



## NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Robert B. Tierney  
Chairman

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### **COMMISSION NAMES FOUR NEW LANDMARKS, INCLUDING THE CITY'S YOUNGEST, AND MOVES FORWARD WITH PROPOSALS TO EXTEND PROTECTION TO ANOTHER 1,100 SITES CITYWIDE**

The Landmarks Preservation Commission today held its annual "Spring Designation Day," taking action on more than two dozen proposals to extend landmark protection to approximately 1,100 sites across New York City. The panel voted unanimously to designate as New York City landmarks a former social club for engineers, a theater and the Modernist headquarters of a Japanese cultural organization in Manhattan \_ now the City's youngest landmark \_ and a Bronx cottage attributed to the preeminent architect James Renwick Jr. It also held seven public hearings and calendared another 16 public hearings on proposals seeking to extend landmark protection to more than 1,100 sites citywide.

"The Commission made a great deal of progress today towards protecting many more of New York City's architecturally, culturally and historically significant sites," said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. "We voted to hold hearings on plans to landmark some of the City's oldest buildings, designated its youngest landmark and took action on 1,100 buildings in between."

The new landmarks are: the Renaissance Revival, c. 1907 **Engineers' Club Building** at 32 West 40<sup>th</sup> Street in Midtown, the neo-Georgian, c. 1915 **Neighborhood Playhouse** at 466 Grand Street on the Lower East Side; the Modernist c. 1971 **Japan Society** at 333 East 47<sup>th</sup> Street in Turtle Bay and the c. 1868, rural cottage-style **Greystone Gatehouse** at 4695 Independence Ave. in the Riverdale section of the Bronx.

The 16 sites that were calendared for public hearings include **three** 19<sup>th</sup>-century and **one** early 20<sup>th</sup>-century buildings in City Island in the Bronx; **two** buildings in Brooklyn: a c. 1866 Gothic Revival style church building, now home to the **Paul Robeson Theatre** at 40 Greene Ave. in Fort Greene and the c. 1929 neo-Romanesque East New York Savings Bank building at 1117 Eastern Parkway in Crown Heights; **one** in Queens: the c. 1867 Italianate style Daniel Eldridge House at 87-61 111<sup>th</sup> Street in Richmond Hill; and **nine** sites in Manhattan including **seven Federal style** buildings dating from approximately 1800 to the 1830s, and the exterior and first floor interior of the Art Deco-style **Cities Service Building** at 70 Pine Street in the Financial District.

The Commission also held public hearings on proposals to designate two historic districts and five individual landmarks. The historic districts include the 190-building **Riverside-West End Historic District Extension I** on Manhattan's Upper West Side, the first of three phases of proposed extensions to Upper West Side historic districts and the 940-building **Central Ridgewood Historic District** in Queens.

The five proposed individual landmarks include the **Citizens Savings Bank**, the c. 1924 Beaux-Arts building at 58 Bowery, at the foot of the Manhattan Bridge in Manhattan; **two** 1930's Neo-Tudor style apartment complexes in Queens: the **Fairway Apartments** in Jackson Heights and **Hawthorne Court** in Bayside; and **two** buildings in Brooklyn: the c. 1929 Moderne style **Sears Roebuck and Co. Store** at 2307 Beverly Road in Flatbush, and the c. 1923 neo-Classical **Public National Bank** building at 47-49 Graham Ave. in Williamsburg.

Descriptions of the buildings that were voted landmarks follow below:

**Engineers' Club Building, 32 West 40<sup>th</sup> Street**, between Fifth and Sixth avenues

The 12-story, Renaissance Revival-style building, designed by the architecture firm of Whitfield & King, was constructed in 1907 to house the Engineers' Club, the first social organization established in the United States for engineers and those working in related fields.



