York  
20 colonial community. Accordingly, LPC urges you to  
21 affirm this designation. Moving to Manhattan, 57  
22 Sullivan Street. The backlog hearing on this item  
23 was held November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The owner spoke in  
24 opposition to the designation. There were five  
25 speakers in support of the designation. The

2 Commission also received many written submissions in  
3 support of the designation. Located on a portion of  
4 the South Village just north of Canal Street,  
5 developed between 1810 and 1820's, this building was  
6 constructed in 1816 as a speculative property by  
7 Carter Frederick Youmans. A three-bay, wood-framed  
8 row house, it's a fine example of the Federal style.  
9 While there have been some alterations over time,  
10 including being raised to a full third story in 1858,  
11 the building retains many significant Federal  
12 details. The 1858 edition is typical of the historic  
13 evolution of Federal-style buildings and as a  
14 significant layer in its history. In the second half  
15 the 19<sup>th</sup> century after the Civil War, the house was  
16 subdivided into apartments, which were occupied by  
17 members of the Irish immigrant owner and tenants,  
18 primarily tradesmen and craftsmen. By 1875, the  
19 basement had been converted to commercial use and was  
20 occupied by the Knickerbocker, a bar with an African-  
21 American proprietary and a multi-racial clientele.  
22 Through the 20<sup>th</sup> century most of the occupants were  
23 Italian immigrant working class families. A post  
24 1995 restoration of the house included new entry  
25 doors at the basement and first story, new windows

2 and ironwork. Today, the 57 Sullivan Street House  
3 survives as a fine example of the Federal style and a  
4 tangible reminder of the rich multicultural heritage  
5 of the South Village. Accordingly, LPC urges you  
6 affirm this designation. Thank you. Moving uptown  
7 we have Saint Michael's Episcopal Church, Parish  
8 House and Rectory. This was heard as part of the  
9 backlog initiative hearing in November 2015. The  
10 owner spoke in opposition to the designation of the  
11 entire complex, but supported designation of the  
12 church. Nine people spoke in favor of designating  
13 the entire complex. In addition, the Commission  
14 received many written comments in support of  
15 designation. Saint Michael's Episcopal Church,  
16 Parish House and Rectory is meritorious as an  
17 exceptionally fine Ecclesiastical complex. Located  
18 at the northwest corner of West 99<sup>th</sup> Street and  
19 Amsterdam Avenue, Saint Michaels is organized by  
20 wealthy parishioners of Trinity Church to provide a  
21 house of worship for those who had built summer homes  
22 in the Bloomingdale section of Manhattan. Under the  
23 leadership of a single family of rectors from 1820 to  
24 1919, Saint Michaels not only grew with the Upper  
25 West Side, but was responsible for establishing

2 schools, charitable organizations and new parishes.

3 By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century this church was built

4 as improved transportation led to increased

5 development and population growth in the Upper West

6 Side. The church is a Romanesque Revival and Neo-

7 Flemish style designed by Robert Gibson and built

8 circa 1890. The architects incorporated a number of

9 stylistic motifs and the design to create a

10 singularly eclectic composition sited around a

11 landscaped courtyard. Of note are the stained glass

12 windows from leading designers such as Tiffany Glass

13 Studios. The rough-based limestone and tan brick

14 Parish House designed in 1896 by F. Carles Merry and

15 completed in 1901 by Robert Gibson employs bold

16 Romanesque Revival-style forms such as the Palladian

17 windows and asymmetrical massing shown here. The

18 rough-based limestone rectory also by Robert Gibson

19 1912 to 1913 while more upstairs [sic] similar in

20 style and serves as an integral part of the complex.

21 Saint Michael's Church, Parish House and Rectory is

22 an exceptionally fine Ecclesiastical complex built at

23 the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and all three buildings

24 are remarkably intact and form a beautiful ensemble

25 with significant presence on the Upper West Side.

2 Accordingly, we urge you to affirm designation today.

3 Thank you. Okay, moving to Queens, the John William

4 and Lydia Ann Bells Ahles House from 3924 to 3926

5 213<sup>th</sup> Street in Queens. The backlog hearing on this

6 item was held on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The owner's

7 representatives spoke in opposition to the

8 designation, and there were eight speakers in support

9 of the designation. The Commission also received

10 several written submission in support of the

11 designation. The owner who opposed this designation

12 submitted materials outlining alterations to the

13 building and questioning whether it merits

14 designation. Research staff undertook an extensive

15 study of their submission and ultimately concluded

16 that many of the alterations date to architect Lewis

17 Walsh's 1924 redesign of the house and are

18 significant in their own right. This impressive

19 Second Empire-style residence updated in 1924 with

20 Colonial Revival alterations is a rare reminder of

21 19<sup>th</sup> century Bayside when it was a village of

22 substantial farmhouses and suburban villas. Now

23 located on 213 Street in Bayside, the Ahles House was

24 built only a few years after railroad service reached

25 Bayside in 1866, and residential subdivisions began

2 to replace farms. It's the only remaining example of  
3 the Second Empire buildings erected in Bayside during  
4 1870's and 1880's. It retains the cubic form and  
5 dormered Mansard roof typical of the Second Empire  
6 style as well as details such as the molded cornice  
7 and hexagonal slate shingles. Very few 19<sup>th</sup> century  
8 houses survived in the borough of Queens, making the  
9 Ahles House a rare example of this period. This  
10 house was constructed in 1873 by Farmer Robert Bell  
11 for his daughter Lydia and her husband John Williams  
12 Ahles, a prominent grain merchant and officer of the  
13 New York Produce Exchange. It remained in the  
14 ownership of the Ahles family until the 1940's. The  
15 house was moved from its original site to its present  
16 location in 1924 to allow Christy Street, now 213<sup>th</sup>  
17 Street, to be cut through to 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue. It was  
18 then that architect Lewis Walsh, a prominent exponent  
19 of the Colonial Revival style who specialized in the  
20 revitalization of Victorian houses, simplified the  
21 building's façade by removing the original wrap-  
22 around porches, bay window and scroll brackets, and  
23 replaces the original clapboard siding with stucco  
24 and installed new panel doors and multi-pane windows.  
25 The overall effect of Walsh's alterations was to

2 create a building that retained its cubic massing,  
3 Mansard roof and cornice of its Second Empire origins  
4 while incorporating Colonial Revival, Arts-and-Crafts  
5 inspired 20's design elements. The relocation and  
6 alterations of the Ahles House are significant in  
7 their own right, because they reflect the historical  
8 context of the transformation of Bayside from a rural  
9 community to a commuter suburb in the early 20<sup>th</sup>  
10 century. Today this house is one of the oldest  
11 surviving in Bayside and is a significant reminder of  
12 the neighborhood's past. Therefore, we urge you to  
13 affirm this designation. Also in Queens is the  
14 Pepsi-Cola sign at 4-0947<sup>th</sup> Road, Long Island City.  
15 One of the best-known features of the New York City  
16 waterfront, the Pepsi-Cola sign has become an iconic  
17 piece of the urban landscape representing commercial  
18 advertising in American industry. Land marking the  
19 sign received a great deal of support from the public  
20 throughout the backlog process. The owner testified  
21 in opposition as well as one individual. Council  
22 Member Van Bramer supports the designation. The  
23 Pepsi-Cola sign was constructed in 1940 and erected  
24 on the roof of the Pepsi-Cola bottling facility in  
25 Long Island City. Contemporary accounts attribute

2 the design to the General Outdoor Advertising  
3 Company, one of the largest advertising companies of  
4 its time. At the time of its construction the sign  
5 was the longest electric sign in New York State.  
6 Situated on the edge of the East River, the sign was  
7 clearly visible from Manhattan's eastside and the  
8 recently completed FDR. The sign's design closely  
9 reflects the company's 1939 trademark logo with red  
10 neon tubing incorporated around the edges of the  
11 letters. The 50-foot painted Pepsi bottle was  
12 probably replaced in the 70's with an updated bottle  
13 featuring the company's contemporary design. In  
14 1993, the 53-year-old sign was rebuilt due to  
15 significant deterioration. Art Craft Strauss [sic]  
16 Sign Corporation, a company that produced some of the  
17 most memorable Times Square spectacles of the 20<sup>th</sup>  
18 century, oversaw the work and the sign was restored  
19 in a manner in keeping with the design, colors and  
20 details of the original sign. In 2003, Pepsi sold  
21 their facility to the Queens West Development  
22 Corporation. The Pepsi-Cola bottling facility was  
23 demolished and the sign was temporarily relocated.  
24 Today, the sign stands within feet of its original  
25 location inside Gantry Plaza State Park. Changes to



2 the zoning code in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup>  
3 century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century have contributed to a  
4 reduction in the number of large illuminated signs  
5 which once crowned the factories and warehouses of  
6 many of Long Island City's most prominent companies.  
7 The Pepsi-Cola sign remains one of the most  
8 conspicuous features of New York's waterfront and  
9 serves as a reminder of Long Island City's industrial  
10 path. Accordingly, LPC urges you to affirm the  
11 designation. Thank you. Going to Staten Island now  
12 to the Vanderbilt Mausoleum. The Vanderbilt  
13 Mausoleum was heard at the special backlog hearing on  
14 October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015. At that hearing, six people  
15 including a representative of the Vanderbilt Cemetery  
16 Association spoke in support of the designation, and  
17 there were no speakers in opposition. At previous  
18 hearings, all of lot 250 was heard, but LPC  
19 designated only selected features of the lot, which  
20 I'll describe in detail. The Mausoleum is located at  
21 Richmond Road and Altamont Street in Staten Island.  
22 The Vanderbilt Mausoleum is an extraordinary monument  
23 to America's Gilded Age built by the country's  
24 wealthiest family at the time and combining the  
25 talents of two of America's greatest designers,

2 Richard Morris Hunt and Frederick Law Olmsted. It  
3 was hailed as the most magnificent tomb of any  
4 private individual and the most costly Mausoleum in  
5 America following its 1886 completion. It was  
6 planned by William H. Vanderbilt, the son of the  
7 "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt, Staten Island  
8 native who had amassed his steamboat and railroad  
9 lines, which played a major role in the 19<sup>th</sup> century  
10 development of New York City and State. When he died  
11 in 1885, William H. Vanderbilt was the richest person  
12 in American history. Dramatically sited near the apex  
13 of Toad Hill, the Mausoleum has an imposing structure  
14 with grey Quincy granite. Its location within a  
15 large private cemetery was especially rare and  
16 prestigious at a time when most ultra-wealthy New  
17 Yorkers were interred in suburban public cemeteries.  
18 Hunt's design is primarily Romanesque Rival in style  
19 featuring three arch doorways, keyhole opening and  
20 luxurious carved tympana. The country's most  
21 celebrated landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted  
22 designed the mausoleum grounds, although most of the  
23 original Olmsted plantings have been lost. One of  
24 the earliest collaborations between Hunt and Olmsted,  
25 the mausoleum was their first joint effort for the

2 Vanderbilt family and led to their subsequent hiring  
3 by George W. Vanderbilt for his North Carolina State  
4 Biltmore in 1889, one of America's most acclaimed  
5 unions of architecture and landscape design. LPC  
6 designated four landscape features at this site, the  
7 broad terrace in front of the mausoleum in its base  
8 and walls which were designed by Hunt and Olmsted,  
9 the Hillock [sic] enclosing the mausoleum which  
10 originally covered its roof, the entrance arch and  
11 gates adjoining the stone retaining walls at the  
12 plot's entrance, and the winding pathway connecting  
13 the entrance arch with a terrace. Internment within  
14 the mausoleum was reserved for those with the  
15 Vanderbilt family name. It houses the remains of all  
16 four of William H. and Maria Vanderbilt's sons and  
17 three of their wives who are best remembered for  
18 their matchless [sic] homes designed by outstanding  
19 American architects. Like these houses, the  
20 Vanderbilt Mausoleum is an exceptional remnant of the  
21 Gilded Age, constructed by Vanderbilt family members  
22 at the height of their wealth, power and prominence  
23 when they were commissioning some of America's finest  
24 and most enduring works of architecture.

25 Accordingly, the Landmarks Preservation Commission

2 urges you to affirm this designation. Thank you.

