

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC
SITINGS AND DISPOSITIONS

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AUGUST 1, 2023
Start: 10:10 A.M.
Recess: 10:35 A.M.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - COMMITTEE ROOM,
14TH FLOOR

B E F O R E: Farah N. Louis,
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Carmen N. De La Rosa
Oswald Feliz
Christopher Marte
Sandy Nurse
Sandra Ung
Inna Vernikov

A P P E A R A N C E S

Kate Lemos McHale
Director of Research for LPC

Steven Thomson
Director of Community and Intergovernmental
Affairs

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: This is the sound check for
3 the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and
4 Dispositions. Today's date is August 1, 2023 being
5 recorded by Danny Wong in the 14th Floor here in the
6 room.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning and welcome to
8 the New York City Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public
9 Sitings and Dispositions. At this time, please place
10 all phones on vibrate or silent mode. If you want to
11 submit testimony, send it to
12 landmarkstestimony@council.nyc.gov. Once again that's
13 landmarkstestimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you for
14 your cooperation. Chair, we are ready to begin.

15 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: [GAVEL] Good morning. I am
16 Council Member Farah Louis, Chair of the Subcommittee
17 on Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions. This
18 meeting is being held in hybrid format. I am joined
19 today by my colleagues Council Members De La Rosa,
20 Ung, Marte and Nurse.

21 Before we begin today's agenda, I will remind
22 members of the public who wish to testify remotely
23 that we ask that you register online and that you may
24 do so now by visiting www.council.nyc.gov/landuse to
25 sign up. If you have already registered but have not

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1
2 yet signed into Zoom, please do so now and remain
3 signed in until you have testified. For anyone
4 wishing to submit written testimony on the items
5 being heard today, we ask that you please send it via
6 email at landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Please
7 indicate the LU Number and the project name in the
8 subject line of your email.

9 Hearing LPC designations Linden Street Historic
10 District and Former Colored School Number 4
11 individual landmark. Today, we will hold public
12 hearings on the Linden Street historic district in
13 Brooklyn Community District 4 in Council Member
14 Gutiérrez's District along with the Former Colored
15 School Number 4 individual landmark in Manhattan
16 Community District 4 in Council Member Bottcher's
17 district.

18 Both were designated by the Landmarks
19 Preservation Commission in May of this year. I now
20 open the public hearing on these two preconsidered
21 items. The historic district under ULURP Number N
22 230353 HKK and the individual landmark under ULURP
23 Number N 230362 HIM.

24 We are joined today by representatives of LPC
25 including Director of Research Kate Lemos McHale and

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2

Director of Community and Intergovernmental Affairs

3

Steven Thomson. Council Member Gutiérrez could not

4

join us today for today's hearing but we have a

5

written testimony from her office celebrating and

6

urging support for this designation and the statement

7

will be submitted into our record.

8

Council Member Bottcher, if he comes, will also

9

provide remarks. I will remind anyone wishing to

10

testify remotely, if you have not done so already,

11

you must register online and you may do that now by

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visiting the Council's website at

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council.nyc.gov/landuse.

14

Counsel, will you please administer the

15

affirmation?

16

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Analysts, will you please

17

raise your right hands and state your name for the

18

record?

19

KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Kate Lemos McHale.

20

STEVEN THOMSON: Steven Thomson.

21

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell the

22

truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in

23

your testimony before this Subcommittee and in answer

24

to all Council Member questions?

25

KATE LEMOS MCHALE: I do.

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2

STEVEN THOMSON: I do.

3

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

4

5

KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Good, okay, can you all hear me? Great. If I could have our slides please? And

6

good morning Chair Louis and Committee Members.

7

Thank you for the opportunity to present these recent

8

designations.

9

We could go to the next one please. Thank you.

10

The Linden Street Historic District was designated on

11

May 9th. This small district is a remarkably intact

12

group of 32 row houses built between 1885 and 1901.

13

They were designed by Brooklyn architects and are a

14

highly successful integration of late 19 Century

15

picturesque styles.