The club was founded in 1888, a time when professional engineering had become integral to the nation's industrial and economic development, and originally leased space at 10 West 29<sup>th</sup> Street. Its members have included Andrew Carnegie, who contributed \$500,000 for the project, Herbert C. Hoover, Thomas Edison, Charles Lindbergh, Cornelius Vanderbilt and H.H. Westinghouse.

The new building was constructed in response to the club's rapidly growing membership, which reached 2,000 by 1909, and featured public spaces, social rooms, and 66 sleeping rooms, also known as bachelor apartments.

Henry D. Whitfield and Beverly S. King's relatively young architecture firm was selected to design the building through a competition, besting Carrere & Hastings and other established names in the business. The firm was also responsible for the parish house of the Flatbush Congregation Church in Brooklyn and a neo-Federal parking garage on the Upper East Side belonging to Carnegie, Whitfield's brother-in-law.

The Engineers' Club building, which faces Bryant Park, has a three-story base clad in white marble, marble quoins, molded window enframements and a projecting ornate cornice.

"The club building today looks almost exactly as it did more than a century ago, and stands as an architectural reminder of the emergence of New York state as the engineering center of the nation," said Chairman Tierney.

Its construction coincided with that of an adjacent, but related building that was also funded by Carnegie and served as the joint headquarters of New York City's professional engineering clubs such as the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the American Institute of Electrical Engineers and the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical and Petroleum Engineering.

The Engineers' Club declared bankruptcy in 1977, forcing the sale of the building, which was converted in 1983 into a cooperative apartment house, its current use.

**The Neighborhood Playhouse (now the Harry DeJur Playhouse)**, 466 Grand Street, at the corner of Pitt Street



The red-brick, neo Georgian-style Neighborhood Playhouse was completed in 1915 and constructed as part of the Henry Street Settlement, by the theater's founders, sisters Alice and Irene Lewisohn. They were the daughters of Lewis Lewisohn, a wealthy German-Jewish immigrant and philanthropist.

Prior to opening the theater, the Lewisohn sisters directed a number of children's productions and pageants at the Henry Street Settlement, founded in 1889 by Lillian D. Wald primarily to assist poor immigrants living on the Lower East Side.

The Neighborhood Playhouse was one of the City's early "little theaters," or experimental theaters, that staged innovative works and gave rise to the Off-Broadway movement. The playhouse, which was completely controlled by women, initially staged drama, song and dance performances, including new works by George Bernard Shaw, James Joyce and Eugene O'Neill.

The playhouse was designed by Ingalls & Hoffman, an architecture firm that was responsible for Broadway's Helen Hayes Theater at 238 West 44<sup>th</sup> Street, also a neo-Georgian style, red-brick building – a rare architectural style for a Broadway theater, which typically were designed in the Beaux-Arts or Classical Revival styles.

The firm's other commissions include the Henry Miller Theater at 124 West 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, and the famed Villa Vizcaya in Miami.

The three-story playhouse, set above a granite base, features a main entrance with wood-paneled double doors beneath a fanlight and flanked by sidelights, wood shutters, and splayed keystone lintels. The second story is topped by a balustrade and a white stuccoed, third-story setback.

The Neighborhood Playhouse theater company closed in 1927, and the Henry Street Settlement took over programming, opening the Henry Street Music School and renaming the building the Henry Street Playhouse. One of the most notable performances at the school was the world premiere of Aaron Copeland's "The Second Hurricane," in a staging by Orson Wells in 1937.

From 1948 to 1970, the playhouse was the home of a dance school founded by modern dance pioneer Alwin Nikolais. It was renamed in 1967 for Harry De Jur, a Russian immigrant who was a former director of the Henry Street Settlement. The New Federal Theatre, which was founded in 1970 and specializes in productions by women and minorities, has performed there since 1971

"The theater is a standout among the buildings that surround it, and continues to distinguish itself as a leading cultural institutions on the Lower East Side to this day," said Chairman Tierney.