3 That concludes the backlog items, and now we're

4 moving to the historic districts, the Park Slope

5 Historic District Extension II. On October 28<sup>th</sup>,

6 2013, the LPC held a public hearing in the proposed

7 designation of the Park Slope Historic District

8 Extension II. Eighteen people spoke in favor of

9 designation including representatives of the Brooklyn

10 Borough President Marty Markowitz, Council Members

11 Brad Lander and Steve Levin, Assembly Member Joan

12 Millman, as well as representatives of New York

13 Landmarks Conservancy, the Park Slope Civic Council,

14 the Real Estate Board of New York, and the Historic

15 Districts Council. One person testified in

16 opposition. The Commission also received 21 letter

17 and 84 signed petitions in favor of designation. The

18 Park Slope Historic District Extension II outlined in

19 red here includes 292 buildings located just below

20 Flatbush to the west of Grand Army Plaza. At the

21 public hearing on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 17 people testified

22 in favor. Five sections of the Park Slope Historic

23 District Extension II are adjacent to the northern

24 part of the existing historic district, which was

25 designation by the LPC in 1973 and contains 1,948

2 buildings. The first Park Slope Historic District  
3 Extension located in the south and east sides of the  
4 original district took place in 2012 and includes 613  
5 buildings. The two most important factors that  
6 contributed to the growth of this neighborhood during  
7 the 19<sup>th</sup> century were transportation improvements and  
8 the development of the park, Prospect Park. Large  
9 scale development started in the 1860's close to  
10 Flatbush Avenue which was an early transportation  
11 artery through the area. The neighborhood was  
12 steadily developed with masonry row houses. The Park  
13 Slope Historic District II was largely developed  
14 between 1870 and the early 1900's. It consists of  
15 rows of well-designed masonry houses and  
16 distinguished institutional buildings designed by  
17 some of Brooklyn's leading architects. The historic  
18 district includes a catalogue of mid to late 19<sup>th</sup>  
19 century styles such as Italianate, Gothic Revival,  
20 Neo-Grec, Second Empire, Queen Anne style, Romanesque  
21 Revival, and Renaissance Revival. There are several  
22 notable apartment and institutional buildings in the  
23 historic district, including the Queen Anne style  
24 apartment houses at 76 to 82 Saint Marks Ave,  
25 designed by the popular Brooklyn Architect Montrose

2 Morris [sp?], the Renaissance Revival style Carlton  
3 Club at 85 Sixth Avenue, the Medieval Revival style  
4 apartment building at 47 Plaza Street, one of the few  
5 large apartment buildings in the district, and the  
6 Gothic Revival style Saint Augustine's Roman Catholic  
7 Church at Sixth Avenue and Sterling [sic] Place. St.  
8 Augustine's in another backlog property that was  
9 removed from the calendar as it is included in the  
10 boundaries of this historic district. The Park Slope  
11 District Extension II contains some of Brooklyn's  
12 most beautiful and well-preserved residential streets  
13 featuring a broad array of outstanding buildings and  
14 Ecclesiastical architecture as shown here. The  
15 neighborhood contains its cohesiveness due to its  
16 streamlined street's consistent scale, residential  
17 character and architectural integrity. Accordingly,  
18 we urge you to affirm designation of this district  
19 today. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you, Ms. George  
21 and Mr. Owen. I also want to use this opportunity to  
22 thank the Chair of the LPC and her staff, working  
23 hard to remove all of backlogged items on LPC  
24 calendar, and we also want to announce that we are  
25 joined by Council Member Greenfield, Chair of the

2 Land Use Committee. Do any members have any  
3 questions or remarks? Council Member Johnson?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair  
5 Koo for the opportunity to testify. I want to thank  
6 you and the Subcommittee for holding this public  
7 hearing today and giving New Yorkers the opportunity  
8 to testify on the great importance of these  
9 individual landmarks. I wanted to speak today about  
10 57 Sullivan Street, which is a spectacular Federal  
11 style building in the West Village with extraordinary  
12 history and architectural significance, and it is  
13 most deserving of designation as an individual  
14 landmark. It is one of the oldest remaining buildings  
15 of its kind in Lower Manhattan and has retained its  
16 original 19<sup>th</sup> century Federal architectural style for  
17 hundreds of years. Its unique architectural  
18 characteristics are one of a kind. From its red  
19 brick façade to its paneled stone arch and its simple  
20 fan light, this small three-story gem embodies the  
21 rustic architectural history of the early 1800's.  
22 Fifty-seven Sullivan Street does not just stand out  
23 for its architectural achievements. It also plays a  
24 role in lower Manhattan's rich and vibrant history.  
25 Built in 1817, the building was erected on the former

2 estate of America's third Vice President, Aaron Burr.

3 By the 1880's, the neighborhood around Sullivan

4 Street began to change. The industrialization of

5 Lower Manhattan brought an influx of Italian

6 immigrants. The old and elegant Saint John's Park

7 which at one time was lined with beautiful Federal

8 mansions similar to 57 Sullivan had been transformed

9 into a freight rail terminal. Fifty-seven Sullivan

10 was a tenement building in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century,

11 housing many hardworking blue collar families, and it

12 has long served as a beautiful reminder of the strong

13 Italian heritage of Sullivan Street in the South

14 Village. Walking around the West Village and the

15 South Village, one is consumed by a sense of history

16 that few other places enjoy. This is because of

17 buildings like 57 Sullivan Street. We have a strong

18 responsibility to safeguard these treasures for New

19 Yorkers of today and for future generations.

20 Testimony for designation of this site was first

21 heard in 1970, 46 years ago. I hope that with your

22 support we can end the long preservation limbo of

23 this important historical site that is endured and

24 give it landmark designation it so greatly deserves.

25 I want to thank the Commission for handling this on



2 the backlog, and I ask my colleagues-- I'm not a  
3 member of this Subcommittee. I ask my colleagues to  
4 vote in favor of designation. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you, Council  
6 Member Johnson. Any other members? Chair  
7 Greenfield?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you,  
9 Mr. Chairman. Thank you Landmarks Preservation  
10 Commission team. We appreciate it. I will note that  
11 I'm actually pleased today because eight of these  
12 items are in fact backlogged items, items that the  
13 Commission has worked on with our encouragement and  
14 with the incarvent [sic] of our legislation that was  
15 signed into law last week, 775A, that actually  
16 requires the Commission to get through the backlog,  
17 and to your credit you've jumped on top of this and  
18 you've enthusiastically supported our legislation and  
19 the efforts, and I think it just proves the point  
20 that good government ends up with good results. In  
21 this case, eight new landmarks that we'll see in the  
22 city that we would not have seen, but for this  
23 effort. So, yes, consider this an opportunity for me  
24 to gloat a little bit about hard-fought legislation.  
25 I do have a quick question, though, on the Park Slope

2 Historic District Extension II. Can you give us a  
3 little more details as to the importance of this  
4 extension and specifically the breadth? It seems a  
5 little bit large. I mean, you're going to have  
6 around two and a half thousand homes in one district.  
7 Are there any other areas that are as large, and what  
8 makes this so unique that it warrants this large  
9 designation? I'm in all in favor of the designation  
10 in general in terms of the area, I'm just curious  
11 about the breadth of the designation. It seems like  
12 a lot of homes.

13 LAUREN GEORGE: Okay, well this district  
14 was-- it has been designated because of the fact of  
15 the special architectural features in the area, and  
16 it is one of the largest areas of consistently well-  
17 designed homes of this period and style. So, from  
18 the beginning this was seen as an area that was  
19 studied as a whole, as a large area, and it was taken  
20 in sections merely because the research required for  
21 such a large district takes a lot of time. So, I  
22 mean, I can't speak to why the whole entire district  
23 was not done together, but I think as for its size,  
24 because it's a very significant area.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay. I  
3 appreciate the answer, none of which answered any of  
4 my questions. Let me just be specific if you don't  
5 mind. Specifically, what other district are of this  
6 scope? Can you give me some other comparisons on  
7 districts that are of this scope?

8 MICHAEL OWEN: Sure. The recently  
9 designated Bedford-Stuyvesant extension is close to  
10 1,000 buildings. Central--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
12 Two and a half thousand.

13 MICHAEL OWEN: No, I know, just also--  
14 you're right. Also just speaking on the top-- of the  
15 top of my head. Also recently, just talking about  
16 recent designations that are-- have a lot. Central  
17 Ridgewood extension was also about a thousand  
18 buildings, and I think that Park Slope near Prospect  
19 Park was the development was sort of very cohesive  
20 when it was built, and it is perhaps a little bit of  
21 unique because it's so near the park. So, it was  
22 hard. Drawing boundaries is always a challenge for  
23 the Commission, when to stop, and the, you know, the  
24 research and the Chair felt that when you walk the  
25

2 blocks, it really is continuity of architecture. So,  
3 that also contributed to just so how many.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Once again,  
5 I'm not-- I have no problem with what the  
6 Commission's doing. I just want to understand the  
7 rationale. So, effectively what the Commission is  
8 saying is that this area in Park Slope is the most  
9 historically significant area in New York City,  
10 because you've decided that you want to designate two  
11 and a half thousand homes in that area. If that's  
12 what you're saying, I'm okay with that. I just want  
13 to understand the rationale for designating such a  
14 large swath of the neighborhood where in your own  
15 testimony, you actually said this in your testimony,  
16 that part of the growth of this community was in fact  
17 the fact that we have a world-class park there and  
18 mass transit, and now this would effectively limit  
19 that growth. So, once again, I have no problem with  
20 the decision. I'm just trying to understand the  
21 rationale, and I'm trying to understand the message  
22 that this sends. So is effectively the message that  
23 the Commission is sending today is that Park Slope is  
24 the most historically significant neighborhood in New  
25 York City, and therefore it warrants an extension

2 which will in total encompass two and a half thousand  
3 homes?

4 LAUREN GEORGE: No, that is not what the  
5 Commission is asserting with this designation. So, I  
6 would correct that for the record. I don't think--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
8 So, what are you--

9 LAUREN GEORGE: that would mean--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]

11 So what are you asserting, and then please just  
12 explain why it is that you've decided to designate so  
13 many homes? Once again, I'm not against the  
14 designations. I'm all for designations, obviously.  
15 I'm just trying to understand the logic behind it.

16 MICHAEL OWEN: One other, I think, reason  
17 for such a large area was the amount of support, but  
18 even though it does seem like a large district,  
19 we're--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]

21 To be clear, it doesn't seem like a large district.

22 It may in fact be the largest district in the City of  
23 New York.

24 MICHAEL OWEN: No, you're correct.  
25

2 LAUREN GEORGE: We'll have to get back to  
3 you with that fact, figure.

4 MICHAEL OWEN: It is very large. Even  
5 now as we speak, the community and the preservation  
6 groups are asking for more. There is a lot of owner  
7 support and even testimony. A lot of the emails and  
8 response we heard was even about why won't you  
9 include my block as well. So, even though--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
11 I mean, Corey Johnson would volunteer right now to  
12 landmark his entire district, and I'm certain-- just  
13 to be fair, I'm certain we could get Corey to get  
14 support for all of that, and so would Ben Kallos.  
15 Corey, is that a fair statement?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: I just want seven  
17 blocks in the South Village.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay. Ben  
19 Kallos is that a fair statement? Okay. So,  
20 effectively what the Commission is saying is that if  
21 neighborhoods decide they want to-- if they want to--  
22 if they want to landmark a district, as long as there  
23 is community support regardless of the merits, that  
24 that's going to--

25 LAUREN GEORGE: [interposing] No.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: be the case,  
3 and they're going to be able to get whatever they  
4 want. Once again, I'm also okay with that. Simeon  
5 Bankoff just jumped up. He was very excited to hear  
6 the news. I have no problem with that. I just want  
7 to understand what the policy is of the City of New  
8 York, and this seems like a relatively large shift in  
9 terms of the policy of the Landmarks Preservation  
10 Commission.

