



**Landmarks Preservation
Commission**

Meenakshi Srinivasan
Chair

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**LANDMARKS COMMISSION VOTES TO PROTECT MORE THAN 800 BUILDINGS
IN BROOKLYN**

Commission Approves Landmark Status for Bedford Historic District

(New York, NY)-The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission today unanimously approved the designation of the Bedford Historic District in Brooklyn. Consisting of 824 buildings within the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, the district is unique for its remarkably well-preserved and concentrated collection of houses by celebrated Brooklyn architects, including Montrose W. Morris, and contains some of the boroughs most distinctive and well-preserved late-19th-century streetscapes. The new district is culturally significant as a major residential district for African-American and Caribbean families since the 1920s.



Constructed almost entirely between 1870 and 1900, the district illustrates the rapid development of row house design in Central Brooklyn during this period. The buildings range from modest vernacular Italianate and Neo-Grec houses to lavishly ornamented Neo-Grec, Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, and Renaissance Revival structures. In addition to its hundreds of distinguished row houses, the district contains dozens of fine flats buildings, as well as two of the city's most significant school buildings— Girls' High School (1885-86, pictured at left), and Boys High School (1890-91), both designed by James W. Naughton with later additions by noted architect C.B.J. Snyder.

The district was originally part of the old village of Bedford, which was centered close to the present-day intersection of Bedford Avenue and Fulton Street, and extends from Monroe Street on the north to Macon Street and Verona Place on the south, and from Bedford Avenue to Tompkins Avenue on the west and east. Before its development, the district consisted of portions of four large farms owned by members of the DeBevoise, Lefferts, and Suydam families. The district's earliest rowhouses were constructed at 276 to 284 Monroe Street (at right). These five wood-framed houses were completed by Walter C. Russell and his wife Susanna E. C. Russell, who was among the few women working as architects in the late-19th-century Brooklyn.





The architectural development of the Bedford Historic District was largely complete by the early 20th century, but significant changes continued to occur in the area— most importantly, its development as a major residential district for African-American and Caribbean-American families. By 1920, a handful of pioneering black families had taken up residency in the district along the south side of Putnam Avenue and at the eastern end of Jefferson Avenue and Halsey Street. Many more settled on Putnam Avenue during the 1920s, as well as on

Halsey Street, east of Marcy Avenue.

African-American churches followed black residents to Bedford, including Siloam Presbyterian Church (pictured at right), which acquired the former Central Presbyterian Church (Acock & Lloyd, 1936-37) at the southwest corner of Jefferson and Marcy Avenues in 1944. Siloam's pastor, the Reverend Milton A. Galamison, continued the church's tradition of social and civil rights activism and became a prominent figure in the effort to integrate the city's schools. Bayard Rustin and the comedian and civil rights activist Dick Gregory were active in these efforts, and in 1964, the church was visited by noted civil rights activist Malcolm X.



Following World War II, Bedford residents worked with their block associations to preserve the neighborhood's historic houses by participating in the brownstoning movement taking place throughout Brooklyn's row house neighborhoods. Today, the Bedford Historic District appears much as it did at the turn of the 20th-century, and its remarkable state of preservation is matched by few other areas of the city.

"This Brooklyn district owes its remarkably intact buildings to the countless homeowners who have safeguarded Bedford's architectural heritage for over a century," said Commission Chair Meenakshi Srinivasan. "In addition to its architectural importance, the Bedford Historic District is also of cultural importance for its rich African American history. This designation is a testament to our strong commitment to designating areas in all five boroughs that have a strong sense of place and illustrate the layered history of our city."

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