

**TESTIMONY OF THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION BEFORE
THE CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING,
AND MARITIME USES ON THE DESIGNATION OF FIRE ENGINE COMPANY
NO. 53, MANHATTAN**

December 15, 2008

Good morning Councilmembers. My name is Kate Daly, Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. I am here today to testify on the Commission's designation of Fire Engine Company No. 53 in Manhattan.

On October 30, 2007, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation. Four witnesses spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of the owner of the building, Manhattan Community Access Corporation, the Historic Districts Council, the Municipal Art Society, the Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America, and the New York Landmark Conservancy. This building was previously heard at a public hearing on July 15, 1991. On September 16, 2008, the Commission voted to designate Fire Engine Company No. 53 an individual landmark.

Erected in 1884, Fire Engine Company No. 53 was designed by the prominent firm of Napoleon LeBrun & Sons, architects for the Fire Department between 1879 and 1895. An excellent example of a mid-block firehouse, Engine 53 was among the initial group of buildings that set the standard for firehouse construction in the city, with a design incorporating elements of the Queen Anne and Romanesque Revival styles. Engine 53's most significant features are a cast-iron trabeated base, a central vehicular entrance enlivened by foliate capitals incorporating sunflowers and torches, and ornate brickwork. The firehouse also represents the city's commitment during this period to the civic character of essential municipal services.

The Commission urges you to affirm the designation.

**TESTIMONY OF THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION BEFORE
THE CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING,
AND MARITIME USES ON THE DESIGNATION OF THE TOMPKINSVILLE
(JOSEPH H. LYONS) POOL AND BATH HOUSE, FIRST FLOOR INTERIOR,
STATEN ISLAND**

December 15, 2008

Good morning Councilmembers. My name is Kate Daly, Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. I am here today to testify on the Commission's designation of the Tompkinsville (Joseph H. Lyons) Pool and Bath House, first floor interior, in Staten Island.

On January 30, 2007, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designations, including the bath house, swimming pool, diving pool, wading pool, mechanical equipment enclosures, perimeter walls and fencing, and street level brick retaining walls. The interior designation includes the domed entry foyer and telephone alcove and fixtures and interior components of this space, including but not limited to, wall, floor, and ceiling surfaces doors, ticket and parcel booth fronts, metal signage, and vents. Eleven witnesses spoke in favor of designation, including Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe and representatives of Councilman Michael McMahon, the Municipal Art Society of New York, the Historic Districts Council, the Society for the Architecture of the City, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, and the Preservation League of Staten Island. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. The Commission has also received five letters in support of designation. Several of the speakers and letters also expressed support for the larger designation effort of all WPA-era pools. On September 16, 2008, the Commission voted to designate the Tompkinsville Pool Bath House an individual landmark.

The first floor interior of the bath house forms the grand entrance to the former Tompkinsville Pool, one of a group of eleven immense outdoor swimming pools opened in the summer of 1936 by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia and Parks Commissioner Robert Moses. Constructed with funding provided by the Works

Progress Administration, the long, low design of the L-shaped building, emphasized by flush and recessed brickwork, horizontal window bands, and contrasting bluestone coping, is characteristic of the era. The interior is distinguished by a number of unique Art Moderne-style features, including starburst-patterned terrazzo flooring, projecting pilasters, and a clerestory with arched window openings.. Simple geometric forms are evident in the cast stone frieze and Flemish bond brick coursing. The plan of the lobby evokes an ancient rotunda with enclosed porticos, grand entrances, and clerestory windows, giving the space a monumental feel that also invites patrons into the structure. Along with other WPA-era play centers, the bath house was a major accomplishment of engineering and architecture.

The Commission urges you to affirm the designation.

**TESTIMONY OF THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION BEFORE
THE CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING,
AND MARITIME USES ON THE DESIGNATION OF THE BETSY HEAD PLAY
CENTER, BROOKLYN**

December 15, 2008

Good morning Councilmembers. My name is Kate Daly, Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. I am here today to testify on the Commission's designation of the Betsy Head Play Center in Brooklyn.

On January 30, 2007, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation, which includes the bath house, swimming pool, diving pool, bleachers and filter house, and perimeter cast-iron fencing. Nine witnesses spoke in favor of designation, including Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe and representatives of the Municipal Art Society of New York, the Historic Districts Council, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, and the Society for the Architecture of the City. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. The Commission has also received letters from the Fine Arts Federation of New York and the Modern Architecture Working Group in support of designation. Several of the speakers and letters also expressed support for the larger designation effort of all WPA-era pools. On September 16, 2008, the Commission voted to designate the Betsy Head Play Center an individual landmark.