11 LAUREN GEORGE: Well, I would say that  
12 under this Chair, you will note that there has been a  
13 reduction in the amount of designation overall,  
14 besides the backlog that we're dealing with. So, you  
15 know, we're-- we inherited the district which had  
16 been heard previous to this current Administration.  
17 So, I don't think that that signals a policy shift in  
18 that direction, and again, this is an area that's  
19 meritorious as a designation for the historic  
20 architectural features, and we always consider many  
21 more things than the support for a district when it  
22 comes--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
24 Sure, but once again, I don't want to beat a dead  
25 horse, but I do want some clarity over here. You

2 guys didn't expand it on the first time. You didn't  
3 view this as suitable. The second go-around is when  
4 you decided to expand it, and collectively but  
5 effectively we're now saying is that this is the most  
6 historically significant area in New York City  
7 because we're designating such a large slot. Once  
8 again, I have no problem with any of this, I really  
9 don't. I just want to understand what the rationale.  
10 I think it's only fair for those folks who read the  
11 tea leaves including Council Members who are here  
12 today. Folks want to have a good sense of, you know,  
13 where things are at and where's the Commission going.  
14 So, just to be clear, you're not saying that if a  
15 neighborhood decides they on their own unilaterally  
16 would like to designate themselves as a landmark,  
17 that is now the new policy of the LPC, that that is  
18 in fact-- that's what I heard, just respectfully.  
19 You're saying it's not the case. Just to be clear,  
20 that's not the case.

21 LAUREN GEORGE: That is correct. The  
22 agency is mandated by the Landmarks Law as the form  
23 of expert in designating landmarks around the City,  
24 and we take support as one of the factors, mostly  
25 relying on our research and agency expertise.



2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay. So, I'm  
3 going to leave you this final question that I just  
4 still don't understand which is what made this  
5 neighborhood so unique. Honest question. I really  
6 want to understand this. Why is this neighborhood so  
7 unique that we've decided to designate more homes  
8 here than any other neighborhood in New York City?

9 LAUREN GEORGE: I can't speak to previous  
10 Administrations that designated this, the other  
11 extensions here, so I'll have to get back to you with  
12 more detail.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay. I'm  
14 looking forward to that. Thank you folks.

15 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you, Councilman  
16 Greenfield. Next we have Council Member Kallos.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you. I  
18 appreciate the fact that the Land Use Committee is a  
19 place for debate where colleagues can respect one  
20 another but vehemently disagree and engage in zealous  
21 advocacy. It's a testament to democracy. With  
22 regards to the timeline, I heard credit being taken  
23 for specific legislation which passed very recently.  
24 Did that legislation have any impact on these items  
25 coming to the City Council today?

2 LAUREN GEORGE: Actually--

3 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: [interposing] Did  
4 everything you did happen before that legislation  
5 passed?

6 LAUREN GEORGE: Yes. The backlog plan was  
7 developed in between 2014 and 2015. So, this plan  
8 had been in place and in effect.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: After we  
10 introduced the legislation, Council Member Kallos.  
11 It was a good attempt, though. I appreciate it.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And how much is  
13 left on the backlog at this point?

14 LAUREN GEORGE: So, we just designated  
15 another crop of eight properties, I mean groups of  
16 eight properties on June 28<sup>th</sup>. So, you'll be seeing  
17 those soon, and that's half of the 30 that have been  
18 prioritized for designation. So there are about 15  
19 more properties to go.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Great. And then,  
21 just in defense, I actually-- I've given funding,  
22 member item funding, to Friends of the Upper East  
23 Side Historic District and HDC and others to try to  
24 find anything they can that is historic about my  
25 council district, and sadly most of the places have

2 been. As far as I understand, if something is sent  
3 to LPC like a wonderfully historic 1980's 210-foot  
4 skyscraper that that might not actually-- sorry, 210-  
5 foot building, not a skyscraper, that that likely  
6 wouldn't be historic in your eyes or worthy of  
7 preservation.

8 LAUREN GEORGE: I mean, it depends,  
9 honestly. You know, that's why we have-- the  
10 Landmarks Law has a 30-year cut-off because things  
11 change, tastes change and things become historic as  
12 every generation advances. So, you know, even post-  
13 modern buildings will be historic at some point.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And then in terms  
15 of my colleague's concern about Park Slope, would the  
16 Upper West Side's Central Park West Historic District  
17 or the Upper West Side's Riverside West End Historic  
18 District, or the Upper East Side's Historic District  
19 or the Greenwich Village Historic District be similar  
20 in size to Park Slope?

21 LAUREN GEORGE: Actually, the number, the  
22 total number of buildings in those districts I don't  
23 have off the top of my head, but geographically I  
24 know that the village actually is one of the largest  
25 and the Upper West Side including the Riverside

2 Extension that was just done last fall would total  
3 similar amount.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And one of my  
5 colleagues objects to the focus of landmarks in  
6 Manhattan. How many Council Members are you hearing  
7 from that would like to bring landmarks and historic  
8 districts to boroughs outside of Manhattan? Is there  
9 a great need? I seem to recall during the  
10 Introduction 775A the number one complaint from  
11 colleagues was that they wanted a historic district  
12 too.

13 LAUREN GEORGE: There definitely have  
14 been several Council Members from outer non-Manhattan  
15 boroughs that have approached us with interest in  
16 supporting community groups who are interested in  
17 land marking. In this Administration in general has  
18 the priority and the goal of land marking the  
19 diversity of our city and looking across the city at  
20 areas that aren't well-represented by landmarks on  
21 its own initiative as well.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you, and  
23 please keep up the good work, and we look forward to  
24 expanding historic districts as communities are able  
25 to move forward, and I would encourage my colleagues

2 to invest their member items wisely into their  
3 communities so that their communities can in turn  
4 invest in historic districts.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So we will now move on.  
6 Any more remarks from our members? Okay, no. Seeing  
7 now, we will now move on to-- thank you, Ms. George  
8 and Mr. Owens. We will now move on to public  
9 testimony on LU 413, designation of the William  
10 Schofield House as a historic landmarks. This house  
11 was originally constructed in 1860 and is located on  
12 City Island in Council Member Vacca's district. The  
13 Council Member supports approval of this landmark  
14 designation. I will now open the public hearing on  
15 LU 413, and Mr. Simeon Bankoff from HDC.

16 SIMEON BANKOFF: What? Thank you. So  
17 kind of you. Good afternoon, Council Members.  
18 Simeon Bankoff, Historic Districts Council. You're  
19 going to be hearing quite a bit from me, because we  
20 are in favor of all of these items. Surprise. I'll  
21 keep it-- sorry?

22 UNIDENTIFIED: [off mic]

23 SIMEON BANKOFF: And yours.

24 UNIDENTIFIED: And Mendez's district.  
25

2 SIMEON BANKOFF: And in Council Member  
3 Greenfield's district, too.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Simeon, can  
5 you make it interesting for us. We know you're in  
6 favor. Can you tell us in order how much in favor  
7 you are? Like, rank them for us.

8 SIMEON BANKOFF: Well I just--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
10 That way at least--

11 SIMEON BANKOFF: want to do this all at  
12 once.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: That way at  
14 least it'll be a little more entertaining, yes.

15 SIMEON BANKOFF: Right, right. Actually,  
16 I'm going to just say just about the Schofield Street  
17 House--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: [interposing]  
19 You're land marking all of Midwood. All Midwood's  
20 getting landmarked.

21 SIMEON BANKOFF: One can only hope.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Exciting.

23 SIMEON BANKOFF: My father lives there,  
24 so you know.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Your father is  
3 my constituent?

4 SIMEON BANKOFF: I think that he was re-  
5 districted into Council Member Williams' district.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Oh, sorry for  
7 this loss.

8 SIMEON BANKOFF: Do you take the-- do you  
9 have the APNY [sic] Way [sic] subway stock [sic]?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: No.

11 SIMEON BANKOFF: Yeah, yeah, he used to  
12 be Council Member Felder's district that was  
13 redistrict--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
15 I have a good neighbor policy. If he needs anything,  
16 he can still feel free to call.

17 SIMEON BANKOFF: Kind of you. Do  
18 something about Coney Island Avenue. It's a wreck.  
19 Anyway, so Schofield Street House is a simply  
20 beautiful house. I would recommend to all of the  
21 Council Members to take a look up at City Island. It  
22 is a remarkable collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century village  
23 homes, some of which are preserved, some which re  
24 not. There were a number of houses that were actually  
25 on the backlog that we're not actually forwarded into

2 the designation, but we're very pleased that the  
3 Schofield Street House is one of them. Thank you,  
4 and I will continue on. You'll talk to me later.  
5 Don't we just stay here? Let me get my stuff.

6 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Any more members from  
7 the public want to comment on this item? No? Okay,  
8 now then-- yeah. I will now close the public hearing  
9 on this item. We will now move on to LU 414, the  
10 designation of Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Fort  
11 Hamilton Parkway Entrance as a historical landmark.  
12 These structures are located in the historic  
13 Greenwood Cemetery in Council Member Menchaca's  
14 district, and he supports the designation. I will  
15 now open the public hearing for LU 414. We have Mr.  
16 Bankoff and also Jenny Fernandez want to make  
17 testimony.

18 SIMEON BANKOFF: You want to go first,  
19 Jenny?

20 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Sure, yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Due to the volume of  
22 the material, we limit each speaker to three minutes.  
23 Thank you. Please start. Identify yourself and start  
24 now.



2 JENNY O'CONNOR: It's very nice seeing  
3 everyone again. It's my first time back before the  
4 committee. Good morning, Chair Koo, members of the  
5 Committee. My name is Jenny Fernandez from the firm  
6 of Cozen O'Connor, and I am here to testify on behalf  
7 of our client, Greenwood Cemetery, on the designation  
8 of the Chapel and Fort Hamilton Parkway Entrance.  
9 Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you  
10 today. Greenwood Cemetery, a National Historic  
11 Landmark, is home to well over half a million  
12 internment and includes the graves of some of  
13 America's and New York's most prominent residents,  
14 making Greenwood a popular tourist destination.  
15 Greenwood has become an important repository for  
16 historical and artistic collections and has been a  
17 careful and dedicated steward of its grounds and  
18 buildings including several landmarks for over 177  
19 years. Although recognized for its historic and  
20 architectural significance, Greenwood remains a very  
21 active cemetery with over 1,200 burials and the  
22 instalment of 200 new monuments in just one year.  
23 Designation of the entire cemetery's grounds pose  
24 significant legal and other issues to the cemetery.  
25 We are pleased that the Landmarks Preservation

2 Commission determined that the individual designation  
3 of the Chapel and Fort Hamilton Parkway Entrance was  
4 the appropriate action, and the Commission has  
5 specified those features for which these structures  
6 have been deemed significant and have been designated  
7 in its reports. Thank you for the opportunity to  
8 testify before you today.

9 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Mr.  
10 Bankoff.

11 SIMEON BANKOFF: Good afternoon, Council  
12 Members. Simeon Bankoff, Executive Director of the  
13 Historic Districts Council. We are firmly in favor  
14 of the items in front of you regarding the Greenwood  
15 Cemetery. Let me just say as a personal note, I am  
16 going to be a permanent resident of Greenwood  
17 Cemetery or future resident as it were, and while I--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
19 Hopefully no time soon.

20 SIMEON BANKOFF: Well, that is the goal.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay.

22 SIMEON BANKOFF: But and while I do--  
23 would not personally object to land marking, we did  
24 understand both of the regulatory problems as well as  
25 the resource problems that the Landmarks Commission

2 would face having to write a proper and precise  
3 designation report on 480 acres of sculpted and  
4 landscaped land which is being well stewarded, well  
5 cared for, and truly well-groomed by Greenwood  
6 Cemetery who is becoming in the process of doing a  
7 very interesting transition of changing itself slowly  
8 from being the working cemetery it will always be to  
9 being one of New York City's premier cultural  
10 institutions.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Just out of  
12 curiosity, Simeon, what is a-- what does a residence  
13 go for at Greenwood Cemetery? You mentioned that  
14 you've--

15 SIMEON BANKOFF: [interposing] I bought  
16 my--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: purchased a  
18 location.

