

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS

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AND DISPOSITIONS

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CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS AND  
DISPOSITIONS

February 12, 2020

Start: 1:10 p.m.

Recess: 2:01 p.m.

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

B E F O R E: ADRIENNE E. ADAMS  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
INEZ D. BARRON  
PETER A. KOO  
I. DANEEK MILLER  
MARK TREYGER

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

Gayle Mandaro  
Senior Director and Senior Attorney in the New  
York City School Construction Authority's Real  
Estate Services Department

Tamar Smith  
Community Relations Manager for the New York City  
School Construction Authority, SCA

Kate Lemos McHale  
Director of Research at the Landmarks  
Preservation Commission

Mario Messina  
Founder and President of 29<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood  
Association

George Calderaro  
Project Director of the Save Tin Pan Alley  
Initiative of the 29<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood  
Association

Simeon Bankoff  
Executive Director of the Historic Districts  
Council

Lacey Tauber  
Development and Planning Director of Operations  
Of the New York City Department of Housing  
Preservation and Development, HPD

Anya Irons  
Director of Operations and General Counsel of  
UHAB

Christine O'Connell  
Housing Finance and Community Development  
Specialists of the New York City Department of  
Housing Preservation and Development, HPD

Matthew Levy  
Chief Executive Officer of New York City Health  
And Hospitals

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

Jeremy Berman  
Deputy General Counsel, Office of Legal Affairs  
New York City Health and Hospitals Capital  
Committee

Luke Nasta  
Chief Executive Officer of Camelot Counseling

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[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Good afternoon, I'm Council Member Adrienne Adams and I want to welcome all of you to this meeting of the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions. We're joined today by Council Member Barron and other committee members will be here shortly. Today we will hold the public hearing and a vote on a proposed school site selection. We'll also hear five landmark designations, the rescission of a landmark designation, an HPD project and a lease for a health and hospitals property in Staten Island. LU 615 was submitted, pursuant to section 1732 of the New York School Construction Authority Act, it concerns a proposed site selection for a new approximately 322 seat primary school facility located at 67 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue in Brooklyn within community school district 20, community district 10, council district 43. I now open the public hearing on this application. We're joined today by representatives of the School Construction Authority and we have from SCA Gayle Mandaro and Tamar Smith, welcome. Before you begin Counsel will swear you in.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Hi, do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this Committee and in answering all of Council Member questions?

GAYLE MANDARO: Yes, I do..

TAMARIO MESSINAA SMITH: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you, you may begin.

GAYLE MANDARO: Good morning.. good afternoon Chairperson Adams and Council Members. My name is Gayle Mandaro and I'm a Senior Director and Senior Attorney in the New York City School Construction Authority's Real Estate Services Department. Also, with me today is my colleague Tamar Smith, a Community Relations Manager for the SCA. The New York City School Construction Authority has undertaken the site selection process for a new approximately 322 seat primary school facility on block 5853, lot 45 in the borough of Brooklyn. The site contains a total of approximately 17,000 square feet of lot area, .39 acres and is located on the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue between 68<sup>th</sup> Street and Senator Street on the block bounded by Senator Street to the North, 68<sup>th</sup> Street to the South, Ridge Boulevard to

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the West and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to the East. The site is  
comprised of one privately owned lot in the Bay Ridge  
section of Brooklyn and is improved by a one story  
with basement medical diagnostic imaging center and  
paved parking area. The site is located within  
Brooklyn community district number 10 and community  
school district number 20. Under the proposed  
project, the New York City School Construction  
Authority would acquire the site and construct a new  
approximately 322 seat primary school facility. The  
notice of filing for the site plan was published in  
the New York Post in the city record on November  
12<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at which time the community education  
council number 20, Brooklyn community board number 10  
and City Planning Commission were also notified of  
the site plan. The CEC and community board were asked  
to hold public hearings on the proposed site plan,  
Brooklyn community board 10 held a public hearing on  
November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019, CEC 20 held a public hearing on  
January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Written comments were not received  
from the community board, CEC or City Planning  
Commission. The SCA has considered all comments  
received on the proposed site plan and affirm the  
site plan pursuant to section 1731 of the New York

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Public Authority's law. In accordance with section 1732 of the PAL the SCA submitted the proposed site plan to the Mayor and City Council by letter dated February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020. We look forward to your Subcommittee's favorable consideration of the proposed site plan and are prepared to answer any questions the Committee may have.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much, we heard this application a little while ago and Council Member Brannan is in support and whenever we see schools being built that's always a good thing, that's what I always say, it's always a good thing. I don't believe we are ready to take our vote...

[off mic dialogue]

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Okay, we're going to continue our hearing and as we get our quorum numbers, we will... before we move on is there anyone else here to testify on behalf of this application? Okay, seeing none I do excuse the panel, thank you very much.

GAYLE MANDARO: Thank you very much.

