



L.U. NO. 385 – CANARSIE CEMETERY
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING & MARITIME USES

TESTIMONY BY RICHARD FRIEDMAN
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DEPARTMENT OF CITYWIDE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
JUNE 2, 2011

Good morning Chair Lander and members of the Landmarks, Public Siting & Maritime Uses Subcommittee. I am Richard Friedman, Assistant Commissioner of Financial Services in Asset Management for the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS). On behalf of Commissioner Edna Wells Handy, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to discuss the transfer and conveyance of Canarsie Cemetery (Cemetery) to Cypress Hills Cemetery of Brooklyn, a licensed New York State cemetery operator.

Canarsie Cemetery is currently owned and operated by the City of New York, under the jurisdiction of DCAS. Prior to City ownership, Canarsie Cemetery was owned by the Borough of Brooklyn, the City of Brooklyn, and the Town of Flatlands. As of January 1, 1969, ownership of the Cemetery was transferred to the Department of General Services, which is now DCAS. DCAS has operated Canarsie Cemetery continuously since 1969. The Cemetery is comprised of 13 acres, 4.5 acres of which are undeveloped and without grave sites. The conveyance will enable the development of the undeveloped site, providing much needed burial grounds for the community.

Chapter 485 of the Laws of New York of 1998 authorizes the conveyance of Canarsie Cemetery. The legislation requires the consent of the New York City Council and the Mayor prior to the conveyance. The legislation further provides that “the Cemetery must continue to be maintained as a non-sectarian burial ground for persons of all races, faiths, and ethnic origins, and this restriction shall run with the land.” Moreover, the deed will contain a 20-foot height restriction on new structures, enabling the Cemetery to maintain the historic character of the Cemetery and the low-rise residential nature of the neighborhood.

In May 2009, DCAS released a Request for Proposals for the acquisition and operation of the Cemetery by a New York State not-for-profit cemetery operator under the jurisdiction of the New York State Department of State, Division of Cemeteries. The objectives of the City in relation to the sale of the Cemetery are 1) to ensure that the Cemetery is properly maintained in perpetuity as a non-sectarian cemetery; 2) to provide an essential community resource through the long-term operation of the burial ground; 3) to enable private operation of the Cemetery; and 4) to reduce City costs through the divestiture of this non-core function.

From the initial planning stages of the RFP process, DCAS has worked with Council Member Lewis Fidler and other elected officials representing the Canarsie community, representatives of Brooklyn Community Board 18, and members of a Community Advisory Committee as required by the authorizing State legislation. A DCAS RFP evaluation committee selected Cypress Hills Cemetery as the designated purchaser. Since selection, Cypress Hills Cemetery has partnered with DCAS on outreach to elected officials and community stakeholders regarding the acquisition of the Cemetery. DCAS also collaborated with Cypress Hills to obtain the required approval from the New York State Cemetery Board for the acquisition of the Cemetery, which was received on August 19, 2010. Thereafter, Cypress Hills Cemetery obtained the approval of the New York State Supreme Court on March 3, 2011 for the acquisition of the Cemetery.

We strongly urge the Council to support this transaction and thank you again for this opportunity to testify about the transfer and conveyance of Canarsie Cemetery. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.

**TESTIMONY OF THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION BEFORE
THE CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING
AND MARITIME USES ON THE DESIGNATION OF THE GREYSTON
(WILLIAM E. and SARAH T. HOADLEY DODGE, JR., ESTATE) GATEHOUSE
IN MANHATTAN.**

June 2, 2011

Good morning Council Members. My name is Jenny Fernández, Director of Intergovernmental and Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation Commission. I am here today to testify on the Commission's designation of the Greyston (William E. and Sarah T. Hoadley Dodge, Jr. Estate) Gatehouse in the Bronx.

On December 15, 2009, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Greyston (William E. and Sarah T. Hoadley Dodge, Jr., Estate) Gatehouse. The president of the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation, the property's owner, opposed designation. Two people spoke in favor of designation, including a representative of the Historic Districts Council. Bronx Community Board 8 passed a resolution on February 9, 2010, to oppose designation. On March 22, 2011, the Commission voted to designate the building a New York City individual landmark.

The Greyston Gatehouse is a significant surviving component of the William E. and Sarah T. Hoadley Dodge, Jr., Estate, known as Greyston, located in the Riverdale section of the Bronx. The Greyston Gatehouse, built c. 1863-68, is a premier example in New York of the picturesque rural cottage style popularized by architectural theoreticians such as Andrew Jackson Downing and Calvert Vaux, though the design is undoubtedly by Renwick & Sands. The one-and-a-half-story frame building is irregularly massed and clad in clapboards on the first story and is a rare example of a 19th-century estate gatehouse in New York City.

The Commission urges you to affirm this designation.

TESTIMONY OF THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND MARITIME USES ON THE DESIGNATION OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYHOUSE (later HENRY STREET PLAYHOUSE, now HARRY DE JUR PLAYHOUSE) IN MANHATTAN.