19 SIMEON BANKOFF: Yeah, no, I bought my  
20 plot about 13 years ago, so I really couldn't say,  
21 but I would recommend that question to Rich Moreland  
22 [sp?] who's sitting up there, or you could call them,  
23 and--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]

3 Is it a spacious spot, or is it just like a basic  
4 spot? What kind of spot did you--

5 SIMEON BANKOFF: [interposing] OH, okay.

6 Well, I actually got a spot--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Curious, any  
8 amenities?

9 SIMEON BANKOFF: Yeah, actually it is.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yeah.

11 SIMEON BANKOFF: I got a spot not far  
12 from Peter Cooper's [sp?] spot, sort of between  
13 Cooper and Hewitt [sp?] where the new Hewitt column  
14 has been put.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Nice.

16 SIMEON BANKOFF: I was actually part of  
17 one of the original plots. It's enough room for  
18 three internments and three cemeteries. Sorry, three  
19 crematoriums.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Stretch out a  
21 little bit.

22 SIMEON BANKOFF: Exactly, my wife, you  
23 know, some good friend perhaps also. Are you asking?  
24 I could give you a lease. And also you can even put  
25 plantings there if you wish.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: That's nice.

3 And what was your issue with Coney Island Avenue  
4 before? I just want to see--

5 SIMEON BANKOFF: [interposing] Well, as I  
6 go visiting both your district and my father--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
8 Yeah.

9 SIMEON BANKOFF: up and down from Windsor  
10 Terrace to the area. Coney Island Avenue in and of  
11 itself seems to have absolutely no urban design  
12 whatsoever. There's -- you're always seeing thing  
13 torn own, some real God awful ugly stuff, a whole  
14 nightmare of signs, and I just would think--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
16 Three points on Coney Island Avenue. The first is  
17 that I actually, under my tenure we turned it into a  
18 slow zone. So it's much safer now.

19 SIMEON BANKOFF: Okay.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: As a result of  
21 my NYC Clean-up initiative, we now have people  
22 cleaning the stretch of Coney Island. Obviously it's  
23 much actually cleaner. Then the New York Times  
24 actually did an article a couple years ago embracing  
25 Coney Island Avenue as a sign of how great Brooklyn

2 is, because if you drive from the beginning of Coney  
3 Island Avenue, you literally hit every ethnicity in  
4 Brooklyn, and so it's like the cultural change  
5 through your car window as you drive down Coney  
6 Island Avenue. So, I'm looking from a more positive  
7 perspective.

8 SIMEON BANKOFF: As somebody who grew up  
9 in deepest, darkest Brooklyn and is well accustomed  
10 to the Coney Island Avenue bus, it can say it's a  
11 little bit of a visual cacophony, and it could  
12 probably use a little better, but I'm glad to hear  
13 that it's safer.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yeah.

15 SIMEON BANKOFF: And the bus does come  
16 periodically.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: And it's  
18 cleaner as well.

19 SIMEON BANKOFF: Yeah.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Absolutely.

21 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Any more  
22 members from the public who wish to testify.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Oh, sorry,  
24 I'm still genuinely curious about what a plot goes  
25 for. Do we know what's the growing rate?

2 JENNY FERNANDEZ: We'll be happy to get  
3 that information.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I thought we  
5 have an expert sitting right here.

6 SIMEON BANKOFF: I don't like to just--  
7 [off mic]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: No, ball park  
9 me, come on.

10 SIMEON BANKOFF: \$17,000 and up.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Pretty good  
12 deal, 17,000 gets you a lifetime space.

13 SIMEON BANKOFF: No monthly maintenance.  
14 They can't evict you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Wow.

16 SIMEON BANKOFF: You're there forever.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Excellent.  
18 Talk about rent control, huh?

19 CHAIRPERSON KOO: It's a good deal.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Alright.  
21 Thank you folks.

22 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So, seeing none, I will  
23 now close the public hearing on this item. We will  
24 now move on to LU 415, the designation of the Van  
25 Sicklen House as a historic landmark. The Van

2 Sicklen House is one of the oldest surviving Dutch-  
3 American houses in Brooklyn. Originally constructed  
4 in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The house is located in  
5 Council Member Treyger's district, and he supports  
6 the designation. I will now open the public hearing  
7 for LU 415, and Mr. Simeon Bankoff?

8 SIMEON BANKOFF: Good afternoon, Council  
9 Members. Simeon Bankoff, Historic Districts Council.  
10 We are very strongly in favor of the Lady Moody  
11 house, which I insist on calling it. As growing up  
12 in Brooklyn, it has always been called the Lady Moody  
13 House, although it's more properly known as the Van  
14 Sicklen House. I just have to say that one of the  
15 interesting things about this particular house in  
16 addition to its historic merit is how it kind of  
17 encompasses the change in owner's feelings about land  
18 marking over years. Mrs. Slomo [sp?] whose family  
19 owned the house from the 1940's into about 2006  
20 originally several times objected to the land marking  
21 of the house, which is one of the reasons why it was  
22 never designated, but then upon learning more about  
23 it, upon doing what she had to do to the house and  
24 then eventually selling the house itself and not end  
25 up taking a loss because of that, had turned around



2 and testified in favor of designation of this  
3 property when it came up for the public hearing.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: To be fair,  
5 though, I think the current owners are opposed to the  
6 designation.

7 SIMEON BANKOFF: That would be-- that  
8 seems to be the case. However, I mean, I'll just  
9 say--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
11 Okay.

12 SIMEON BANKOFF: So, what are we saying  
13 here?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: No, no, no,  
15 no. We're not saying anything. I'm just--

16 SIMEON BANKOFF: [interposing] Right.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: My point is--  
18 by the way, I'm in favor of the designation. I'm  
19 just saying that to be fair. I do want the record to  
20 reflect that the current owners are--

21 SIMEON BANKOFF: [interposing] Yes, the  
22 current owners--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
24 are opposed to it. I thought you were going to  
25

2 mention the interesting part of the houses that  
3 apparently it wasn't Lady Moody's house.

4 SIMEON BANKOFF: Oh, no, no one ever  
5 though it was Lady Moody's house.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I think it was  
7 a well-spread rumor for many years.

8 SIMEON BANKOFF: Oh, it's part of Brooklyn  
9 folklore that--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
11 Folklore, okay.

12 SIMEON BANKOFF: But that's, you know,  
13 that just adds--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
15 It's similar to the folklore actually that Cornelius  
16 Vanderbilt invented the-- helped invent the potato  
17 chip, but when he visited--

18 SIMEON BANKOFF: [interposing] I'm not  
19 familiar with that one.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: when he  
21 visited a restaurant in Saratoga, but apparently that  
22 is also not accurate. So today we're-- this our  
23 Subcommittee Myth Busters hearing here.

24 SIMEON BANKOFF: I would recommend at  
25 some point that an investigation of the village grid

2 of Gravesend be looked at just because it actually is  
3 one of the last 17<sup>th</sup> century village grids that still  
4 exist on the streets, and some level of commemoration  
5 should happen.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Alright, take  
7 a look at that. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Okay, thank you. Are  
9 there any more members of the public who wish to  
10 testify? Seeing none, I will now close the public  
11 hearing on this item. We will now move onto LU 416,  
12 the designation of the Sullivan Street House as a  
13 historic landmark. The Sullivan Street House was  
14 originally constructed in 1816 in the South Village.  
15 This item is located in Council Member Johnson's  
16 district, and he supports the designation. I will  
17 now open the public hearing for LU 416. Mr. Bankoff,  
18 please testify.

19 SIMEON BANKOFF: Good afternoon. Simeon  
20 Bankoff, Executive Director of the Historic Districts  
21 Council. We are in favor of this house which as  
22 Council Member Johnson quite rightly said is one of  
23 the oldest houses in Lower Manhattan and definitely  
24 one of the few wood framed houses left in the  
25 section. I would like to say that it has been on

2 people's radar screen, definitely since 2002 as part  
3 of the Federal Rural House Project that was initiated  
4 by the Landmarks Conservancy and the Greenwich  
5 Village Society for Historic Preservation, and we are  
6 pleased to see it finally take action.

7 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Are there  
8 any more members of the public who wish to testify?  
9 Seeing none, I will now close the public hearing on  
10 this item. Now we will move to LU 417, the  
11 designation of Saint Michael's Episcopal Church as a  
12 historic landmark. This proposed landmark is  
13 comprised of 30 buildings, the Church, the Parish  
14 House and the Rectory. These items in Council Member  
15 Levin's district, and he submitted a letter in  
16 support of the designation. I'm sorry, Mr. Levine's  
17 district, and he submitted a letter of support of the  
18 designation. I will now open the public hearing on  
19 LU 417. Mr. Bankoff, you again. Okay.

20 SIMEON BANKOFF: Me again, and will I be  
21 joined by anybody?

22 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you.

23 SIMEON BANKOFF: It's okay. I'm getting  
24 used to this seat. Simeon Bankoff, Executive  
25 Director of the Historic Districts Council. Thank

2 you so much for hearing me today. I will keep this

3 very brief. This is a beautiful, beautiful church

4 that-- and building. It's truly a remarkable

5 architectural landmark for the area. I would like to

6 note that the interior windows are done by Tiffany.

7 They are not covered by the landmark designation, but

8 you know, hopefully the additional protections that

9 landmark designation will give will hopefully focus

10 more attention on these and should they ever need to

11 be replaced, repaired, helped, I think that there

12 would be lots of people who are willing to help them.

13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Council Barron just

15 joined our committee. Thank you. Are there any

16 members of the public who wish to testify? Seeing

17 none, I will now close the public hearing on this

18 item. We will now move on to LU 418, the designation

19 of the John William and Lydia Ann Bell Ahles House as

20 a historic landmark. This house is located in

21 Council Member Vallone's district, and he submitted a

22 letter of support for the designation. I will now

23 open the public hearing for LU 418. We have Mr.

24 Bankoff, Mr. Robert Rubin and Henry Euler, and Jordan

25 Most to testify.

2 UNIDENTIFIED: [off mic]

3 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Okay, he's going to  
4 speak on behalf of them, okay. Thank you. Please  
5 start--

6 HENRY EULER: [interposing] My name--

7 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah, please start now.

8 HENRY EULER: My name is Henry Euler.

9 Today I come to speak in support of land marking  
10 Ahles House in Bayside, Queens. As a lifetime member  
11 and parent recording secretary of the Bayside  
12 Historical Society, as a lifetime member of the  
13 Queens Historical Society, and as a member of Queens  
14 Preservation Council and Historic Districts Council,  
15 I feel it is important to preserve our historical  
16 past for the benefit of today's and tomorrow's  
17 generations. The Ahles House was constructed circa  
18 1873 in the Second Empire style of architect. Robert  
19 M. Bell of the founding Bell Family of Bayside had  
20 the house constructed as the wedding present for his  
21 daughter Lydia and her future husband John William  
22 Ahles. The house itself is situated on land that has  
23 been part of the Lawrence Family Farm. The property  
24 was purchased by Mr. Bell a few years after his  
25 marriage to Catherine Lawrence. The Ahles family

2 lived in the house built on the property for almost

3 70 years. Because of the link to the Bell and

4 Lawrence families, two of the most prominent in

5 Bayside's founding families, this house is believed

6 to be the oldest standing home in Bayside. It has a

7 unique architectural style when compared to other

8 homes in Bayside. But even more importantly is the

9 historical aspect of this particular site. As a

10 lifelong resident of Bayside I have witnessed

11 firsthand the desecration and destruction of many

12 historic buildings in my community including the Bell

13 homes on Bell Boulevard and 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the Bell

14 Estate on 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Clark Kennedy [sic] Street,

15 the Wedding Fell [sic] Farm on Bell Boulevard near

16 Rocky Hill Road, the Tad Dorgan [sic] House on Two

17 Ninth Street near 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, and many home taken

18 for the Clearview Expressway in 1960, including the

19 Jacob Ruppert Mansion that was located on 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue

20 and 207<sup>th</sup> Street. Slowly but surely, all of our

21 precious history is disappearing. That's why I urge

22 the Subcommittee, this Subcommittee, the Land Use

23 Committee and the Full City Council to landmark the

24 Ahles House before it meets the same fate as many of

25 our other historical Bayside homes. I also endorse

2 the land marking of the Pepsi-Cola sign being  
3 considered today and the entire Bowne Street  
4 Community Church in Flushing which should be coming  
5 before the City Council in the near future. I also  
6 hope that the LPC and City Council will soon be  
7 considering the land marking the proposed Broadway  
8 Flushing Historic District. Queens County has many  
9 historical buildings and districts that merit  
10 landmark designation, and preservationists will  
11 continue to advocate for landmark status of these  
12 sites. Thank you for letting me testify.