[off mic dialogue]

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Okay, that portion of the hearing is now closed. We will now hear LU's 618

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through 622, the designations of five historic row houses as five individual landmarks in Speaker Johnson's district, Manhattan community district five. The row houses are located at 47, 49, 51, 53 and 55 West 28<sup>th</sup> Street block 830, lot seven, eight, nine and ten and eleven. Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century these buildings were the location of the most significant concentration of sheet music publishers in New York City. As publishers began to congregate in the area the name Tin Pan Alley was coined, coined around 1903 to evoke the racket of piano music audible on the block. I now open the public hearings on these five items. We're joined today by representatives of LPC. So, we welcome Kate Lemos McHale and Timothy Frye. Before you begin Counsel will swear you in.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this Subcommittee and in response to all Council Member questions?

[panel affirms]

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you, you may begin.

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KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Good afternoon Chair

Adams and Council Members. I'm Kate Lemos McHale,  
Director of Research at the Landmarks Preservation  
Commission. Thank you for the opportunity to present  
these five landmarks designated in December 2019  
associated with the significant history of Tin Pan  
Alley. Between 1893 and about 1910 the block of West  
28<sup>th</sup> Street between Broadway and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue was home  
to the most significant concentration of sheet music  
publishers in New York City. Here composers,  
arrangers, lyricists, performers and printers came  
together as collaborative firms and from the  
cacophony of competing pianos within low rise  
buildings lining the block it became known as Tin Pan  
Alley. Do you want me to keep going without images or  
wait a minute? Okay. Tin Pan Alley revolutionized the  
music industry's practices for the production and  
promotion of popular music. It often cited.. it is  
often cited as the birth place of American popular  
music making sheet music available to countless  
households for it's role in popularizing ragtime as  
an American art form and as the forbearer of  
subsequent decades of popular music that came to be  
known as the great American songbook. The five

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designated buildings all house significant numbers of music publishers and related firms during the Tin Pan Alley period and have good integrity to that time period. They underwent lower floor conversions to accommodate two story storefronts before or during the Tin Pan Alley era and above those storefronts they've undergone little change and retain much of their historic character. Yeah, yep. Among the landmarks, I'll quickly take you through, our 47 West 28<sup>th</sup> Street built in 1852 and its current iron façade was installed in 1892 prior to the Tin Pan Alley era, it was home to at least 10 musicians and publisher's offices over the course of 11 years, it was also the office of the New York Clipper which was the foremost music and entertainment magazine of its time. 49 West 28<sup>th</sup> Street was built in 1852 and its iron façade was installed in 1890, it was home to at least eight musicians and publisher's offices over the course of 12 years. 51 West 28<sup>th</sup> Street was built in 1852 and its lower floors were altered for commercial use in 1904 during the Tin Pan Alley era, it was home to at least 26 musicians and publisher's offices over 17 years. Both 49 and 51 West 28<sup>th</sup> Street were the offices of M. Witmark and Sons who pioneered a number

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of Tin Pan Alley's marketing strategies and printed some of its biggest hits. 53 West 28<sup>th</sup> Street was built in 1859, its lower floors were converted to retail use in 1889 and it was, next please, thank you, home of at least 19 musicians and publisher's offices for 13 years. And finally, West... 55 West 28<sup>th</sup> Street also built in 1859 was home to at least ten musicians and publishers over ten years. The buildings are calendared for a public hearing in the spring of 2019 following extensive research and analysis, conversations with preservation advocates and historians and outreach meetings with the property owners. At the public hearing on April 30<sup>th</sup> and in written testimony, the Commission received support for a designation from 66 people and organizations including representatives of Speaker of the Council Corey Johnson, Manhattan Borough President Gail Brewer, New York State Assembly Member Richard Gottfried, Historic Districts Council, the 29<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood Association, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, Municipal Arts Society, Society for the Architecture of the City, Village Preservation, Save Chelsea, the Bedford Stuyvesant Society for Historic Preservation, Hamsong

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Foundation, the American Society of Composers,  
Authors and Publishers, from Carnegie Hall, from the  
Museum of the City of New York, the National Music  
Publishers Association, Americana Music Productions,  
Audubon Park Alliance, Dumbo Neighborhood Alliance,  
Flower Tenants Association, Jujamcyn Theaters, Mabel  
Mercer Foundation, Musicians Foundation, and from 36  
individuals including descendants of James Reese  
Europe and J. Rosamond Johnson, African American  
compositions whose work was published on West 28<sup>th</sup>  
Street in the era and descendants of composers and  
band leaders, Noble Sissle Junior and Duke Ellington.  
Four people including three representatives of the  
owner and one individual spoke in opposition to the  
designation. This presentation addresses the history  
of Tin Pan Alley and the concerns that were raised in  
testimony and LPC's approach to these designations.  
Tin Pan Alley is shown in blue on this 1899 map in  
the midst of its sheet music publishing era. Built as  
brick and brownstone fronted row houses in the  
1850's, the five landmarks found new lives as  
songwriters and sheet music publisher's offices in  
the 1890's and early 1900's when the area around  
Madison Square became the city's entertainment