16

Representing the areas early residential

17

development, this architecturally and historically

18

significant district stands out as a unified street

19

scape with a strong sense of place. Next slide

20

please.

21

The Linden Street Historic District consists of

22

the row houses on the block of Linden Street between

23

Bushwick Avenue and Broadway. At LPC's public

24

hearing on February 28th, eight people testified in

25

support of designation including representatives of

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1
2 the Historic Districts Council, the Bushwick Historic
3 Preservation Association, South Bronx Cares and five
4 individuals. One individual representing Open New
5 York opposed the designation.

6 The Commission also received six letters from
7 members of the Bushwick Historic Preservation
8 Association in support of designation. And we did
9 work with Council Member Gutiérrez's office and the
10 Community Board, both who were very supportive of
11 designation. Next please.

12 Bushwick, oh sorry. The historic district is in
13 the Southern area of Bushwick and is the
14 neighborhoods first historic district. There are
15 currently 12 individual landmarks in the neighborhood
16 and shown here are several of those including free
17 standing houses and civic and religious buildings.
18 LPC staff studied the area carefully in the context
19 of Bushwick Avenue and the neighborhood late 19th and
20 early 20th Century development and found that its
21 distinctive rowhouses, the continuous nature of the
22 streetscape and its intact historic character really
23 distinguished this area within the neighborhood.

24

25

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1
2 We had a meeting with property owners and many
3 follow up conversations with them as well through the
4 process. Next please.

5 Bushwick is one of the original six towns in
6 Brooklyn. It was chartered by the Dutch in 1661. It
7 became part of the City of Brooklyn in 1854 and these
8 two maps show its rapid transformation between 1880
9 when there really was not much built and 1898 after
10 the arrival of the Broadway Elevated Train Service
11 really spurred development. So, within about a
12 decade, most of the blocks were filled with wood
13 frame and mason rehouses and by 1901, all of the row
14 houses in the district had been built.

15 Over the years many of the houses shown on these
16 maps have been altered or demolished and replaced but
17 those on Linden Street remain highly intact. Next
18 please.

19 The district was developed by Samuel Meeker who
20 was a Lawyer and one of the founders of the
21 Williamsburgh Savings Bank and he built a house for
22 himself on the corner of Bushwick Avenue and Linden
23 Street in 1852, and you can see that in this
24 photograph, and developed the rest of the lots on the
25 block. Next please.

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1
2 These Queen Anne Style brick terra cotta and
3 brownstone row houses are an impressive section along
4 the westside of Linden Street facing Bushwick Avenue.
5 They were designed by Brooklyn Architect Frank Keith
6 Irving whose work is represented in the Crown Heights
7 North and Prospect Heights Historic Districts. The
8 sophisticated row is notable for its continuous bands
9 of decorative terra cotta, ornamental freezes and
10 profits and high Victorian end house with a mansard
11 roof that you can see here in the photo. Next
12 please.

13 Moving down the block towards Broadway, in the
14 middle is a row of Brownstone and brick row houses
15 designed in the Neo-Grec style by Edward F. Gaylor
16 and built in 1885. These have characteristic Neo-
17 Grec style in size lintels, bracketed seals, door
18 hoods and cornices and many of the high stone stoops
19 retain their historic cast iron railings and door
20 posts. And closest to Broadway are Brownstone row
21 houses designed in the renaissance revival style by
22 Benjamin Finksieper and built in 1901. Next please.

23 And across Linden Street is an intact row of
24 Romanesque and Renaissance Revival Style Row Houses

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1 with alternating projecting bays built between 1894
2 and 1896.

3
4 Architect and Builder Charles E. Palmer combined
5 two popular late 19 Century Styles in his design for
6 this row, which featured distinctive Romanesque rough
7 faced stone facades and Renaissance Revival Style
8 Cornices and generously sized front yards. Next
9 please.

10 The first residents along the section of Linden
11 Street were predominantly White, middle- and working-
12 class families. After World War II, Bushwick's
13 population decreased as residents left the city and
14 during the turbulent years in the 1970's and 80's,
15 sections of Bushwick experienced unrest and decline.
16 That resulted in many lost buildings.