June 2, 2011

Good morning Council Members. My name is Jenny Fernández, Director of Intergovernmental and Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation Commission. I am here today to testify on the Commission's designation of the Neighborhood Playhouse (later Henry Street Playhouse, now Harry De Jur Playhouse) in Manhattan.

On October 26, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of The Neighborhood Playhouse (later Henry Street Playhouse, now Harry De Jur Playhouse). There were four speakers in favor of designation, including the owner's architect and representatives of the owner, the Victorian Society of New York and the Historic Districts Council. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. On March 22, 2011, the Commission voted to designate the building a New York City individual landmark.

The Neighborhood Playhouse was constructed in 1913-15 by sisters Alice and Irene Lewisohn as part of the Henry Street Settlement. A theatrical group by the same name founded by the sisters was located here from 1915 to 1927. One of the city's early "little theaters," it was an experimental theater that presented innovative drama, song and dance. The theater presented new works by George Bernard Shaw, James Joyce, Eugene O'Neill and other contemporary playwrights. The Neighborhood Playhouse, along with the Providence Playhouse and the Washington Square Players, were pioneers in staging experimental and innovative works. The New Federal Theatre, which specializes in presenting plays by minorities and women, has performed here since 1971.

The red-brick neo-Georgian style facade was designed by the architectural firm of Ingalls & Hoffinan and was a departure from the more formal Classical Revival or Beaux-Arts style design of Broadway theaters. The playhouse is remarkably intact and is one of the leading cultural institutions on the Lower East Side.

The Commission urges you to affirm this designation.

TESTIMONY OF THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND MARITIME USES ON THE DESIGNATION OF THE ENGINEERS' CLUB BUILDING IN MANHATTAN.

June 2, 2011

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

On November 16, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Engineers' Club Building. One speaker, a representative of the Historic Districts Council, spoke in favor of the designation. There were no speakers in opposition to the designation. Although the owner did not attend the public hearing, at a meeting with Commission staff they did not express opposition to designation. On March 22, 2011, the Commission voted to designate the building a New York City individual landmark.

The Engineers' Club was founded in 1888 at a time when professional engineering was becoming increasingly important to the industrial and economic development of the United States. While the city was well supplied with professional and trade associations related to engineering, the Engineers' Club was the first purely social organization founded in the United States for engineers or those connected to the field. Prominent members have included Andrew Carnegie, Herbert C. Hoover, Thomas Edison, Charles Lindbergh, Cornelius Vanderbilt, H.H. Westinghouse, and Nikola Tesla.

The design of the Engineers' Club building was determined by an architectural competition. The 12-story Renaissance Revival style building, completed in 1907, features a tripartite configuration consisting of a three-story base clad in white marble with prominent Corinthian pilasters. An early example of the high-rise clubhouse building type, the Engineers' Club building also featured 66 sleeping rooms in addition to its public and social spaces.

The Engineers' Club occupied the West 40th Street building until 1979, when it was converted into residential apartments. The building stands as an architectural reminder of the emergence of New York State as the engineering center of the country and of the United States as an industrial and economic power. As the last remaining club building on the block, it is also a visual reminder of the prominence of the social club and of the bachelor apartment at the turn of the 20th century.

The Commission urges you to affirm this designation.

**TESTIMONY OF THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION BEFORE
THE CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING
AND MARITIME USES ON THE DESIGNATION OF THE JAPAN SOCIETY
HEADQUARTERS IN MANHATTAN.**

June 2, 2011

Good morning Council Members. My name is Jenny Fernández, Director of Intergovernmental and Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation Commission. I am here today to testify on the Commission's designation of the Japan Society Headquarters in Manhattan.

On June 22, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Japan Society headquarters. A letter from the Vice-President of Japan Society in support of designation was read into the record. Two people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of Docomomo US New York/Tri-State, and the Historic Districts Council. On March 22, 2011, the Commission voted to designate the building a New York City individual landmark.

The headquarters of Japan Society is located in the Turtle Bay section of Manhattan. Founded in 1907, Japan Society functions as a cultural and educational institution, as well as a forum for dialogue between Japanese and American business leaders. Junzo Yoshimura, a leading Japanese architect during the second half of the 20th century, was responsible for the building's handsome horizontal design, in partnership with George G. Shimamoto, of the firm Kelly & Gruzen. In addition to being Yoshimura's only work in New York City, this building is likely to have been the city's earliest permanent structure designed by a Japanese citizen. A life-long resident of Tokyo, Yoshimura was closely associated with the Rockefeller family, who donated the site and likely played an important role in Yoshimura's selection as architect. Completed in 1971, Yoshimura re-interpreted familiar Japanese elements in such industrial materials as bronze and painted concrete. His elegant yet restrained charcoal-colored design was praised and received a "Certificate of Merit" from the New York Society of Architects in 1972. Japan Society is a conspicuously serene work of late modernism. In a city where buildings often compete for attention, Yoshimura's muted design is remarkably timeless, reflecting Japan's unique architectural heritage and the Society's mission to serve as a venue for international exchange.

The Commission urges you to affirm this designation.