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district. Theaters are shown here with stars,  
department stores and other entertainment venues  
clustered around the area north of Madison Square  
Park and west of Broadway, West 28<sup>th</sup> Street was also  
in the heart of the tenderloin where high and low  
entertainment coexisted and where creative  
opportunities were available to a wider spectrum of  
the population than elsewhere. During the Tin Pan  
Alley era music publishers consolidated for the first  
time as an industry on this block where they could  
dispatch their sheet music to the venues nearby. The  
name Tin Pan Alley refers to the sonic experience of  
visiting the block around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup>  
century, it was allegedly coined when a journalist  
visiting publisher Harry Von Tilzer complained that  
the clamor of these cheap pianos made the whole  
street sound like a tin pan alley. Local newspapers  
at the time often referred to West 28<sup>th</sup> Street, this  
block in particular as the heart of Tin Pan Alley and  
where all of New York's best music publishers were  
located. Despite the later application of the name  
Tin Pan Alley to the entire music business much like  
Hollywood is used to refer to the movie industry, the  
original Tin Pan Alley was built around sheet music

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at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this was played by  
orchestras and on an increasing scale at home on  
pianos. As shown in this timeline of music technology  
this was still a time before radio, recorded music  
was prohibitively expensive, of poor quality and only  
had a niche market outside the home. Tine Pan Alley  
represents then the height of the sheet music era as  
the vivid covers that were printed on this block  
illustrate. During this era a song's popularity was  
determined by how many copies of sheet music it sold  
and publishers aimed to expose their music to as many  
perspective buyers as possible. Tin Pan Alley was an  
important cultural moment of intense music production  
and innovation, it produced such iconic songs as Take  
me Out to the Ballgame but what was even more  
significant was the quick composition and massive  
publication of sheet music that made a long term  
impact on popular music. To boost sales of sheet  
music a number of influential industry practices  
originated on Tin Pan Alley including hiring  
musicians to play songs in publisher's offices and as  
pluggers to demonstrate them in department stores and  
theaters giving free professional copies to encourage  
orchestras to perform new numbers, hiring what were

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called boomers to masquerade as audience members and demand certain songs be played and writing songs about current events to score national hits and Witmark and Sons whose office was at 49 and 51<sup>st</sup>... and 51 West 28<sup>th</sup> Street invented a number of these practices. And the intimate scale of Tin Pan Alley's row houses made it convenient for music publishers to advertise their music to the theater crowds, allowed their music to be audible from the street and also made the offices accessible to creative hopefuls easy... eager to capitalize on their talent. Tin Pan Alley represents important milestones for the participation of African American and Jewish artists in mainstream American music production. Ragtime music originated by African American composers is often considered the first distinctly American form of music and Tin Pan Alley's ragtime publications are an essential component of its significance to American culture. A number of Tin Pan Alley's ragtime publications became well known hits played in countless homes across the country and exported to Europe. The descendent firms of the first black owned and black operated music publishing businesses in the United States had offices on this block and some of

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Tin Pan Alley's Jewish publishers printed ragtime music on behalf of black songwriters in addition to adapting ragtime syncopation to create hits of their own. This period also has challenging history, Tin Pan Alley arose during and reflects a post reconstruction context when racist policies, views and ideology were prevalent in New York City and throughout the country and among other injustices were reflected in offensive caricatures and stereotypes spread through mass media including sheet music produced on Tin Pan Alley. As descendants of musical forms that were popular in minstrel shows certain songs were built on racist caricatures of African Americans from decades of black face performance and some sheet music covers and lyrics published on Tin Pan Alley contained offensive epithets and slurs common in entertainment of the time. At the public hearing representatives of the property owner raised concerns that designation would celebrate racist content and imagery of Tin Pan Alley sheet music. LPC also received a good deal of thoughtful testimony stating that shying away from this façade of a complicated history overlooks and delegitimizes the participation of black artists in

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the production of this music with full awareness of the pros and cons and with a range of repercussions. To gloss over these aspects of history would be to overlook the experience of a significant portion of the population and for us a chance to miss... to... miss a chance to communicate that these difficult histories are New York City and American histories and potent reminders that the repercussions are still felt. Some of Tin Pan Alley's most notable composers were African American songwriters whose involvement in the Tin Pan Alley was a milestone and a means for them to reclaim the epithets and stereotypes used against them. J. Rosamond Johnson shown here with Bob Cole, Burt Williams and George Walker and Ernest Hogan later reflected that some wanted to "clean up the caricature", unquote and made concerted efforts to produce sheet music which portrayed African American life without hurtful or offensive imagery and presented formal images like these on sheet music covers. It is the priority of Chair Carroll to represent the diversity of New York City through our landmarks and to tell the story of all New Yorkers. LPC staff did extensive rigorous research drawing from important scholarship insights and conversations