### **Japan Society Headquarters, 333 East 47<sup>th</sup> Street, between First and Second avenues**



Completed in 1971, the subtle five-story Modernist style Japan Society was designed by Junzo Yoshimura, a leading Japanese architect during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and George G. Shimamoto, an architect at the firm now known as Gruzen and Partners.

Japan Society, a cultural and educational institution, was founded in 1907 to foster a friendly relationship between the United States and Japan. John D. Rockefeller III, the philanthropist and brother of former New York State governor Nelson Rockefeller, served as president of the organization from 1951 to 1978, and spearheaded the construction of the new headquarters.

The building's charcoal-colored façade is comprised of a series of elements considered to be a reinterpretation of familiar Japanese elements, such as layered, painted concrete spandrels, recessed windows, white ceiling panels and metal screens.

"Yoshimura produced a serene work that spoke to Japan's aspirations at the time and reflected the nation's contemporary architectural design trends." said Chairman Tierney.

The building is the 12<sup>th</sup> Modernist site to receive landmark status since 2003. It's also the youngest of the City's individual landmarks. Prior to today's vote, the Ford Foundation, completed in 1967, held that distinction.

**Greyston Gatehouse** (the William E. and Sarah T. Hoadley Dodge, Jr., Estate Gatehouse)  
4695 Independence Ave., the Bronx

The Greyston Gatehouse, was completed in 1868 in the Riverdale section of the Bronx, a neighborhood on a high bluff above the Hudson River that was developed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as a summer retreat for the wealthy.

The gatehouse was constructed to house a caretaker for the Greyston Estate, the site of the noted c. 1864 Gothic Revival grey granite villa that was designed by the preeminent architect James Renwick, Jr. and his partner Joseph Sands. The villa, also known as the William E. and Sarah T. Hoadley Dodge, Jr. House, was named a New York City landmark in 1970.



Renwick is the architect of numerous institutional and religious buildings in New York City and beyond, including Grace Church and Rectory, St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Rectory and Cardinal's Residence, all in Manhattan, the Smallpox Hospital on Roosevelt Island and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

William Earle Dodge, Jr., was a partner in the international tin and copper manufacturer, Phelps, Dodge & Co., and was the president of the Ansonia Clock Co. and Ansonia Brass Co. His wife, Sarah Tappan Hoadley, was the daughter of a former drug merchant and banker and president of the Panama Railroad Co.

The 1 1/2-story gatehouse is one of New York City's finest examples of the picturesque rural cottage style that was popularized in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was Renwick and Sands \_ also the designers of the Riverdale Presbyterian Church in Riverdale \_ are strongly to be the architects of the gatehouse, not only because they designed the villa, but also because of the firm's close associations with the Dodge family and the fact that both buildings feature multiple jerkinhead gables.

In addition to jerkinhead gables, the irregularly shaped gatehouse features clapboard siding at the first story and board-and-batten above, and jerkinhead roofs covered by polychrome slate shingles with several sections set in a diamond pattern. The property includes two historic granite piers at the entrance leading to Greyston.

"The charming Greyston gatehouse is not only a rare example of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century architectural style in New York City, it's also one of the very few known buildings of this kind that's associated with Renwick's firm," said Chairman Tierney.

The gatehouse remained in the Dodge family until 1977 and is now owned by the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation.

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The Landmarks Preservation Commission is the mayoral agency responsible for protecting and preserving New York City's architecturally, historically and culturally significant buildings and sites. Since its creation in 1965, LPC has granted landmark status to more than 27,000 buildings,

including 1,284 individual landmarks, 111 interior landmarks, 10 scenic landmarks, 102 historic districts and 16 historic district extensions in all five boroughs. Under the City's landmarks law, considered among the most powerful in the nation, the Commission must be comprised of at least three architects, a historian, a realtor, a planner or landscape architect, as well as a representative of each borough.

Contact: Elisabeth de Bourbon/ 212-669-7938