17 In the 1990's and 2000's, government and
18 community groups partnered to create new housing and
19 improve services in the area and the neighborhood has
20 sense attracted an influx of new residents from
21 Central and South America, the Caribbean, Asia and
22 the Middle East. And today, the Bushwick
23 neighborhood has continued to experience ongoing
24 revitalization and Linden Street reflects the
25 diversity and vitality of its surrounding

1 neighborhood and preserving these houses also
2 preserves that history of the people who have lived
3 here through the history of the block. Next please.

4 So, finally, this section of Linden Street has
5 remained remarkably intact over the years and stands
6 out as an architecturally and historically
7 significant residential block in Bushwick. The
8 designation helps further LPC's equity goals and we
9 had good community support. I urge the Council to
10 uphold the designation and I'm happy to answer any
11 questions.
12

13 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you so much. I'd like
14 to now recognize any of my colleagues if they have
15 any questions or remarks and we've also been joined
16 by Council Member Vernikov. Any Council Members with
17 questions? Alright. You could move forward to your
18 second presentation and when you're ready let us
19 know.

20 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Okay, sure yeah, I'm ready
21 for the next slide please. Yeah, it just keeps going
22 after this. Great then the next slide please. Thank
23 you.

24 The Former Colored School Number 4 was built in
25 1849 to 1850. It's Manhattans only known surviving

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Colored School as schools serving African American students were called at the time. It's an important reminder of racially segregated education in New York City, spanning the period between the civil war and the post reconstruction period. In addition to illustrating what a small New York City public school looked like before the Civil War, it shows us how education afforded crucial opportunities and skills to Black students as they struggled against the discrimination and inequities that were part of their daily lives.

Historian Eric K. Washington submitted a request for evaluation and research on the building and LPC staff prioritized the building as part of our citywide survey and study of buildings with important African American history. We did a lot of detailed research and analysis of the building and we're really pleased by the designation in May.

At our public hearing on April 25, 21 people testified in support of designation, including Council Member Eric Bottcher, representatives of Community Board 4, the Council of Chelsey Block Associations, several neighboring individual Block Associations and Condo Boards, local and citywide

1
2 preservation advocates, and individuals including
3 Eric Washington.

4 In addition, we received seven letters of support
5 including from the African American Redress Network
6 and the Schomburg Center and no letters were received
7 in opposition. A petition supporting designation had
8 2,843 signatures by the time of the vote. Next
9 please.

10 This is a map showing the landmark site, which is
11 the tax lot located mid-block on the south side of
12 West 17th Street, between 6th and 7th Avenues. Next
13 please.

14 This school building was constructed in 1849 by
15 the Public-School Society of New York as a primary
16 school that could accommodate 300 children ages 5 to
17 7, using the model primary school house plan, which
18 is shown on the left. Boys and girls use separate
19 entrances and occupied separate floors inside the
20 building. The New York City Board of Education was
21 formed in 1853 and in the 1850's following State
22 Legislation, created segregated schools identified as
23 schools for colored children. This building became a
24 colored school in 1860 for both primary and grammar
25 school levels ages 5 to 14. At that time, there were

1
2 8 racially segregated public schools in Manhattan
3 serving 2,377 students.

4 After the State Civil Rights Act of 1873, public
5 schools were to open to all children but that was
6 slow to be implemented in New York City where school
7 segregation continued until 1884. For example, on
8 this map, the former Colored School Number 4 in 1879
9 is still labeled C4 for Colored School Number 4. The
10 map shows the schools immediate neighborhood at the
11 time, which is home to modest row houses, churches,
12 including the African Union Church on West 15th
13 Street, a brewery and other commercial and industrial
14 buildings. Next please.

15 There were also colored schools in other
16 boroughs. On the left, the former Colored School
17 Number 3 was built in 1879 as a segregated school and
18 is the only known example remaining in Brooklyn. It
19 was designated a landmark in 1998. On the right is
20 the former Colored School Number 48 in Jamaica
21 Queens, which was built in 1886 but is no longer
22 standing. Next.