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with African American historians to better understand the historical and cultural context for this moment in the creation of widely accessible American popular music. These designations recognize the significant achievements of African American songwriters on Tin Pan Alley and acknowledge the adverse conditions that they faced at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Between 1901 and 1920 most American households began to own record players for the first time and sheet music sales began to decline. By 1910 most of the music publishers on Tin Pan Alley had followed the entertainment district to Harold and Times Squares where larger, newer and custom offices were able to accommodate their new in-house orchestras and recording spaces. This photograph shows the street as part of the city's flower district which it was for many years, this image is from 1920 about a decade after the songwriters moved uptown. These five Italianate style row houses from the 1850s retained much of their historic character and represent Tin Pan Alley's remarkable concentration of musicians and sheet music publishers and its significant contributions to American culture. Together they preserve this history in the sense of the historic

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streetscape as it appeared when a musical cacophony was part of the experience of the block. The designation reports note and commissioners discussed on the record that the goal of this designation is to preserve the historic fabric of buildings that represent the significant history of Tin Pan Alley as part of New York City's cultural heritage so that we and future generations may experience and learn from them. I hope you will uphold the designations of 47, 49, 51, 53, and 55 West 28<sup>th</sup> Street buildings as individual landmarks. Thank you, I'm happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you Kate for your presentation. We've been joined by Council Members Koo and Miller, before we take our vote, I am going to ask my colleagues if they have any questions for LPC. Okay, we have no questions, you are excused, thank you. We're going to go ahead and take our vote for, for Land Use 615. Okay, Counsel please call the roll.

COMMITTEE CLERK: So, for a vote for Land Use 615 for a 322 primary school in Brooklyn Chair Adams?

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: I vote aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Barron?

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Koo?

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Miller?

COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: And Council Member  
Treyger?

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: For a school I  
definitely vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of five in  
the affirmative, no negatives, no abstentions the  
items are recommended for approval by the full Land  
Use Committee.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Okay, thank you  
Counsel. Members of the public wishing to testify  
please come up, Mario Messina; George Calderaro; and  
Simon... Simeon, I'm sorry, of course.

MARIO MESSINA: Good afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Okay, just a minute.

MARIO MESSINA: My name is Mario Messina...

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: You have to turn your  
microphone on.

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MARIO MESSINA: Okay, I got it... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: You may begin...

MARIO MESSINA: I got it...

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

MARIO MESSINA: Thank you Chair Adams, thank you Council Members. My name is Mario Messina from the 29<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood Association and I'm here to speak on behalf of Tin Pan Alley. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2008 the Department of State published an article about American popular music. The article highlighted and directly linked many successful songs of Jewish and black musicians to Tin Pan Alley. The Department of State that receives orders can name... I cannot name all of them because of the sake of time will publish books about the contribution of Tin Pan Alley and the discovery and success of popular music such as James Bland, the first commercially successful African American songwriter and Ethelbert Nevin among many others are facts that cannot be disputed, they're created in the national culture of treasures right in Tin Pan Alley. Furthermore, the fact this is American popular music from mainstream to... by Larry Starr and Christopher Waterman and

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published by Oxford University are strong arguments that stress the important contribution made by those part of Tin Pan Alley in the hay days. Let's now look at another positive effect of landmarks preservations, smart developers know the landmarks preservation is a good business, quietly developers attract first class business and tenants, property value increase more in historic districts than in normal properties and it holds its value during economic downturns. We're all witnessing the incredible growth of latest miles Soho tried back on... back in Grand Central. Furthermore, US studies show that preservation creates more and important qualified jobs, increases property value, attracts tourism, creates positive environmental impacts and if... when I can turn the page fosters positive social impacts and promotes revitalization of the area. Grants for restoration are available for historic preservation programs and grants, federal historic preservation tax incentives programs have generated over 66 million in private investments in the rehabilitation of historic buildings since 1977. The 29<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood Association is planning to shepherd a project of creating museum of the

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Department of American Popular Music in Tin Pan Alley and the working name for that right now is American Popular Music Project. This could perhaps spark new life and keep the spotlight that it deserves on Tin Pan Alley. Thank you for your attention.

GEORGE CALDERARO: Good afternoon Chair Adams, Council Members. My name is George Calderaro, I'm Project Director of the Save Tin Pan Alley Initiative of the 29<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood Association. I'm urging your support of a landmark designation of these five Tin Pan Alley buildings. For at least two decades musicians, cultural historians and preservationists have sought landmark designation for Tin Pan Alley known globally as the birthplace of American popular music. Over the past several years I've led the effort to finally protect this intact, irreplaceable piece of American culture. As you heard we've been grateful to receive endorsements from performers and I won't enumerate all of them again and they're in your report, music organizations, cultural organizations, community representatives including community board five and all elected officials as well as the support of varied cultural and preservation organizations and

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more than 20,000 members of the public who have signed our petition asking for landmark protection and, and a hearing. Among the most compelling testimonials we have received came from Robert Slayton, Professor of American Values and Tradition at Chapman University who cites Tin Pan Alley as one of two phenomena that made New York City the cultural capital of the country and the major proponent of American cultural globally and I'll quote if you forgive me, "before any other mass media New York music became a national force influencing Americans in every region with movies still in their infancy and radio a distant dream sheet music from Gotham introduced folk from all over our city's cultural and made us a top presence in the... in the arts from Broadway to Peoria to San Diego and all points in between, with Tin Pan Alley New York became American art for the very first time". If you had proposed this designation a century ago the nation would have stood up and cheered a resounding affirmation, it makes sense to finally recognize this incredible contribution. I implore you to consider this and thousands of sincere requests over the obvious self-serving objections of the owner. Designation is not