Opened in the summer of 1936 by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia and Parks Commissioner Robert Moses, the Betsy Head Play Center is one of a group of eleven immense outdoor swimming pools constructed with funding provided by the Works Progress Administration. Betsy Head Park, established in 1914 in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, was the city's first recreation facility designed to include a public outdoor swimming pool and bath house. Following a fire, the original 1914 bath house was replaced in 1939 with the current structure designed by John Matthews Hutton. The bath house is distinguished by the

extensive use of recessed glass-block walls for the locker room portions of the bath house, making the structure surprisingly translucent. The equally striking rooftop observation gallery has parabolic arches supporting a broad, flat roof. The main entrance, distinguished by its relatively lavish polished black marble wall facings, curved corner sections of glass block, and slate paving, prove an original and creative use of modest materials and forms. The complex, along with other WPA-era pools, was a major accomplishment of engineering and architecture, has long been recognized as among the most remarkable public recreational facilities in the United States.

The Commission urges you to affirm the designation.

**TESTIMONY OF THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION BEFORE
THE CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING,
AND MARITIME USES ON THE DESIGNATION OF THE PUBLIC NATIONAL
BANK OF NEW YORK BUILDING (LATER PUBLIC NATIONAL BANK &
TRUST COMPANY OF NEW YORK BUILDING), MANHATTAN**

December 15, 2008

Good morning Councilmembers. My name is Kate Daly, Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. I am here today to testify on the Commission's designation of the Public National Bank of New York Building (late Public National Bank & Trust Company of New York Building) in Manhattan.

On October 30, 2007, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation. Five people spoke in favor of designation, including Councilmember Rosie Mendez and representatives of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, Historic Districts Council, Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America, and the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The building's owner opposed designation. In addition, the Commission received a number of communications in support of designation, including letters from Councilmember Tony Avella, the Friends of Terra Cotta, the Neue Galerie Museum for German and Austrian Art, and City Lore: The New York Center for Urban Folk Culture. On September 16, 2008, the Commission voted to designate the Public National Bank of New York an individual landmark.

The Public National Bank of New York Building in the East Village is a highly unusual American structure displaying the direct influence of the early-twentieth-century modernism of eminent Viennese architect/designer Josef Hoffmann. Built in 1923, the bank was designed by Eugene Schoen, an architect remembered today for furniture design. At his death, the New York Times remarked that "Schoen was regarded as one of the leading exponents of modern architecture and design." This was one of the many branch banks that Schoen designed between 1921 and 1930 for the Public National Bank of New York

(known as Public National Bank & Trust Company of New York after 1927), which had its headquarters on the Lower East Side.

Originally two stories, the structure had a monumental ground-story banking floor and upstairs offices clad in light grey granitex and terra cotta above a polished grey granite base. Designed with an angled corner bay with entrance, flat capital-less fluted pilasters, and a broad, highly stylized modern cornice, the entrance is surmounted by notable polychrome Viennese-inspired terra cotta ornament in the form of a decorative band, above which is a cartouche. The building's terra cotta was manufactured by the New York Architectural Terra Cotta Company. Sold in 1954, the building was converted into a nursing home, with the addition of an intermediate floor, and into apartments in the 1980s.

The Commission urges you to affirm the designation.

**TESTIMONY OF THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION BEFORE THE
CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING, AND
MARITIME USES ON THE DESIGNATION OF THE WHEATSWORTH BAKERY
BUILDING, MANHATTAN**

December 15, 2008

Good morning Councilmembers. My name is Kate Daly, Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. I am here today to testify on the Commission's designation of the Wheatsworth Bakery Building in Manhattan.

On October 30, 2007, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation. Four witnesses spoke in favor of the designation, including Councilmember Rosie Mendez, and representatives of the Historic Districts Council, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, and the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. There were no speakers in opposition to the proposed designation. In addition, the Commission received numerous letters and e-mails in support of designation, including a letter from Councilmember Tony Avella. On September 16, 2008, the Commission voted to designate the Wheatsworth Bakery Building an individual landmark.

Constructed in 1927-1928 to the designs of J. Edwin Hopkins, a specialist in the design of industrial bakeries, the building is a rare example of an Art Deco/Viennese Secessionist style factory building in New York City. The building's linear ornamentation of terra cotta friezes with restrained, geometric designs is characteristic of this style of architecture. Its brick façade and large multi-pane steel windows are typical features of factory buildings of the era, but the terra cotta distinguishes this building from typical factory buildings of the 1920s. The building was built by Wheatsworth, Inc., the successful manufacturer of whole wheat biscuits and flour and inventor of the Milk-Bone dog biscuit. The National Biscuit Company acquired Wheatsworth in 1931, and Nabisco continued to use the building for baking until the mid-1950s. The Wheatsworth Bakery Building is a rare surviving industrial building in the far East Village, where most of the nineteenth- and early-twentieth century industrial

facilities have been replaced by public housing complexes, a public pool, and parking garages.

The Commission urges you to affirm the designation.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: KATE DALY, LPC E.D.

Address: 1 CENTRE ST, 9th FL

I represent: LPC

Address: _____

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