13 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you, Mr. Euler.

14 Mr. Bankoff?

15 SIMEON BANKOFF: Good afternoon, Council  
16 Members. Simeon Bankoff, Executive Director of the  
17 Historic Districts Council. This home is the oldest  
18 known structure in Bayside and the last survivor of  
19 many homes once belonging to the Bell family, who  
20 were influential in the development to the early  
21 Bayside as Henry just said. This house was stuccoed  
22 [sic] and the porch was removed in the 1920's after  
23 it was moved to make room for street improvements and  
24 development. However, that is indicative of the  
25 Colonial Revival style, and these historic



2 alterations do not detract or obscure its  
3 characteristic Second Empire style. In fact, it's the  
4 only surviving example of that style in the area.  
5 The last surviving residence other than this one  
6 located at 3808 Bell Boulevard was demolished in 1971  
7 despite preservation efforts at the time.  
8 Unfortunately, that house was replaced by a funeral  
9 home and is now used as a drab suburban office  
10 building. We are very thankful that the Landmarks  
11 Preservation Commission has taken action to prevent  
12 that from happening to this house, which is so very  
13 important to the history and understanding of the  
14 Bayside community. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Are there  
16 any more members of the public who wish to testify?  
17 Oh, okay. Two more, okay. We have Jordan Most and  
18 Robert Rubin.

19 JORDAN MOST: My name's Jordan Most. I'm  
20 representing Robert Rubin. Robert Ruben is the owner  
21 of the house. I'm from the office of Sheldon Lobel,  
22 P.C. We've represented Robert Rubin actually since  
23 2009. He's lived in that house since 1981 as a  
24 tenant and purchased the house in early 2000's. It  
25 was a backlog, obviously calendared item back in

2 2009. Mr. Rubin has opposed designation since then,  
3 and is a longtime, again, resident in this house and  
4 care-er [sic] of this house, custodian of the house,  
5 but he is opposed to landmark status. And I think  
6 that a number of things that were mentioned are  
7 important to note and to draw out a little bit. This  
8 house and the basis for the designation has not been  
9 so clear that originally the house-- it was the  
10 position that had been taken was that it was an  
11 excellent example of Second Empire architecture. But  
12 as was actually just stated and is noted in a number  
13 of my papers and submissions, it is not anymore-- no  
14 longer a representation of Second Empire. The house  
15 was so dramatically changed that it bears very little  
16 except for possibly the slate roof and the mansard  
17 roof, are really the only aspects of Second Empire  
18 traits that are left. The house was dramatically  
19 changed in the 1930's. The house was moved also  
20 earlier. So, it's not even in its original location.  
21 It bears no resemblance, and we've shown early  
22 photographs of porches and a number of different  
23 elements. We submitted paperwork back in 2009 and  
24 again in 2015 that showed about eight different  
25 Second Empire houses that had been landmarked over

2 the years by LPC, and they all retain between 60 and  
3 100 percent of the various Second Empire traits.

4 Whereas we found that this house had been so  
5 dramatically changed that only 20 percent of its  
6 Second-- original Second Empire traits remain intact.

7 And I think that there's a-- I don't want to call it  
8 confusion, but I think when we responded to LPC, LPC

9 looked a little harder and came up with some

10 different arguments as to why this house should be

11 landmarked. So it went from being a Second Empire

12 house to maybe being based on certain historical

13 elements, which are not necessarily so convincing.

14 While it's affiliated to the Bell family, it's not

15 Abraham Bell who's the more significant Bell of the

16 Bell Boulevard of the Bells of Queens, and also then

17 it became a house of fusion traits. It became a

18 house of several different characteristics, that it

19 was sort of melded together. So, we just feel that

20 this house doesn't really represent a style as

21 historically significant. I think there's a-- there

22 is admittedly is there's-- it's an old house, and

23 it's a nice looking house, and therefore people are

24 scrambling to say what is a nice old house, but not

2 necessarily a historically significant house. You  
3 want to say something? Yeah, yeah, yeah.

4 ROBERT RUBIN: Alright, when this was  
5 started back in 2009--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
7 Who are you? I'm sorry, sir.

8 JORDAN MOST: Robert Rubin.

9 ROBERT RUBIN: Rob Rubin. I'm the owner.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: If you could  
11 identify yourself, please.

12 ROBERT RUBIN: Oh, alright. I'm the  
13 owner.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you.  
15 Yes?

16 ROBERT RUBIN: I'm moving because I have  
17 Parkinson's, so please forgive me--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
19 Oh, no, no worries.

20 ROBERT RUBIN: if I move around a little  
21 bit.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Just for the  
23 record. Thank you.

24 ROBERT RUBIN: Alright. When this  
25 started with Tony Avela [sp?], there were reports in

2 newspapers that the owners lived in Florida, that he  
3 was saving the house from demolition, and it must be  
4 reserved, and it's an Empire style, it's just like  
5 its original form, and it snowballed into this big  
6 story. You know, I've been living there for 38 years  
7 now, and not once did anybody in all the years that  
8 I'm living there approach me or ring my doorbell and  
9 say, "You know, Mr. Rubin, this is a great old house  
10 and we're thinking about land marking it because of  
11 x-y-z." Never happened. He thought that-- everybody  
12 started to fear monger that it was going to be torn  
13 down. I'm going to spend the rest of my life in that  
14 house. I already spent 38 years, and where am I  
15 going at 62 years old? And I intent to stay there  
16 for the rest of my life. I have no desire knocking  
17 it down, but it's my home. I worked 28 years to save  
18 money to buy the house, and everybody should have the  
19 right to do what they want to do, when they want to  
20 do it, if they want to do it, of course apply for  
21 city permits, but I have no intention of changing it.  
22 I could have flipped the house for money any time I  
23 wanted between all this time. I bought the house at  
24 a very modest price because the owner was like a  
25 father to me, and I paid rent all these years, and he

2 wanted to make my life easier as I get older, and  
3 that's the whole idea is to get life easier. He also  
4 was opposed when I told him all about this. So, this  
5 is all about my little [sic] life, and I think the  
6 biggest privilege in the world is to own your own  
7 home. I don't want to own a co-op. I didn't want to  
8 own a condo. I lived here since in my 20's, and I had  
9 a dream of buying it and creating my own home, and  
10 that's what I've been doing. I've been maintaining  
11 it for all these years, and I do everything myself.  
12 Unfortunately, I got Parkinson's now. It's going to  
13 get a little bit more difficult for me, but it's  
14 supposed to be an easy time as I get older, and the  
15 stress is killing me, and it really-- it's so  
16 different than what it was. I mean, there's a whole  
17 side of the wall missing if you look at the pictures  
18 of what it was and what it is. It's just amazing.  
19 There was two windows on the side, and now there's--  
20 there was three. They're taking pictures of the  
21 house like they bagged a lion, "We saved this house."  
22 They never saved it. It's not going anywhere. What  
23 are they saving? They made a whole story about the  
24 lost-- all the Bayside was built the Lawrence land.  
25 And then this architect who never performed anything

2 else in Bayside, and they fear mongered the whole  
3 place, and I people coming in my yard in the middle  
4 of the day. I had illegal pictures taken from the  
5 back of my house on my own property. I can't sit in  
6 my home without people walking on it and saying, "Oh,  
7 this is the Ahles House. Can I have a tour?" It's  
8 not a dentist office. It's not a, you know, a  
9 office. It's not a store. It's a home, and it's my  
10 home, and it's being violated every single week by  
11 people just gallivanting on my property and walking  
12 in my yard to take pictures. It's ridiculous.

13 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you, Mr.--

14 ROBERT RUBIN: [interposing] Rubin.

15 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Rubin. Any of you have  
16 questions?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I do indeed.  
18 Robert was it?

19 ROBERT RUBIN: Yes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yes. Well,  
21 thank you so much for coming out and testifying  
22 today. So, I just I want to-- I just want to be  
23 clear on what your objections are.

24 ROBERT RUBIN: Right.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: So let's just  
3 put it in perspective, right? You know, I chair the  
4 Land Use Committee and I see people have these  
5 concerns all the time. So, objectively speaking,  
6 just so that you know, designating your home as a  
7 historic landmark will not diminish the value of your  
8 home. If anything, especially because it's so unique  
9 and it's such a particular neighborhood, it probably  
10 will actually increase the value of the home. So, if  
11 that's a concern, I honestly don't think you should  
12 be concerned about that. I do want to understand  
13 your other concerns, though, which is you're saying  
14 that you're worried about people trespassing or about  
15 making changes. What-- I just-- I really want to get  
16 a better sense of what your concern is, but I want to  
17 assure that most studies that have been done,  
18 especially for something I think is unique and, you  
19 know, I have-- because Simeon's on the panel, I'm  
20 happy to have him jump in here as well as an expert.  
21 Especially something unique as this, I actually don't  
22 think the value of your home will go down. I think  
23 the value of your home will actually go up once your  
24 home is designated. So, do you have other concerns



2 particularly about designating your home as a  
3 historic landmark?

4 ROBERT RUBIN: There are a lot of  
5 concerns, and it's not about money mind you.  
6 Alright? Because I could have-- as I said, I could  
7 have flipped this house and made money--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
9 NO, but I want to assure you I think it's an  
10 important point though, which is that--

11 ROBERT RUBIN: [interposing] Not  
12 everybody-- not everybody cares about money.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: No, I  
14 understand that, but I don't want you to think you're  
15 going to lose out from a financial perspective.

16 ROBERT RUBIN: But it's regulatory.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay.

18 ROBERT RUBIN: If I wanted to do  
19 something--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
21 Yeah.

22 ROBERT RUBIN: I should never ask for  
23 approval to do something.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yeah.  
25

2 ROBERT RUBIN: I don't care if goes for  
3 painting, changing my windows.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yeah.

5 ROBERT RUBIN: How dare someone say to  
6 me, "Well, you have to get permission." It's my  
7 home. No one should go through that, and it is not  
8 what it was. It's changed so drastically, and I  
9 don't want to go through red tape, filling out forms,  
10 you know--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
12 I hear you.

13 ROBERT RUBIN: to do something that I  
14 have perfectly right to do because it is my home. I  
15 grew up and my father he did his own work, and it's a  
16 pleasure. Part of-- I live for this house,  
17 especially now with Parkinson's. It is my lifeblood.  
18 I'm not going anywhere. I love my garden. I love my  
19 house. I love painting. I love fixing it. I love  
20 repairing it. I don't need to be regulatory. I don't  
21 need to be told what to do, what to do with it, how  
22 to do it.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Fair enough.

24 ROBERT RUBIN: It's crazy.  
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: So, the other  
3 thing I will just point out, which I think is  
4 important, and once again, you know, this is-- you're  
5 obviously not new to the process because you've been  
6 doing it for a few years, but I can't recall you  
7 coming before us. I just think it's worth mentioning  
8 which is that part of the reason that we designate  
9 homes or even buildings as historic, it's not because  
10 of you. I want to be clear by the way. If you ask  
11 me, just from having you up here for five minutes, do  
12 I trust Robert to do the right thing? A hundred  
13 percent I trust you, and I am a pretty good judge of  
14 character, and I think you're going to do the right  
15 thing. I think the concern is that none of us, right,  
16 because we were joking before Simeon Bankoff owns a  
17 plot in Greenwood Cemetery, none of us are going to  
18 live forever, and we're not worried honestly about  
19 you. Part of the purpose of designating a home as  
20 historic, is we're worried about the future, right?  
21 So, 20 years, 40 years, 50 years, 100 years down the  
22 road, and quite frankly the reason in fact that there  
23 have been so many changes to this home is that the  
24 Landmarks Law wasn't even in existence before the  
25 changes actually happened, and so we weren't able to

2 preserve homes like this. But Counselor, I actually  
3 have a question for you. You know, we've been told--  
4 are you disputing this? We've been told that this is  
5 in fact the oldest known structure in Bayside and the  
6 last of the homes belonging to the Bell family,  
7 albeit perhaps not the most famous of the Bell family  
8 folks, but is that not correct or is that correct?  
9 This is an important point.