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intended to celebrate every individual song published during the era but the birthplace of the business that gave us the sound of American popular music for the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to understand and learn from our history we must confront even the most difficult aspects of our past and honor those who overcame and rose above it. assuming that you'll affirm and your colleagues will affirm the designation I was impressed at the designation hearing that the, the Commissioners were interested in raising awareness of Tin Pan Alley and its legacy and as Mario noted we have already formed a committee, the Tin Pan Alley American Popular Music Project to create a, a... an entertainment district and we are hoping to engage the support of the Council, the economic development corporation, the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, NYC GO and the Nightlife Commissioner to create and revitalize an American popular music district in, in Tin Pan Alley. Thank you again for your consideration.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you for your

testimony.

SIMEON BANKOFF: Good afternoon Council

Members. Simeon Bankoff, Historic Districts Council.

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I'm going to beg your indulgence because I'm going to go a little longer than I usually am. We've been working on this for a while, thank you, your kind. HDC is the advocate for New York City's designated historic districts, landmarks and, and buildings preservation, we're delighted to support this designation by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Having been strong advocates for preserving Tin Pan Alley since 2008 when the buildings were then threatened with demolition to make way for a skyscraper. At the time we were stunned by the remarkable international support our campaign elicited, we received calls and messages from Great Britain, Germany and Australia wanting to help save the buildings where the American songbook was born. We got to know musicians, artists, collectors and historians from across the country all of whom felt a deep connection with this site, it was truly unlike any preservation campaign we worked on. We mention this only to hint at the broad meaningful public appeal this designation has, I've attached an article from 2008 from the Sydney Morning Tribune on that, I was wearing black back then too. Tin Pan Alley is more than this collection of buildings in this symbol

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of an earlier America where the bounds of many  
seemingly... where the bounds of unity seemingly range  
supreme because everybody was singing the same songs.  
This is of course a reductive and skewed image, the  
artists who wrote the songs were... which were the  
soundtrack to America in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup>  
century were just as much outsiders as artists always  
are, they're African Americans trying to make their  
way in a culture that barely recognizes them but  
still was improvement from the post reconstruction  
south, they're recent immigrants from Europe fleeing  
successive waves of war, economic hardship and  
ingrained prejudice. Together these groups of  
outsiders working for colorful aggressive publishers  
transformed how music was shared and experienced in  
our country and around the world. The roots of  
popular culture can be found in Tin Pan Alley, the  
New York Clipper which Kate had mentioned, an early  
sporting periodical reinvented itself as a solely  
theatrical journal by 1894 and was located at 47 West  
28<sup>th</sup> Street during the height of the music publishing  
era on the street, the Clipper later went on to  
become a small newspaper known as Variety by the way.  
Similarly, the renowned William Morris Agency was

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housed at 23 West 28<sup>th</sup> Street... 43 West 28<sup>th</sup> Street,  
unfortunately not under consideration at this current  
time but this is more than where music flourished,  
this is where the business of entertainment was born.  
It's sometimes difficult for people to understand  
what is being preserved when a landmark designation  
is proposed for sites of historic significance.  
People's comments such as, these buildings have been  
altered, they look nothing like they did back then,  
or music isn't made there anymore why do you want to  
serve these missed the point. History is the communal  
memory of a shared culture; it depends on artifacts  
to transmit knowledge across time so that future  
generations can share in the same knowledge and form  
their own memories. The easiest form of transmitting  
knowledge are of course words, but they can also be  
the least impactful. Reading a fact about a place is  
nothing compared with the experience of visiting that  
place yourself. Once understanding of the actual  
events which happened in Tin Pan Alley, the jangle of  
dozens of pianos, the random encounter of artists as  
they would rush in and out of offices jammed  
together, the camaraderie and competition caused by  
such a close proximity, the hustle of the place is so

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much easier to comprehend standing before these buildings. These buildings with the appropriate learned knowledge which I hope that George and Mario's initiative will help create, open up the early days of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in a way that even a great documentary can't, that they're still here today a century after their hay day is a gift, to lose them at this point would be a tragedy.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you for your testimony Mr. Bankoff as always very extensive and you always, always paint a picture for us for these.. for these proposals. I thank you all very much for your testimony today, I'm sure that many of us will agree that Tin Pan Alley holds a history unlike any other in our city so thank you very much, thank you for the memories that you brought to us today for Tin Pan Alley to extend our view and appreciation. Thank you very much. Are there any more members of the public wishing to testify on these items? Seeing none I now close this hearing and these applications will be laid over. We will now hear LU 623, an application for the.. before I go on, we were joined by Council Member Mark Treyger as well. We will now hear LU 623, an application for the rescission of the landmark

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designation for the former PS 31 building located at 425 Grand Concourse in the Bronx community district one in Chair Salamanca's district. The building had suffered structural problems and was damaged by hurricane Sandy, it was demolished in 2013 per an emergency declaration by the Department of Buildings. In 2018 the Council approved a rezoning, an Article XI tax exemption to facilitate a new mixed-use development on the site of the former landmark. I now open the public hearing on this item, we're joined today by representatives of the LPC, once again we have Kate Lemos McHale and Timothy Frye. You are still under oath and you may begin.

KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Thank you Chair Adams. I am still Kate Lemos McHale, Director of Research at the Landmarks Preservation Commission and I'm here to present the rescission of the landmark designation for PS 31 which took place on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019. PS 31 was located at 425 Grand Concourse in the Bronx and was designated an individual landmark in 1986. It was... it was designed by Superintendent of Schools Charles B.J. Snyder and built in 1897 to 99. To date LPC has designated 26 schools designed by C.B.J. Snyder including PS 31, 21

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of which are individual landmarks. In 2013 the Department of Buildings determined that the building posed a threat to public safety and issued an emergency declaration for full demolition. The image on the left is an aerial view of the vacant landmark site once occupied by the school. On the right is the former landmark site shown in red on the west side of Grand Concourse at East 144<sup>th</sup> Street. On December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013 the Landmarks Preservation Commission approved an advisory report on the demolition of PS 31 acknowledging the Department of Building's emergency declaration the building's poor structural condition and multiple efforts over many years to rehabilitate the structure, the building was demolished soon after. As was presented to you, the Landmarks Commission in 2013 serious issues were discovered after the designation which led to multiple efforts by a variety of firms to rehabilitate the building. Because of its poor condition however the school was eventually vacated by 1997 and temporary shoring and bracing were installed. In 2012 after superstorm Sandy a damage assessment found that its condition had further deteriorated beyond repair as a result of the storm

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including damage to the shoring and bracing and this slide shows the building shortly after superstorm Sandy. In 2013 as I mentioned the Department of Buildings determined that the building posed a threat to public safety and issued the emergency declaration for full demolition. At our recent public hearing on the rescission of the landmark site on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the Commission received testimony from a representative of the Historic Districts Council who did not support or oppose the rescission but urged better maintenance and upkeep of public buildings. The Commission voted to rescind the landmark designation because the designated school building has been demolished and nothing of architectural, historic or cultural significance remains on the designated site. We recommend that you uphold this action and I'm happy to take any questions.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: I'm just happy to see that something is going to be done on this site that will benefit New Yorkers specifically after superstorm Sandy its always good to see that we don't let these vacancies and these spaces just remain dormant and remain literally in ashes in our city. We've got so many other spaces to work with so I'm

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really happy about this, I have no questions, but I did want to make that comment so thank you for your testimony today.

KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Are there any other members of the public wishing to... wishing to testify? Okay, seeing none I close this hearing and the application will be laid over. The next hearing is for LU 616, an application by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development to facilitate the disposition and renovation of one city owned six story building located at 272 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street in community district three in Manhattan. HPD is seeking an urban development action area project approval or UDAAP and the approval of a new four-year tax exemption under Article XI of Private Housing Finance Law. The building which entered city ownership through in room foreclosure in 1978 has 19 currently occupied residential units which will be retained post renovation. The property will be conveyed to UHAB HFDC for a nominal fee of one dollar. Post disposition, UHAB, HDFC will come back to HPD to seek funding to coordinate a renovation of the property. At closing the building will become a

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2 rent stabilized property with rents set at 30 percent  
3 AMI for all tenants. Okay, from HPD we have Lacey  
4 Tauber, Christine O'Connell and is it Anya?

5 ANYA IRONS: Anya.

6 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Anya Irons.

7 ANYA IRONS: From UHAB.

8 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: From UHAB, thank you.

9 Before you begin Counsel will swear you in.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: Do you affirm to tell  
11 the truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony  
12 before this Committee and in answering all of the  
13 Council Member's questions?

14 LACEY TAUBER: Yes.

15 CHRISTINE O'CONNELL: Yes.

16 ANYA IRONS: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you, you may  
18 begin.

19 LACEY TAUBER: Okay, land use item number  
20 616 consists of the proposed disposition of a city  
21 owned multiple dwelling located at block 376, lot 28  
22 in Manhattan council district two known as 272 East  
23 7<sup>th</sup> Street. The project is slated for disposition  
24 through HPD's property disposition and finance  
25 program. Under this program city owned, vacant and or

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occupied multifamily residential buildings may be purchased by a designated sponsor in order to create affordable rental housing units with a range of affordability. HPD has designated UHAB HDFC as an eligible sponsor for this project. 272 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street contains six stories and is comprised of 19 units with a mixture of unit types including 14 studios and five two-bedroom apartments. The building is fully occupied and will subject to rent stabilization upon conveyance. Initial rents for existing residents will be set at 30 percent of the area median income, AMI. Estimated rents at 30 percent AMI are 425 for a studio and 662 dollars for a two bedroom. Upon vacancy units will be rented at 50 percent of AMI and will be rented to families with household incomes at or below 60 percent of AMI. Once conveyed to the new owner UHAB will coordinate the development of a rehabilitation scope of work with the tenants. LU 616 also seeks approval of Article XI tax benefits; in this case the exemption period will be four years only at which time UHAB will return to HPD for funds in order to implement the rehabilitation plan and an extension of tax benefits. Post rehabilitation the property is expected to be

