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THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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OVERSIGHTS & INVESTIGATIONS

October 2, 2009

Honorable Jessica Lappin
Chair
Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting & Maritime Uses
330 East 63rd Street, Suite 1K
New York, NY 10065

Dear Council Member Lappin:

I write to express my full support for the designation of 411-417 Westervelt Avenue, Horton's Row as a historic landmark.

Horton's Row, constructed between 1880 and 1882 by Harry L. Horton, is located at the periphery of Fort Hill in northeastern Staten Island at the outskirts of the villages of New Brighton and Tompkinsville. Horton was a prominent resident of Staten Island and had established a successful banking and brokerage firm in Manhattan. Horton's Row consisted of twelve identical attached masonry row houses that were built as affordable rental houses for middleclass families. No's 411 - 417 Westervelt Avenue are the only four intact houses that survive. Horton's Row represents a rare housing type on Staten Island. Most of the dwellings built in 19th century Staten Island were free-standing single-family frame houses. Other extant examples of attached single-family dwellings dating from this time in the North-Shore villages were constructed for working-class families, making this a rare example of attached masonry row houses in Staten Island.

I thank you and the entire Land Use staff for all your efforts to make this designation a reality. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you should have any questions.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kenneth C. Mitchell".

Kenneth C. Mitchell

KCM/tr

**TESTIMONY OF THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION BEFORE
THE CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING
AND MARITIME USES ON THE DESIGNATION OF RIDGEWOOD NORTH
HISTORIC DISTRICT, QUEENS**

November 23, 2009

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 Ridgewood North Historic District in Queens.

On December 16, 2008, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Ridgewood North Historic District. Six people spoke in favor of the proposed designation, including City Councilmember-elect Elizabeth Crowley, and representatives of the Historic Districts Council, New York Landmarks Conservancy, Society for the Architecture of the City, Ridgewood Property Owners and Civic Association, and Greater Ridgewood Restoration Corporation. There were no speakers in opposition to the proposed designation. In addition, the Commission received three letters in support of this designation from City Councilmember Diana Reyna, the Municipal Arts Society, and the Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America. On September 15, 2009, the Commission voted to designate Ridgewood North a New York City historic district.

The Ridgewood North Historic District is significant as an intact grouping of structures that reflect the development of model tenements in Ridgewood in the early 20th century. A contiguous district in both typology and style, it is composed of 96 buildings, primarily three-story brick tenements, that encompass almost eight square acres in southwest Queens. The tenements were constructed between 1908 and 1914, mainly by the G.X. Mathews Company. Known as "Mathews Model Flats," these "new law" tenements had larger rooms and more adequate sanitary facilities than their 19th-century predecessors. Built in long rows of repeated designs that create a sense of place, the facades retain a high degree of integrity and are distinguished by their buff- and amber-colored brick facades, carved-stone details, ornate pressed metal cornices, and stoop and areaway ironwork.

In addition to being innovative in plan, the tenements are striking in appearance. Built after 1905 when fire codes in Ridgewood began requiring masonry construction for attached rows, the buildings have load-bearing masonry walls constructed of light-colored Kreisler brick. Using mainly buff- and amber-colored brick, the buildings have fine detailing in the Romanesque- and Renaissance-Revival styles, including corbelled, projecting, contrasting and geometric patterned brickwork, brick pilasters, and contrasting brick or stone string coursing. With mainly flat facades, the mid-block buildings are recessed from the street wall of the corner buildings, adding further interest to the row, while 66-22 to 66-42 Forest Avenue feature angled projecting bays. Some buildings, like those on Grandview Avenue and Palmetto Street have Romanesque Revival-style round and segmental arches of contrasting brick, while others feature carved-stone door and window lintels. Other handsome details include Classically-inspired carved-

stone entablatures and friezes, pressed metal cornices and original ironwork at the stoop and areaway. The buildings facing Fairview and Grandview Avenues have commercial storefronts at the first floor and apartments on the second and third floors, while those on the side streets are completely residential. A cohesive collection of speculative urban architecture, the tenements in the Ridgewood North Historic District retain extremely high levels of architectural integrity and represent an important part of the development of housing in New York City.

The Commission urges you to affirm the designation.