10 JORDAN MOST: Yeah, I don't know if it is  
11 the oldest structure in Bayside.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay. I think  
13 that's-- I think that is what we have been told. So,  
14 my only point is that I hear the frustration, and I  
15 understand that-- and we're always reluctant to  
16 landmark homes and buildings when landlords are  
17 opposed, but you know, just because they didn't  
18 necessarily get it right the first time doesn't mean  
19 they didn't get it right, in all fairness, and I just  
20 want to put that out there. And I do think that it's  
21 important to point out that, you know, there are very  
22 good reasons for land marking a home if it is in fact  
23 the oldest known structure. If it's the only  
24 structure that is left over by the Bell family, I  
25 mean, that-- and yes, albeit that it's not entirely

2 Second Empire style, I think there are still some  
3 features that are remaining, and in fact, if you look  
4 at the previous house that we did, just so that--  
5 similar example, the Lady Moody House, a very similar  
6 in the sense of, you know, very old home in  
7 Gravesend. Owner is not thrilled. Has been changed,  
8 but once again, it's kind of a chicken versus the egg  
9 problem, which I want to point out not just for you  
10 but for the folks who are watching at home as well,  
11 which is that if you don't landmark a house, then the  
12 house is going to consistently change, and the reason  
13 that these homes have changed is because there was no  
14 land marking when they changed the homes. So, it's a  
15 complicated issue. So, my only point to you,  
16 Counselor and to Robert, is that, you know, it's not--  
17 - this isn't you, and I am sorry even though I don't  
18 know who these people are. I'm sorry that people  
19 have turned this into a crusade and made it about you  
20 and somehow have implied that you don't-- not  
21 interested in the best welfare of the house. I don't  
22 think any of that is true, and I would encourage you,  
23 honestly, if anyone trespasses on your property call  
24 911 and have them arrested. I'm serious by the way.

2 ROBERT RUBIN: They told me to get an  
3 electrical fence.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay. I don't  
5 know about an electrical fence.

6 ROBERT RUBIN: That's what they told me,  
7 because it happened way too many time.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay.

9 ROBERT RUBIN: I have a fence and they  
10 climbed over my fence--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
12 That's terrible.

13 ROBERT RUBIN: to take pictures.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: And we should  
15 call the police, and that's unacceptable. Nowhere  
16 should anyone do that. I want the record to reflect  
17 from my perspective as the Chair of the Land Use  
18 Committee that I think you're doing a fine job with  
19 you home. I'm sure you care about your home. I  
20 really don't think that's the motivation here today.  
21 I think really we're just worried about keeping  
22 something that does seem to be historic and making  
23 sure that it's in tact for generations to come beyond  
24 all of us who are sitting here. So, I hear you.

2 ROBERT RUBIN: Well, I can assure you,  
3 I'll be around for generations. I'm not going  
4 anywhere and I don't think the house is going  
5 anywhere.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: No, no, I  
7 understand that. But you know, even I think the  
8 oldest person, the oldest person in America is 110  
9 years old, right?

10 ROBERT RUBIN: Right.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: And so the  
12 point is that even if all of us live to 110, that's  
13 still another 50 or so years, and what we're talking  
14 about over here is multiple generations and  
15 centuries, and we're trying to preserve things well  
16 beyond us, but I certainly hear your concerns, and I  
17 appreciate you coming out here today, and we'll take  
18 it under advisement. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Council  
20 Member Barron?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Mr.  
22 Chair. To the panel, before you leave, I just have a  
23 few questions I want to ask. Yes. Thank you.

24 ROBERT RUBIN: My pleasure.  
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Speaking of the  
3 oldest person, we just lost who had been the oldest  
4 living person, Ms. Susan Musha [sic] Jones, and she  
5 lived in my community, and she was 116 years old.

6 ROBERT RUBIN: God bless her.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And she just  
8 passed last May. So, we certainly want to put that  
9 in the record. In terms of the home that we're  
10 talking about, I'm not familiar with it. I'm not  
11 familiar with that part of Queens, and I certainly  
12 enjoy looking at historic homes. So, Mr.-- I'm  
13 sorry, your name again?

14 ROBERT RUBIN: Call me Robert.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, Robert, Mr.  
16 Robert.

17 ROBERT RUBIN: Robert Rubin.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: You presently live  
19 in the home and you've lived there for 38 years?

20 ROBERT RUBIN: Correct.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. Do you have  
22 other occupants of the home, either family members--

23 ROBERT RUBIN: [interposing] No, I occupy  
24 the whole entire home. I don't rent it out. I'm not-



2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing] You  
3 don't rent it out.

4 ROBERT RUBIN: I'm not after rentals.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

6 ROBERT RUBIN: I always had a dream of  
7 living in the whole house myself. I lived on the  
8 downstairs--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]  
10 Okay.

11 ROBERT RUBIN: twenty-eight years telling  
12 the landlord, who I loved desperately, I'm going to  
13 own it one day. He said, sure, sure, sure, sure. He  
14 said, "Save your money." So, I saved my money. I  
15 saved my money. Then the time came. He said, "Now  
16 you're ready to buy it?" I said absolutely, and I  
17 lived a dream to move upstairs, and I created the  
18 whole-- the-- all the floors. The upstairs is the  
19 bedrooms. The middle floor is living rooms, and the  
20 bottom floor is like a basement, because I really  
21 don't have a basement. So, it's like a guest room.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

23 ROBERT RUBIN: So, I occupy all the  
24 floors.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. Just for  
3 the record, I always believe that we certainly have  
4 to look forward to the future, but I don't know that  
5 we want to have a negative impact on the present to  
6 be able to preserve what's going forward in the  
7 future, and I think that anyone who owns their own  
8 home should have greater weight in the decision as to  
9 what happens with their property.

10 ROBERT RUBIN: Thank you. Absolutely.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

12 ROBERT RUBIN: Thank you. Can I just add  
13 one thing?

14 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah, go ahead. Yeah,  
15 go ahead.

16 ROBERT RUBIN: You know, if it was really  
17 worth land marking, I would be the first to say go do  
18 it. I have high integrity. I don't lie. I don't  
19 cheat. I live my life very cleanly. I'm an  
20 inventor. I lived there my whole entire life, just  
21 about my whole adulthood, and if it-- I would be the  
22 first to stand behind it. It is so not what it was.  
23 It's ridiculous. Just if it was something of value,  
24 I would say go do it, I'm right behind it.

2 JORDAN MOST: Well, I think the evidence  
3 of that is that there-- evidence of that, I think, in  
4 support of what Mr. Rubin is saying is that in 2009 I  
5 think Landmarks realized that at least with what was  
6 in front of them that it was clearly not a clear  
7 case, and it was-- there were so many dramatic  
8 changes to this house which was a wood clapboard  
9 house centrally located on an enormous piece of land  
10 with porches and dormers and many elements that are  
11 now gone, elements that have been added to the house,  
12 and that it becomes very much a hybrid house of  
13 varying different styles and elements, and anyway,  
14 that I think is what really what Mr. Rubin is  
15 pointing to, is that he felt a little like this was a  
16 bit grasping at the end of the day, and that's really  
17 I think where we come out on it.

18 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Okay, thank you. Yeah,  
19 we will take your concerns seriously.

20 ROBERT RUBIN: I hope so. Thank you so  
21 much.

22 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Are there any more  
23 members of the public who wanted to testify on this  
24 item. Seeing none, I will close the public hearing  
25 on this item. Now, we'll move on to LU 419, the

2 designation of the Pepsi-Cola sign as a historic  
3 landmark. This item is located in Council Member Van  
4 Bramer's district and he supports the designation. I  
5 will now open the public hearing for LU 419, and we  
6 have Mr. Bankoff.

7 SIMEON BANKOFF: Good afternoon, Council  
8 Members. Simeon Bankoff, Executive Director of the  
9 Historic Districts Council. If I may be completely  
10 honest, and I think at this point in the hearing I  
11 should be, there was a lot of discussion among my  
12 board and among us about whether or not we truly  
13 supported this as a landmark. The concern coming  
14 down to the actual regulation of the property,  
15 because under the First Amendment you really can't  
16 regulate. The Landmarks Commission cannot regulate  
17 content of a sign, that this could become the Simeon  
18 Bankoff sign if they kept an appropriate font.  
19 However, during the long public hearing and a lot of  
20 discussions, we discovered that actually there are  
21 easements and agreements that are protecting this  
22 sign. It's a very unique kind of situation so that  
23 the landmark designation of it is actually  
24 appropriate, especially when viewed in the light of  
25

2 its extraordinary public awareness in the City. So,  
3 for those reasons we support this designation.

4 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Are there  
5 any more members of the public who wish to testify?  
6 Seeing none, I will now-- oh, okay. Council Member  
7 Barron?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes, I have a  
9 question. Did you say that the Council Member was in  
10 favor or was opposed?

11 CHAIRPERSON KOO: He's in favor.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Mr. Greenfield?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you,  
15 Mr. Chairman. How do you feel about the fact that  
16 Michael Bloomberg would say this encourages folks to  
17 drink soda and therefore be obese and gain weight?  
18 Does that concern you at all, as--

19 SIMEON BANKOFF: You know, I mean a  
20 similar question could be brought up with regards to  
21 elevator buildings, you know?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: But I don't  
23 think we're having a hearing today on elevator  
24 buildings.

2 SIMEON BANKOFF: Well, you know, some of  
3 these buildings might have-- actually, none of these  
4 buildings. None of these have elevators.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: And quite  
6 frankly, quite a few people who live in those  
7 buildings are disabled, so I wouldn't agree with you--  
8 -

9 SIMEON BANKOFF: [interposing] Oh, that is  
10 true. I would not-- but you know what I mean.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: on that.

12 SIMEON BANKOFF: I think that--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
14 The Pepsi-Cola sign, we're encouraging people to  
15 drink sugary drinks--

16 SIMEON BANKOFF: [interposing] If we're  
17 really--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: which is a  
19 huge, huge cause of obesity in this country.

20 SIMEON BANKOFF: On the other hand, as an  
21 aesthetic object, can one subtract the content from  
22 the form?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I want the  
24 record to reflect that I'm very excited that come  
25 August that there's going to be the return of Crystal

2 Pepsi which I had when I was a teenager, and that is  
3 Pepsi-Cola without the food coloring. So, I'm  
4 actually looking forward to that. Highly recommend--

5 SIMEON BANKOFF: [interposing] Are they  
6 ever going to bring back what was it, Pepsi-Free  
7 [sic]?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I hope they  
9 never bring that back.

10 SIMEON BANKOFF: Yuck.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Council  
13 Member Barron?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. In  
15 terms of the finances associated with this sign, it's  
16 actually a form of free advertising or broad  
17 advertising. What financial benefit does the City  
18 accrue from Pepsi-Cola by Pepsi having this free  
19 advertising?

20 SIMEON BANKOFF: I would actually-- I'm  
21 not privy. It's a very complicated situation with  
22 regards to the-- with regards to the development in  
23 Queens West behind it, and I know that there was--  
24 there were a lot of negotiations, so I can't really  
25 answer you that on.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So, are there  
3 restrictions as to what can be built adjacent to this  
4 sign so that the view is not blocked or that the sign  
5 remains prominent? What are those restrictions?

6 SIMEON BANKOFF: I would actually ask if  
7 the LPC, because this one is a complicated kind of  
8 development issues.

9 LAUREN GEORGE: Hello, Council Member  
10 Barron.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Hi, thank you.

12 LAUREN GEORGE: So, to answer your  
13 question, the City does not--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
15 If you could just state your name for the record.