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converted to cooperative home ownership. The cumulative value of the tax benefit totals approximately 92,977 dollars with a net present value of 79,445 dollars. And I'll just add that we also submitted for the record a letter and a tenant petition from the residents expressing their support for this plan.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Okay, thank you very much, we do have support from my colleague, Council Member Carlina Rivera which I will read into the record. Dear Chair, Chair Adams and Committee Members thank you for granting me the opportunity to speak in support of the proposed application for the Article XI tax exemption and urban development action area project, UDAAP for 19 units of housing in my district. By way of partnership with receiving entity UHAB, these individuals and families will remain in their homes under a rent stabilized regime set at 30 percent AMI. A city owned building since 1978, the site will seek public financing via Department of Housing Preservation and Development to then undergo much needed capital improvements. As areas in the East Village continue to see upward pressures on rents due to real estate speculation these housing

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units represent an opportunity for long time residents to remain in a neighborhood that many of them have known for their entire lives. I ask that you join me in supporting this exemption and disposition to help preserve a place for these residents in their community. Thank you. I know that it's very important for my colleague, Council Member Rivera that her constituents remain where they're comfortable and seeing no opposition to this proposal I thank you for your testimony today, you are excused.

LACEY TAUBER: Thank you.

CHRISTINE O'CONNELL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Our last hearing is on LU 617, an application by the New York City Health and Hospitals for the approval of the leasing of approximately 24,080 square feet of land including the 20,000 square feet administration building on the campus of New York City Health and Hospitals Sea View. This approval pursuant to section 7387 of the HHC Act would facilitate the 30 year lease with a 19 year renewal option of the city owned property to Camelot of Staten Island Incorporated to operate a residential substance abuse use disorder program to

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treat women on the campus of New York City Health and Hospitals Sea View. I now open the public hearing on this application. We are joined today by representatives of NYC Health and Hospitals; Matthew Levy, Jeremy Berman, Luke, is it Nasta?

LUKE NASTA: Luke Nasta.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Luke Nasta from Camelot of Staten Island. Before you begin Counsel will swear you in.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this Subcommittee and in answer to all of the Council Member's questions?

LUKE NASTA: I do.

MATTHEW LEVY: Yes.

JEREMY BERMAN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much, you may begin.

MATTHEW LEVY: Sorry about that. Good afternoon members of NYC Council Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses. New York City Health and Hospitals is requesting the approval for leasing of approximately 24,080 square feet of land including 20,000 square feet administration

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building on the campus of New York City Health and Hospitals Sea View on Staten Island. The lease will be between New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation as landlord and Camelot of Staten Island Incorporated, Camelot as tenant. Camelot will pay Health and Hospitals an annual rent of 250,000 or 12.50 per square foot to be escalated by two and a half percent per year for 50 years with Camelot holding an option to extend such term for ten additional years. The total rent payable over a 50-year term will be 24, 24 million dollars... 24,371,087 dollars. Camelot, Camelot is a non for profit formed in 1971 licensed under Article 32 of the New York State mental health... mental hygiene law to operate outpatient and intensive rehabilitation... residential rehabilitation programs. Camelot operates two, two intensive residential programs, one for adolescent males and one for adult males. It also operates five outpatient programs; one on Staten Island and four outpatient clinics located in homes for the homeless, tier two family shelters in Queens and the Bronx. Since 2012 Camelot has operated a 35-bed adult male residential program on the Sea View campus in the Camelot rehabilitated group building. The

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proposed 25 residential substance abuse use disorder program will treat women only because research indicates that gender responsive rehabilitation is more effective, there are no residential SUD programs for women on Staten Island. It will be housed in the now vacant administration building which will be updated and renovated by Camelot with funding provided by the New York State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuses to accommodate the potential.. the patient population Camelot serves. The improvements made to the building will be at no cost to Health and Hospitals but will further improve the dilapidated building on Sea View's campus. According to the New York State Department of Health, SUD is found on Staten Island at rates higher than the rest of New York City. Individuals with SUD represent approximately 33 percent of the Medicare beneficiaries on Staten Island and 32 percent of these are hospitalized at least once each year which is twice the rate of those without SUD and roughly 30 percent of these are women. As previously mentioned, there are no residential treatments, treatment programs on Staten Island for women with SUD. Camelot maintains the acute detoxification services either

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alone or in combination with short term 21, 21-day inpatient rehabilitation is effective for less than 25 percent of the patients and ongoing outpatient treatment is also effective for only a limited percentage of patients thus longer duration programs are necessary. Women entering the Camelot program will remain as long as nine months. The Camelot facility will accept referrals from Health and Hospitals and from a range of health and social services agencies on Staten Island including members of the Staten Island delivery system reform incentive PPS. Each Camelot patient will have a primary counselor and will receive treatment for SUD including methadone, buprenorphine, base treatment, mental health issues, trauma related experiences and post discharge planning with respect to employment and housing. Each resident will receive a medical and psychiatric evaluation and medications will be prescribed for chronic conditions. Camelot projects that 80 percent of its patients will achieve recovery. We look forward to a favorable review and approval of the lease agreement between Health and Hospitals and Camelot. Thank you very much.

