



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

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COMMISSION GRANTS LANDMARK STATUS TO CROWN HEIGHTS NORTH IN UNANIMOUS VOTE

*Collection of 19th and 20th Century Mansions, Row Houses, Apartment Buildings and Churches,
Distinguished by Eclectic Architectural Styles, Becomes Brooklyn's 17th Historic District*

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) voted unanimously today to grant landmark protection to 472 buildings in the Crown Heights North section of Brooklyn, forming a historic district that will serve as the cornerstone for establishing similar districts in the neighborhood.

Approved on a 9-0 vote, the new district runs along Pacific Street to the north, Dean Street, Prospect Place and St. Mark's Avenue to the south, Bedford Avenue to the west and Kingston Avenue to the east. It comprises finely detailed buildings that were mostly constructed between the 1860s and 1930s and were designed by many prominent Brooklyn architects in styles ranging from Romanesque Revival and Queen Anne to Georgian and Renaissance Revival.

"This marvelous ensemble of mansions, churches, row houses and freestanding residences in Crown Heights North forms a streetscape that is unlike any other in New York City," said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. "The creation of a historic district here underscores the Commission's commitment to preserving our City's special heritage in all five boroughs, and we look forward to working with the residents of Crown Heights North to help them ensure that their splendid neighborhood remains intact."

The creation of the Crown Heights North Historic District marks the first of several phases of landmark designation that will be proposed for 1,400 buildings in Crown Heights North.

Today's designation brings to 86 the number of historic districts in all five boroughs. LPC is responsible for protecting these groups of historically, culturally and architecturally significant structures that are characterized by a distinct sense of place and a coherent streetscape. Backed by the country's strongest preservation law, the Commission is authorized to approve or deny permission for changes to the buildings in these districts.

Commissioner Tierney praised the Crown Heights North Association, a homeowners' and civic group, for spearheading the formation of the district and for their advocacy of their neighborhood's architecture and history. He also thanked LPC's staff for their dedication and hard work in making the district possible.

Most of the land in Crown Heights North was part of a farm owned by the Lefferts family, who started to sell off their property in the 1850s. Large scale residential development began in the area after the Brooklyn Bridge opened in 1883, attracting a largely white, Protestant population who brought with them churches and other institutions, including the renowned New York Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church

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and the former Union League Club. The subway opened along Eastern Parkway in 1920, generating an influx of people and raising demand for housing. Many mansions in the neighborhood were demolished to construct Tudor Revival, Mediterranean and Art Deco-style six-story apartment buildings.

Since 1950, Crown Heights North has been the home to a significant West Indian and African-American community. Much of the 19th and early 20th century architectural character of the area remains unchanged, as significant residential development ended in the 1930s during the Great Depression.

Below are brief descriptions and photos of several outstanding buildings in the District:

Dean Sage Residence, c. 1870
839 St. Mark's Avenue



This mansion is the second-oldest house in the district after the c.1855-69 Elkins House, a designated New York City Landmark at 1375 Dean Street. Constructed at the northeast corner of St. Mark's and Brooklyn avenues for a wealthy Brooklyn lumber dealer, the building features severe gray facades laid in stone blocks and a three-sided bay with pointed-arch windows.

The Sage house is a High Victorian Gothic villa designed by **Russell Sturgis**, who is considered one of America's finest practitioners of the style. Sturgis set up an architecture practice in New York after the Civil War, and

over the next twenty years designed a number of churches, institutional buildings, houses, public buildings, and banks. Among his best-known works are a chapel and dormitories at Yale University and the Farmers and Merchants Bank in Albany, New York.



Union League Club Building, c. 1889
19-29 Rogers Avenue

Facing Grant Square at the southeast corner of Bedford and Dean Streets, the former Union League Club Building once housed a Republican club. The Romanesque Revival-style structure features light-colored brick with rough-faced brownstone trim. The main entrance is decorated with portrait busts of former presidents Lincoln and Grant. The club closed in 1913, and the building was sold to another club.

The building was designed by **Peter J. Lauritzen**, whose firm was responsible for many buildings in Brooklyn, including the renovation of former Hawley mansion at 563 Bedford Avenue in Williamsburg and eight fire houses for the former Brooklyn Fire Department. Before coming to New York, he served as Washington, D. C.'s lead architect, and from 1875 to 1883 was the consul for the Danish government.

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855-857 St. Mark's Place, c.1892



This imposing pair of houses is perhaps the District's most sophisticated example of Romanesque Revival-style architecture, designed by one of Brooklyn's finest late 19th century architects, **Montrose Morris**. This pair is an excellent example of Morris' sophisticated use of the Romanesque Revival style. A finely detailed stable and apartment, also designed by Morris, and constructed of Roman brick with bands of rough-faced limestone and a slate roof, is located to the rear of the houses.



Morris began his practice in 1883, and designed apartment houses throughout Brooklyn, including the Imperial, Alhambra and Renaissance Apartments, all three of which are designated NYC landmarks and at one time were among the most prestigious and impressive multiple-family residences in Brooklyn.

Bedfordshire Apartments, c. 1891 1200 Pacific Street



Also designed by **Montrose Morris**, the six-story Bedfordshire was constructed next to the Imperial. Executed in light brick, the Bedfordshire is an exquisitely detailed composition in the Romanesque Revival style.

At its first floor, the smooth- and rough-faced stone pilasters flanking the main entrance and window openings are crowned by foliate capitals supporting dwarf pilasters and a frieze band displaying the name of the building. This ornament is executed in terra-cotta, as are the ornate voussoirs and imposts of the fourth- and fifth-floor window arches. A foliate terra-cotta frieze and imposing, and unusually deep, bracketed cornice, cap the Bedfordshire.

1146-1150 Dean Street, c. 1891

These classically inspired, Renaissance Revival-style row houses are notable for their terra-cotta detailing and their first-floor horizontal striations. They were designed by **George B. Chappell**, one of the most prolific architects in the Crown Heights North Historic District. He lived in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, where many of his buildings are located. Chappell also is responsible for St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church (1886-90) at 1227 Pacific Street, an NYC landmark, and one of his best works. In 1899, he founded the firm of Chappell & Bosworth, which specialized in factories and warehouses, including 97-103 Horatio Street (1899-1900), a Romanesque Revival style warehouse in the Gansevoort Market Historic District in Manhattan.