23 Since the Colonial era, literacy and education
24 have been important priorities within the African
25 American community as avenues for civil liberties and

1
2 a means of advancement despite racist discrimination
3 and segregation.

4 New York City's education of Black students began
5 with the African Free School, established by the
6 Manumission Society as a charity in 1787. An early
7 school house built on Mulberry Street in 1815 as
8 shown here in a drawing by one of its students. A
9 number of graduates became prominent community and
10 national leaders including Henry Highland Garnet, who
11 was a nationally influential abolitionist and Charles
12 L. Reason, a College Professor and Reformer who
13 founded the Society for the Promotion of Education
14 among Colored Children. Next please.

15 Manhattan's African American community became the
16 target of racist violence during the New York City
17 draft riots, which engulfed the city on July 13,
18 1863. Over the course of several days, violent
19 attacks targeted African Americans, houses of
20 abolitionists, Black churches and institutions such
21 as the former Colored School Number 4. Rioters
22 stormed the school building but the staff kept the
23 mob out and the children safe. Those rioters then
24 attacked other innocent victims across the street.
25 Next please.

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1
2 The former Colored School Number 4 was associated
3 with important African American teachers and
4 students. Sarah J. Tompkins Garnet became the
5 Principal of the school in 1863 just before the draft
6 riots. She was one of the first African American
7 women principals in the New York City school system.
8 Her family members were well to do Brooklyn farmers
9 and merchants and she was esteemed as a prominent
10 educator, artist, and champion of social justice.

11 Another distinguished teacher was Joan Imogen
12 Howard whose first teaching position was at Colored
13 School Number 4. She earned a master's degree and
14 later represented New York State a Board of Women
15 Managers at Chicago's Columbian Exposition in 1893.
16 And many students who attended the school went on to
17 become prominent leaders in education, music and
18 management. Shown here are Susan Elizabeth Frasier,
19 who became New York City's first African American
20 Teacher assigned to an integrated public school in
21 1896.

22 Walter Fr. Craig was a Violinist, Composer and
23 Orchestra Leader and James H. Williams became a
24 highly respected and influential supervisor, known as
25

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1
2 the Chief of the Red Cap Porters at Grand Central
3 Terminal. Next please.

4 Manhattan removed the word Colored from the names
5 of public schools in 1884. The former Colored School
6 Number 4 became Grammer School Number 81 but it
7 continued to serve African American children until it
8 closed in 1894. At that time, it was one of two
9 schools taught solely by African American Teachers.
10 After 1894, the building remained in city ownership.
11 It was leased to various veteran association groups
12 and by 1936, the Department of Sanitation was using
13 it as one of their facilities and remains the
14 buildings owner today.

15 The former school retains its original
16 configuration and model primary school house design.
17 Although the front façade was updated in the 1930's
18 with beige brick, it still retains its original form,
19 roofline and window and door patterns. And
20 incredibly, it still has its characteristic two
21 entries that once separated boys and girls and its
22 historic wood multi-pane double hung windows at the
23 second and third stories. After careful study, staff
24 determined the building retains its character

25

1
2 defining features that reflect its period of
3 significance. Next.

4 The former Colored School Number 4 is incredibly
5 significant as an important reminder of 19 Century
6 education in New York City and illustrates how the
7 city's public educational system served African
8 American students during the city's period of
9 mandated, racially segregated schools.

10 On May 23rd, the Commission voted to designate the
11 building and Mayor Adams announced \$6 million in
12 funding for its rehabilitation. The designation had
13 widespread support and is a significant part of our
14 work to recognize important African American history
15 throughout New York City. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. I have a quick
17 question, I'm sorry. It's being used right now by
18 DSNY and the Mayor offered to give \$6 million. Is
19 that in the FY24 budget?

20 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: That is a good question.

21 STEVEN THOMSON: I don't think that that was
22 indicated at the time of which budget year it was
23 placed in but I can look into that and get back to
24 you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Okay, thank you. I would
3 love to know that before we vote on this. And
4 another question regarding opposition. You have
5 seven opposition letters or is it just one, the
6 Schomberg?