16 LAUREN GEORGE: Sorry, Lauren George,  
17 Landmarks Preservation Commission. To answer your  
18 question about the sign and the benefit to the City,  
19 land marking this does not require Pepsi to pay the  
20 city in any way. It's recognizing this as a part of  
21 the historic industrial past of the waterfront, and  
22 so the sign would have been there regardless, I guess  
23 is the answer, so it doesn't change that. So we're  
24 not amplifying the sign physically in any way by land  
25 marking it, but I think the restrictive covenants



2 that are in place, there are covenants and easements  
3 in place with Queens West Development Corporation  
4 when it was sold that would remain-- that keep the  
5 site there in perpetuity where it is. So, you can't  
6 build-- the way that the development have been built  
7 around it was specifically designed to keep the sign  
8 in a prominent location.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So, when a  
10 billboard goes up there's some finance arrangement  
11 that's involved with the person who owns the property  
12 putting it up. So the City now wants to landmark  
13 this, but we won't get any financial benefit.

14 LAUREN GEORGE: Because the-- we're not  
15 allowing it to go up for the first time. It's already  
16 been there, so it's-- you know, it's not like a new  
17 commission or it's not a new placement of the sign.  
18 It's merely acknowledging the importance of this sign  
19 and sort of the history and the industrial past of  
20 the waterfront. That's our purpose for land marking  
21 it.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Kallos?  
24  
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Do we know the  
3 last time Pepsi paid for this advertisement for this  
4 sign?

5 LAUREN GEORGE: I believe that because  
6 this land was owned by the bottling plant when it was  
7 purchased by Queens West that would be the last time  
8 I understand the transaction to have taken place,  
9 when Queens West purchased the property and then  
10 demolished the plant.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And so I'm  
12 eternally grateful to the Historic Districts Council  
13 for their knowledge and expertise. I didn't realize  
14 we could actually change the lettering provided that  
15 the font and--

16 SIMEON BANKOFF: [interposing] Yeah.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So--

18 SIMEON BANKOFF: [interposing] If you  
19 look at the W Hotel in Union Square, which is the  
20 Guardian Life building, it used to say Guardian Life,  
21 and now it says W Hotel, and that was a landmarked  
22 property.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Okay, so even  
24 with this landmark perhaps what we could start doing  
25 is exploring as a Council in order to, as our Land

2 Use Chair acknowledged, not encourage sugary drinks,  
3 start to try to see if we could change it to say--

4 SIMEON BANKOFF: [interposing] Carrots.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: David Greenfield  
6 or Queens West or something similar so that it's not  
7 a free commercial, but keeps the spirit but changes  
8 the messaging to something that is New York City-  
9 branded.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I don't know  
11 about that. I think this is where we're going to  
12 engage in our open and public debate. I think  
13 honestly the reason that we want to preserve this is  
14 that the Pepsi-Cola sign and the bottle is unique.  
15 I'm not convinced that we're simply trying to  
16 preserve advertising space. I think the goal over  
17 here of this particular landmark, even though we  
18 can't landmark the actual lettering, is to encourage  
19 current and future owners to keep this intact,  
20 because there is something wonderful about the  
21 historic nature of this sign that was built in a very  
22 particular design in 1936.

23 SIMEON BANKOFF: I'm actually just--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
25 And as much as I would love to have Greenfield

2 Village emblazoned, I would actually defer, believe  
3 it or not, to the Pepsi-Cola sign because I think  
4 there is something nice and a unique characteristic  
5 of this some 80-year-old sign.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And as a full  
7 testament to the Landmarks Preservation Law, I look  
8 forward to a future where Pepsi is no longer in  
9 business and children ask their parents, "What is  
10 Pepsi-Cola and why do they have a sign?" And that  
11 might be a future with less obesity, but yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Now, I must  
13 say, I concur with Chair Greenfield on his point.  
14 This is strictly to-- we do this for historic  
15 purpose. Thank you. Anymore members from the public  
16 want to testify? So we're going to close on this  
17 item. We will move on-- no, we will move on to LU  
18 item 420, the designation of the Vanderbilt Mausoleum  
19 as an historic landmark. This item is located in  
20 Council Member Mathieu's district, and he has no  
21 objection to the designation. I will now open to the  
22 public hearing on LU 420 with Mr. Bankoff and also  
23 Mr. Frank Piel [sic], Prial to testify. Thank you.  
24 Please identify your name and begin.

2 FRANK PRIAL: Thank you. My name is  
3 Frank Prial. I'm an architect with the firm of Beyer  
4 Blinder Belle in New York, and I'm also a trustee of  
5 the Vanderbilt Cemetery Association, and I thank you  
6 for giving me opportunity to speak. I would like to  
7 read from a letter that was prepared by the  
8 Association. On behalf of the Board of Trustees at  
9 the Vanderbilt Cemetery Association, we write  
10 regarding the proposed designation of the Vanderbilt  
11 Mausoleum in New Dorp, Staten Island as a New York  
12 City landmark. As long as the Vanderbilt family and  
13 Vanderbilt descendants continue to have the right to  
14 burial in the mausoleum and in related cemetery areas  
15 of approximately 16 acres, we are in favor of the  
16 designation. Furthermore, we recommend that the  
17 designation if awarded include the stone entrance  
18 arch to the mausoleum, the driveway and esplanade in  
19 front of the tomb. All are important components of  
20 the overall original design. The Vanderbilt  
21 Mausoleum was commissioned by William Henry  
22 Vanderbilt, 1821 to 1885, principal heir of  
23 "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt, 1794-1877, the  
24 founder of the New York Central and Hudson River  
25 Railroad, builder of the first two Grand Central

2 terminals, an originator of the nation's first laws  
3 of interstate commerce. The mausoleum which was  
4 built between 1881 and 1889 is a true relic of  
5 America's Gilded Age. It represents and  
6 extraordinary collaboration by the period's foremost  
7 architect Richard Morris Hunt and landscape architect  
8 Frederick Law Olmsted. It is the largest private  
9 tomb in the country and contains the remains of six  
10 generations of Vanderbilt's, a family whose name is  
11 uniquely associated with New York's civic, social and  
12 transportation history. With a clear understanding  
13 that the Vanderbilt continue to reserve their long-  
14 held right to burial in the mausoleum and on the  
15 property, we respectfully submit that this structure,  
16 its entrance arch, driveway and esplanade merit  
17 designation as a New York City landmark. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Bankoff?

19 SIMEON BANKOFF: Good afternoon. Simeon  
20 Bankoff, Executive Director to the Historic Districts  
21 Council. We are very much in favor of this  
22 designation. We thought it was-- we think it's  
23 terrific that the Vanderbilt Family Association is  
24 very strongly in favor. We reached out to them among  
25 other people and they were thrilled, and it was

2 terrific to get their support. I would like to just  
3 state for the record, earlier today when the  
4 Landmarks Commission talked about how they made their  
5 choices with regard to the backlog, one of the things  
6 that was a-- it fell within the realm of why they  
7 chose not to move on things, had to do with owner  
8 consent or owner objection. While we have seen a  
9 number of owner objections today, by in large the  
10 vast number of properties they chose not to move on  
11 was because of owner objection, and the vast number  
12 of those properties were in Staten Island as well.  
13 So, we would like to ask that the Council support as  
14 Council Member Greenfield so beautifully spoke about  
15 the Ahles Bell House, support the Landmarks  
16 Commission in when it is a truly worthy and  
17 meritorious designation to move forward as when  
18 things are meritorious. Thank you so much.

19 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Any  
20 questions for the members? No? Seeing none. Are  
21 there any more-- thank you. Are there any more  
22 members of the public who wish to testify? Seeing  
23 none, I will now close the public hearing on this  
24 item. We'll now move on to LU 421, the designation  
25 of the Park Slope Historic District Extension II.

2 This historic district would include a total of 292  
3 buildings, mostly three to four-story row houses in  
4 the Park Slope neighborhood of Brooklyn. This item is  
5 located in Council Member Lander's district, and he  
6 has submitted a letter in support of the designation  
7 with the boundaries that were established by the  
8 Landmarks Preservation Commission. I will now open  
9 the public hearing on LU item 421. We have Mr. Peter  
10 Bray, Mr. Lief, L-i-e-f? Lief, Mr. Lief-- Mrs.,  
11 okay, sorry. Mrs. Lief and John Casson, and of  
12 course Mr. Bankoff. Okay, so please identify  
13 yourself, and then you can start. Each one has three  
14 minutes to speak.

15 JOHN CASSON: Hello. My name is John  
16 Casson. Before I present my remarks, I'd like to  
17 answer the question, "Why is this neighborhood so  
18 unique?" Because I'm in a unique position to answer  
19 this question. My wife and I purchased our brownstone  
20 in Park Slope a half century ago. Ours is a truly  
21 historic home, for its first owner was C. C. Martin,  
22 Chief Engineer of Prospect Park who was responsible  
23 for implementing Olmsted and Vaux's [sic] design for  
24 the park. He later was hired by John and Washington  
25 Roebling and became their most senior engineer



2 involved in all cases of the construction of the  
3 Brooklyn Bridge. And this, in 1983 when the bridge  
4 was opened, he was appointed superintendent and Chief  
5 Engineer of the bridge, and he purchased the home  
6 which my wife and I live in. now, my home was  
7 completed in 1883, and this was when Park Slope  
8 really took off with a very short period of time, but  
9 two things caused it: Prospect Parks development and  
10 then the opening of the bridge which improved  
11 transportation to the area dramatically. So, Park  
12 Slope really grew very quickly in a very short period  
13 of time, and it became a very large area, a very  
14 desirable area to live and became one of the fanciest  
15 areas to live in in New York city as evidence by the  
16 mansions that were once lining Prospect Park and  
17 Eighth Avenue, and then most of which are no longer  
18 there. So, that is one of the things that really did  
19 make Prospect-- Park Slope so unique and caused so  
20 many houses to be built in such a relatively short  
21 period of time. Okay. My name is John Casson--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]

23 To be clear, by the way, because I asked the  
24 question. The question wasn't why it was so unique.  
25 I know what it's unique. The question is why is it

2 more unique than everywhere else in New York City,  
3 but I appreciate the answer.

4 JOHN CASSON: Well, it's unique and then  
5 since it developed in a short period of time--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]  
7 I understand.

8 JOHN CASSON: relative to other areas in  
9 New York City, and so-- and as a result they use  
10 more-- the building designs were very more similar.  
11 There was less contract [sic].

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I hear you.

13 JOHN CASSON: Okay. My name is John  
14 Casson and I'm here to testify that I'm emphatically  
15 in favor of the Second Extension of the Park Slope  
16 Historic District. When we came to Park Slope it was  
17 50 years ago. It was a neighborhood in decline that  
18 many of its residents were fleeing crime including  
19 muggings, burglaries and were rampant. Crack houses  
20 were commonplace and buildings were being abandoned.  
21 None the less in the late 1960's and 1970's, young  
22 couples that rejected the idea of living and raising  
23 a family in the suburbs recognized Park Slope's great  
24 potential. Despite its problems, there's still many  
25 attractive blocks lined with trees and handsome

2 historic homes. Park Slope offered many other  
3 advantages. The houses were large, but their prices  
4 in real estate taxes were low. It was a short  
5 inexpensive subway ride to Manhattan where many of us  
6 worked and within walking distance of many shops,  
7 Prospect Park, the Central Library, Brooklyn Museum,  
8 Botanic Garden, and BAM [sic]. Several subway lines  
9 connect this to Manhattan's numerous fractions.  
10 Perhaps the most enticing incentive at the time were  
11 the people who were moving here. They were friendly,  
12 welcoming and helpful people who were reviving the  
13 neighborhood. Those of us who moved there when we  
14 did contributed to Park Slope's transformation from  
15 an Arian decline into the dynamic and economically  
16 and social viable neighborhood it is today. Those of  
17 us who are still here want to see this attractive  
18 appearance of our beloved neighborhood protected by  
19 an expanded historic district. Based on my  
20 experience as a former Trustee of the Park Slope  
21 Civic Council and a member of its Historic District  
22 Committee, I help gather several hundred signatures  
23 from residents who support the expansion of the  
24 historic districts. I found that residents moved  
25 here-- who moved there after the initial land marking

2 in 1973 also recognized that why maintain the  
3 appearance of Park Slope is so essential. The  
4 historic appearance of a neighborhood is why so many  
5 people want to dine and shop and be entertained here.  
6 It is why so many domestic and foreign tourists spend  
7 time here. It is why so many movies, television shows  
8 and commercial s are filmed here. It is why so many  
9 people continue to move here. A failure to expand  
10 the boundaries to Park Slope Historic District will  
11 have an adverse effect on the historic neighborhood's  
12 appearance and heritage, and as a result, the City's  
13 economy. When the-- since the Park Slope Historic  
14 District was created in 1973 I've seen how our homes  
15 and other buildings in our block have benefit from  
16 being landmarked. We have also seen how a great many  
17 blocks have been irreversibly disfigured because they  
18 are outside the boundaries of the Park Slope Historic  
19 District. Recently, developers of historic  
20 structures and Lief [sic] block [sic] have this-- I'm  
21 sorry-- demolished--

22 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [interposing] Please  
23 wrap up your comments.

