



NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Meenakshi Srinivasan
Chair

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STONEWALL INN DESIGNATED AS AN INDIVIDUAL LANDMARK

Iconic Site of 1969 Stonewall Rebellion Approved by the New York City Landmarks Commission



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission today voted unanimously to designate the Stonewall Inn at 51-53 Christopher Street in Manhattan as an individual landmark. The site was the starting point of the Stonewall Rebellion, and is one of the most important sites associated with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) history in New York City and the nation. This marks the first time a site is designated as a New York City Landmark primarily for its significance to LGBT history.

In the late 1960s, when few establishments welcomed gays and lesbians and repressive laws made it impossible for a gay bar to obtain a liquor license, police raids on gay and lesbian clubs were routine. At about 1:20 a.m. on June 28, 1969, the Stonewall Inn was raided as part of a crackdown on New York City gay clubs. Instead of leaving the premises, the patrons of the bar remained waiting in front of the club where they were joined by friends and passersby, mostly members of the LGBT community. As the crowd grew, its members became increasingly angry at the rough treatment some prisoners were receiving and resentful of the unfairness of the situation. For more than two hours, the crowd fought back while anti-riot police tried to clear the streets. The protests and confrontations continued for the next few days until almost midnight Wednesday July 2, 1969, with the Stonewall Inn often at the center of events.

The Stonewall uprising ushered in a new phase in the LGBT Liberation Movement. Within a few months, in direct response to Stonewall, several activist organizations were formed in New York City, including the Gay Liberation Front, the Gay Activists Alliance, Radicalesbians, and the Street Transvestites Action Revolutionaries. Soon new organizations were being established across the U.S. and around the world to promote LGBT civil rights.

On June 28, 1970, the first anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion was commemorated as Christopher Street Liberation Day. The main event was a march from Greenwich Village to Central Park. That same day, Pride marches were also held in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago in commemoration of Stonewall. Those celebrations have since grown into the internationally-celebrated LGBT Pride Month, with events held annually throughout the world.

The two buildings that comprised the Stonewall Inn were originally built in the 1840s as stables, and in 1930 were merged at the first story and given a unified façade. Their combined ground floor commercial space originally housed a bakery, and in 1934 it was taken over by the Stonewall Inn Restaurant. The property reopened in 1967 as a gay club, retaining the name Stonewall Inn.

"New York City's greatness lies in its inclusivity and diversity," said Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair Meenakshi Srinivasan. "The events at Stonewall were a turning point in the LGBT rights movement and in the history of our nation. This building is a symbol of a time when LGBT New Yorkers took a stand and vowed that they would no longer live in the shadows, standing up for the equal rights of all New Yorkers. I am proud that the Commission has designated this very special site as an individual landmark and that we have officially recognized the significance of the Stonewall Inn to the history of our city."

"The Stonewall Inn is a rarity – a tipping point in history where we know, with absolute clarity, that everything changed," said Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer. "This building has a unique place in the history of our city and in the struggle for dignity and equal rights in our society. I thank the LPC for finally designating the Stonewall Inn as a city landmark."

"I applaud the Landmarks Preservation Commission for officially designating the Stonewall Inn as a New York City landmark," said New York City Public Advocate Letitia James. "For years, it has been an emblematic landmark to millions of New Yorkers and visitors, and this official designation is long overdue. As the symbolic starting point of the LGBT rights movement, the Stonewall Inn represents what Selma represents for the civil rights movement, and what Seneca Falls represents for the women's rights movement. Now with protections in place, this historic place can be preserved for generations to come."

"I'm so proud that New York City has formally recognized and protected the historic importance of Stonewall as the birthplace of the modern LGBT civil rights movement. When I think of Stonewall being preserved for future generations, I think of my four year old daughter, and I'm relieved to know that she'll have access to the history that helped her dad's build the family she grew up in. My sincere thanks to the Landmarks Preservation Commission for taking this important step today," said New York State Senator Brad Hoylman.

"LGBT people from around the globe come to New York City to visit sites of historic significance to our community," said Council Member Corey Johnson. "I thank the Landmarks Preservation Commission and its Chair, Meenakshi Srinivasan, for voting to designate the Stonewall Inn, birthplace of the modern LGBT rights movement as a New York City Landmark. When I first visited New York City, the first place I wanted to go was the Stonewall Inn. I stood outside and felt a deep connection to this place that I had read and heard so much about. To now be the Council Member representing the West Village and to have a chance to vote on its landmark designation is incredibly meaningful and special. I hope to see other sites of historical significance to the LGBT community landmarked so that future generations can also experience a connection to their history and heritage."

From the time of the Stonewall Rebellion, the buildings still retain their brick cladding, arched entrances, small storefront windows (associated with LGBT bars of the 1960s), and stuccoed upper stories.

The Stonewall Inn is already within the Greenwich Village Historic District, which was designated on April 29, 1969— just months before the Stonewall uprising. In recognition of the importance of the Stonewall Rebellion, the Commission is now designating the Stonewall Inn as an individual New York City Landmark.

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 approximately 32,743 buildings and sites, including 1352 individual landmarks, 117 interior landmarks, 10 scenic landmarks, 114 historic districts and 22 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.

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