7 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Oh sorry, no the letters were
8 all in support for -

9 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Including the Schomberg?

10 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Okay, thank you. Do any of
12 my colleagues have questions? Council Member Nurse?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: With this designation,
14 would the Department of Sanitation continue using the
15 building in the way it has been?

16 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: The use is I think to be
17 determined. There's a study going first to
18 rehabilitate the building and then to find a use that
19 I think can serve a more public function and reflect
20 the history of the building.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Okay.

22 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Uhm, but you know the
23 designation covers the exterior of the building, so
24 there's lots of flexibility for whatever use.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Who is doing that study?

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KATE LEMOS NURSE: Uhm, again.

STEVEN THOMSON: In the press release, I don't know, it's a \$6 million rehabilitation. It was left open, how it would be conducted exactly but the language used was that it would be informed by community consultation. So, we imagine that will be between the Council Member and the Community Board and some of the civic organizations in my area.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Is it going to include some of the folks that gave you support letters, like the Schomberg?

KATE LEMOS MCHALE: I hope they're involved in the conversations.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: So, we have to vote on this today and I want to make sure we do the right thing here, right. So, I just need a commitment from all of you that you're not only involved in the folks that live in that area that are considered part resident and participatory in the civic associations which is nice but we know the area is gentrified, right. It would be great if you all can reach out to some of the folks that you got support letters from to be a part of that process. Just to piggyback off

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1
2 of Council Member Nurse's question, in addition to
3 that, it would be great if we all can have a
4 conversation after this being that we're voting on it
5 now so we don't have a sufficient amount of time to
6 have a conversation with the Mayor but it would be
7 great if we can change the use of the building to
8 something else. And I just need a commitment from
9 you guys before we vote. Sorry to be abrupt guys but
10 it is what it is. So, I just need that commitment on
11 the record.

12 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Well, I think our role is to
13 you know designate it as a landmark and a future use
14 is going to be determined by the owners and through
15 this process with the funding.

16 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: And you would be in support
17 of us working with you and them to make sure that
18 we're doing the right thing here?

19 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Okay, thank you. Any
21 questions by any other members? Sorry about that.
22 Thank you, the applicant panel is now excused.
23 Counsel, are there any members of the public who wish
24 to testify on either of these two landmark
25 designations?

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, it appears that we do
3 not have any members of the public signed up remotely
4 and if there's anyone in the room with us today who
5 wish to testify, please come forward, fill out a
6 speaker card. Okay, it appears we have no witnesses
7 for either of these items.

8 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: And there are no members of
9 the public? Okay, thank you. There being no members
10 of the public online or in person to testify
11 regarding preconsidered Application Numbers N 230353
12 HKK or N 230362 HIM, the public hearing is on the
13 Landmarks Designation is now closed.

14 Next, we will vote on the two items we just heard
15 and I will take this last opportunity to recognize
16 any of my colleagues that have any questions or
17 remarks. As noted earlier, both Council Member
18 Gutiérrez and Council Member Bottcher are in support
19 of these designations. Any questions, remarks?
20 Alright, we're ready to go.

21 I now call for a vote to approve Preconsidered
22 Application Numbers N 230353 HKK and N 230362 HIM.
23 Counsel, please call the roll.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Louis?

25 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: I vote aye.

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Feliz?

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Aye.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member De La Rosa?

COUNCIL MEMBER DE LA ROSA: Aye.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Marte?

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Aye.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Nurse?

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Ung?

COUNCIL MEMBER UNG: Aye.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Vernikov?

COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: Aye.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, by a vote of 7 in the affirmative, zero in the negative and no abstentions, the items are adopted and recommended to the full Land Use Committee.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. That concludes today's business. I would like to thank the members of the public, my colleagues, Subcommittee Council Land Use Staff and Sergeant at Arms for your participation today. This meeting is hereby adjourned. [GAVEL]

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 August 4, 2023