24 JOHN CASSON: Okay. Just this demolished  
25 historic structures on these blocks and erecting

2 buildings that are in congress and made the  
3 appearance of this historic neighborhood.

4 Inappropriate renovations have transformed [sic] many  
5 handsome homes on these blocks into eyesores. As a  
6 result of these changes, blocks that the Landmarks  
7 Preservation Commission would once have included  
8 without reservation in an enlarged historic district  
9 are now being rejected for land marking by the LPC  
10 because they are now-- now too many buildings on  
11 these blocks that are incompatible with Park Slope's  
12 original historic structures. Expanding the Park  
13 Slope Historic District will ensure that attractive  
14 blocks that are in the neighborhood are protected.  
15 Please prevent the blocks that you are considering  
16 land marking today from being disfigured by  
17 irresponsible developers and renovators, and approve  
18 Park Slope Historic District Extension II. Thank  
19 you.

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Now Mrs.  
21 Lief?

22 JUDITH LIEF: My name is Judith Lief.  
23 I'm a 32-year resident of Park Slope. I am Co-  
24 president of the Park Slope Civic Council, and I'm  
25 also a member of REBNY. I wanted to first thank

2 Council Members Lander and Levin for their ongoing  
3 support of the expansion of our historic district.

4 I'm reading a letter written by David Alquist who's a  
5 member of the Park Slope Civic Council Historic

6 District Committee. "We of the Park Slope Civic

7 Council Historic District Committee respectfully urge

8 the Council to approve this second extension of Park

9 Slope's Historic District as originally designated by

10 the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Park Slope's

11 residents have for decades wanted our woefully small

12 historic district to be extended. The Civic Council

13 organized and advocated tirelessly for years on

14 behalf of this extension, marshalling the process

15 through door-to-door outreach through research and

16 historic building records, through public meetings

17 and hearings. We followed the letter and the spirit

18 of the mandated process in bringing this historic

19 district extension into reality. We urge the

20 Landmarks Subcommittee to respect the work of the

21 Landmarks Preservation Commission and to adopt this

22 extension as designated by them. You should not

23 second guess the work of those dedicated public

24 servants charged with preserving the heritage of New

25 York's unparalleled built environment for future

2 generations. One example in our second extension is  
3 184 Sterling Place, not far from Flatbush Avenue.

4 This Neo-Classical building was constructed in 1912

5 by owner Peter Winchester Raus [sp?] to designs by

6 architect Gostav Erda [sp?]. Raus, a prosperous dry

7 goods merchant with a business in Manhattan had

8 previously built an enormous mansion now demolished

9 on Prospect Park West at Garfield Place. The huge

10 arch central bay of his Sterling Place building

11 together with its extra deep footprint expresses its

12 original use as a carriage house or automobile

13 stable. One imagines Raus in his Prospect Park West

14 mansion telephoning his chauffer in Sterling Place to

15 bring around the horses' carriage to his mansion.

16 This beautiful building speaks volumes about the

17 history of Park Slope in New York City. We have a

18 responsibility, one the Landmark Subcommittee should

19 share, to respect and to preserve our architectural

20 heritage for the future. We urge this Subcommittee

21 to support the designation of Park Slope Historic

22 District Extension II as originally designated by the

23 Landmarks Preservation Commission." I would also add

24 that I'm sorry that Council Member Greenfield left

25 the hearing, I think, because he had so many concerns

2 about the size of the expansion of Park Slope's  
3 historic district. He might have benefitted from  
4 further testimony. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. We are also  
6 joined by Council Member Steve Levin. So, sir,  
7 please identify yourself and start.

8 PETER BRAY: Yeah. So, I'm Peter Bray.  
9 I'm the Chair of the Park Slope Historic District  
10 Committee. I'm also a Trustee of the Park Slope  
11 Civic Council. We are here today because four  
12 elements of the land marking process work together to  
13 arrive at this last step. One, the Civic Council  
14 actively undertook a lengthy open and transparent  
15 dialogue with the community. Every property owner in  
16 the district has been aware of this process. Two,  
17 owners have overwhelmingly endorsed the historic  
18 district through their support letters and petitions.  
19 Speaker after speaker spoke in favor of this  
20 extension at the LPC's public hearing. Three,  
21 Council Members Lander and Levin have been unwavering  
22 in their support. I want to thank them for  
23 shepherding this district through the process.  
24 Finally, the LPC exercised great discernment-- I wish  
25 Council Member Greenfield was here to hear this



2 point-- in finding that just 292 buildings of the 700  
3 buildings in this study area were worthy of  
4 protection. They had not designated every single  
5 building or every single building that owners wanted  
6 to be in the historic district. They rejected three-  
7 quarters of the buildings in the study area, and the  
8 City Planning Commission has endorsed their  
9 decisions. Now, I understand that the Fortis Property  
10 Group is asking this Subcommittee to remove 184  
11 Sterling Place from the district. They bought this  
12 building well into the process, so they understood  
13 its status and could not now claim any economic  
14 hardship because it's in the district. Instead of  
15 participating in the public process like every other  
16 public-- like every other property owner had an  
17 opportunity to do so. They seek an inappropriate  
18 favor from the subcommittee. I'm asking the  
19 subcommittee not to grant this favor. This  
20 subcommittee initiated Intro 775A because it sought  
21 to hold the LPC accountable to the land marking  
22 process. For this reason, it should not permit a  
23 developer to game the process at the last minute.  
24 Moreover, granting their favor would be tantamount to  
25 lifting the deed restriction like was done on

2 Rivington House. It would confer an inappropriate  
3 economic benefit on this developer without regard to  
4 the public interest, that the LPC and the City  
5 Planning Commission have upheld and is their duty to  
6 ensure the public interest. I ask that you be  
7 accountable to the public interest and the public  
8 process by keeping this district intact. And I just  
9 wanted to mention that the reason why the Park Slope  
10 Historic District is so large is because it's an  
11 enormous neighborhood. It's on the order of 150  
12 blocks. I would invite any Council Member here. I'd  
13 invite Council Member Greenfield to walk every single  
14 block with me. You cannot judge this neighborhood  
15 unless you've actually walked those blocks, and you'd  
16 see the tremendous consistency and integrity of Park  
17 Slope. So, it's not a numbers game. It's not why  
18 should it be 2,500 buildings. The real question is  
19 why shouldn't it be 4,000 buildings or 5,000  
20 buildings? And the answer is, is that the LPC has  
21 suffered in terms of having the smallest budget of  
22 any city agency in the City. If it had the requisite  
23 resources in order to address Park Slope or any other  
24 neighborhood t once, today I would be four or five  
25 thousand buildings.

2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you.

3 PETER BRAY: Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Mr. Bankoff?

5 SIMEON BANKOFF: Good afternoon, Council  
6 Members. Simeon Bankoff, Executive Director of the  
7 Historic Districts Council. We stand in firm support  
8 of the LPC's action to designate Park Slope Extension  
9 II which is just the latest in over 50-year attempt  
10 to preserve the historic character of this  
11 neighborhood. The preservation of Park Slope began in  
12 the 1960's when Everett and Evelyn Ortner [sp?] and  
13 Clen Leblin [sp?] and others came to-- began to buy  
14 houses in the Slope, recognized its Victorian  
15 architect and sought to become a historic district.  
16 Originally, they were before the Landmarks Commission  
17 in 1968. However, at the time, the Landmarks  
18 Commission had a moratorium for three years, which  
19 they were not allowed to act in between. They could  
20 only act for six months every three years. So, in  
21 1972 they had a wait for three years, and during that  
22 three years they did more research, and they came  
23 back and came back with a larger historic district.  
24 And in fact I have-- I've read letters from the  
25 Landmarks Commission saying, "Well if we don't do

2 this now, they're just going to keep coming back with  
3 bigger and bigger and bigger because the area is that  
4 good. So, 1973 we got a Park Slope historic  
5 district. Then for the ensuing however many years  
6 that is-- I can do map-- 38 years, actually until  
7 2000, in starting the 2000's, the Park Slope Civic  
8 Council started agitating to finish the job and  
9 actually protect it. This was actually-- the  
10 Landmarks Commission was sued in a court of law for  
11 not having looked at the rest of the Park Slope  
12 Historic District. That suit was settled in 2005,  
13 and then Peter and this team, the latest leadership  
14 of the PSCC continued to outreach constantly.  
15 They've done a fantastic job really keeping it on the  
16 front burner of the community talking with their  
17 elected officials, Council Member Lander, Council  
18 Member Levin, before them Council Member de Blasio  
19 and Council Member Yaski [sp?], before them Council  
20 Member Fisher and Council Member Dibrienza [sp?]. We  
21 have been working with the community for such a long  
22 time that this is, however, not the end, but pretty--  
23 getting closer and closer. That's it. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Any questions from our  
25 members? No? Mr. Levin?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you. I just  
3 want to thank everybody that's here and the Park  
4 Slope Civic Council. I don't represent Park Slope  
5 anymore, but when I did in the previous term I was  
6 very proud to work with the Park Slope Civic Council  
7 and the expansion in the north Slope and, you know,  
8 the-- Park Slope is a wonderfully preserved  
9 neighborhood, and that's in large part due to owners  
10 that take care of their buildings and care about  
11 historic preservation and care about the structural  
12 integrity, the landmark integrity of this  
13 neighborhood, and that's why I fully support the,  
14 year the full expansion and commend Park Slope Civic  
15 Council on all the work that you all have done in  
16 cataloguing every single building, and to all the  
17 owners in the neighborhood, in the Historic Districts  
18 Council, and all the owners in the neighborhood for  
19 preserving their buildings and such responsible  
20 fashion. Thanks.

21 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. So, thank  
22 you all for taking time to come in to testify. Are  
23 there any more members of the public who wish to  
24 testify? Seeing none, I will close the public  
25 hearing on this item. That was the last item we have

2 on our calendar year for today. So, we'll now move  
3 on to a vote. We are voting to recommend approval  
4 for all items in the calendar except-- we are moving  
5 to recommend approval on all items on the calendar  
6 except LU 418, which we are holding-- which we are  
7 laying over. We are voting now to approve all the  
8 items. We are now voting to approve the pre-  
9 considered hospital lase, LU 413, 414, 415, 416, 417,  
10 419, 420, and 421. And LU 421, the designation of  
11 Park Slope Historic District, historic extension II.  
12 I will couple all these items on the vote for  
13 approval. Counsel, please call the roll.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Koo?

15 CHAIRPERSON KOO: I vote aye.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Palma?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: I vote aye.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member

19 Mendez?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Aye on all.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Levin?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Aye on all.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member

24 Barron?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Permission to  
3 explain my vote?

4 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Go ahead.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. On  
6 419, the Pepsi-Cola sign, is it my understanding  
7 that-- is it correct that the sign can in fact at  
8 some point in the future carry a different message?

9 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yes.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. Then I'm  
11 abstaining on 419, and I vote aye on the others.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member  
13 Kallos?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Aye on all.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: By a vote of 6 votes  
16 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative and 0  
17 abstentions, all items are approved and referred to  
18 the Full Land Use Committee with the exception of LU  
19 419 which is approved with votes of 5 votes in the  
20 affirmative, 0 in the negative and 1 abstention.

21 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Okay. So meeting  
22 adjourned. Thank you.

23 [gavel]

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND MARITIME USES 112

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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 July 15, 2016