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CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much for your testimony today, this is a very interesting application. Just curious about a couple of things, there are no residential SUDs for women on Staten Island at all, right?

LUKE NASTA: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Okay and Camelot operates two residential programs, one for adolescent males and one for adult males, was that.. were those programs initiated in 71 or was it.. [cross-talk]

LUKE NASTA: No, the, the 24 bed.. do you remember when that was opened John?

[off mic dialogue]

LUKE NASTA: Yeah, 92, right?

[off mic dialogue]

LUKE NASTA: Okay, so the 24 bed was in 1992 and the Sea View operation was 2012. Staten Island is a little slow to accept its problems and its solutions.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Okay, so.. alright, so what I'm trying to understand..

LUKE NASTA: Sure..

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CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: ...is the, the obvious need for, for this and just getting just background for my edification...

LUKE NASTA: Sure...

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: ...so there are no current for women only programs like this, the programs that currently exist on Staten Island are they co-ed programs right now, are they just nonexistent, what does that look like?

LUKE NASTA: There are... they're outpatient that, that are co-ed but there are no residential treatment programs for women exclusively.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Okay... [cross-talk]

LUKE NASTA: ...and women are dying from overdoses on Staten Island at the rate of 25 a year and there are about 300 overdoses a year of women but of, of those only 25 are, are fatal.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Interesting. Your locations in Queens and the Bronx where are they specifically?

LUKE NASTA: You're asking hard questions, I don't know... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: That's not hard at all... [cross-talk]

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2 LUKE NASTA: No, no, no they're not but I  
3 don't know the addresses.

4 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Okay... [cross-talk]

5 LUKE NASTA: Do... does it... do you guys  
6 know the addresses of... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Not, not really the  
8 addresses just the towns I'm looking for... [cross-  
9 talk]

10 LUKE NASTA: Its... well its Queens... its  
11 Queens and three in the Bronx.

12 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Okay, just sections,  
13 I'm just looking for... [cross-talk]

14 JEREMY BERMAN: They're, they're located  
15 in, in, in other programs that are run by others,  
16 they're co-located with homes for the homeless...  
17 [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: I see... [cross-talk]

19 JEREMY BERMAN: ...which, which operates  
20 tier two shelters...

21 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: I see...

22 JEREMY BERMAN: ...and so they're not  
23 Camelot branded programs, Camelot operates... [cross-  
24 talk]

25 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: They're... [cross-talk]

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JEREMY BERMAN: ...within... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: ...not standalone  
Camelot programs... [cross-talk]

JEREMY BERMAN: Right and they're...  
[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: ...they are... [cross-  
talk]

JEREMY BERMAN: ...and they're not  
residential programs so I think a big point if I can  
speak for my... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

JEREMY BERMAN: ...colleague here from  
Camelot is that this is a residential, long term  
residential program as, as was stated, there the  
residents remain for as long as nine months so that's  
an entirely different treatment approach than the  
outpatient approach which his more episodic and  
shorter term.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Okay, thank you,  
that, that totally clarified my understanding. Okay,  
I think that was it for the questions, is there  
anything else that you'd like to add?

JEREMY BERMAN: Well I'd just say on  
behalf of Health and Hospitals this is a positive

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thing for us because it takes a building that was previously dilapidated or is currently dilapidated and unused and it brings use to the building, it brings state funds from Oasis administered through the dormitory authority of the state of New York which will oversee the renovations so it takes a burden off of us of minimal maintenance for an idle building and I think the borough president is very interested in bringing more life to Staten... to Sea View and seeing more health related uses on the campus complimentary to the long term post-acute care facility that we operate so this is in the general planning direction that Health and Hospitals would like to take the Sea View campus, it results in some modest income to the hospital and relieves us of the burden of this dilapidated structure and serves important community needs of Staten Island as, as Mr. Nasta has described.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you so much, I, I'm, I'm, I'm positive that borough President Oddo would absolutely, you know love this being a part of, of this particular campus as would the countless numbers of women that would be able to take advantage of these services and programs. So, I thank you very

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much for your testimony today and good luck.. [cross-talk]

JEREMY BERMAN: Thank you.. [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: ...with the application, thank you so much.

LUKE NASTA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Are there any other members of the public wishing to testify on this item? Seeing none I now close this hearing and the application will be laid over. I'd like to thank the members of the public, my colleagues, Council and Land Use staff for attending today's hearing. 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

FEBRUARY 19, 2020