



Manhattan Community Board 10

CITY OF NEW YORK

Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan

April 2012





CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10

215 West 125th Street, 4th Floor—New York, NY 10027
T: 212-749-3105 F: 212-662-4215

Henrietta Lyle
Chair

Paimaan Lodhi, AICP
District Manager

Stanley Gleaton
Land Use Committee Chair

Betty Dubuisson
Landmarks Committee Chair

At a regularly scheduled General Board Meeting on May 2, 2012, Manhattan Community Board 10 unanimously voted to approve the Comprehensive Preservation Plan.

Prepared by Michael Sandler
Community Planning Fellow



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ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

In response to the growing concerns of the Community regarding preserving Harlem's rich heritage, Community Board 10's Land Use and Landmarks Committee has developed a comprehensive planning document that explores various methods in preserving historic buildings and the built context of the District.

This planning document outlines the purpose, the context, and the benefits of designation. Acknowledging that Harlem as a District is under-designated, the goal of this planning document is to ensure new developments are consistent in vernacular and scale and existing buildings are protected. The recommendations put forth in this report represent a collective vision of the community. This report identifies proposals of four distinct landmark designations: individual, interior, scenic, and historic districts. It also includes recommendation for future contextual re-zonings.

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I. PURPOSE

During the public review process for the 125th St. Rezoning, local residents and Community Board 10 (“CB 10”) highlighted a need to designate historic sites and districts throughout Central Harlem in order to preserve the built character of the community. The case was made that there are many blocks and buildings worthy of designation, and that the District as a whole is under-designated when compared to other neighborhoods in Manhattan. Over the past 10 years, the pace of development in Harlem has accelerated and concerns have been raised that much of the new development is out of context with the existing four- to six-story built character of the neighborhood. Unfortunately, the City decided not to move forward with any plans for historic preservation.

In 2010 and 2011, the Land Use and Landmarks Committee of CB 10 met with the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), the Department of City Planning (DCP), the Historic Districts Council, and the Landmarks Conservancy to familiarize themselves with the method, process, and benefit of historic preservation. In the summer of 2011, a special 197-a Taskforce of CB 10, in consultation with the Department of City Planning, met to discuss how to move forward with a 197-a Plan. A recommendation was made, at that time, to develop a comprehensive planning document focusing on historic preservation.

In December 2011, the Land Use Committee of CB 10 met to evaluate a proposal to expand the Mount Morris Park Historic District. At this meeting, committee members raised concerns that there was not enough understanding of the existing state of preservation in the Community District 10 to make a decision about this particular extension. In order to make an informed decision about the Mount Morris Park extension, as well as future land use decisions, the committee wanted to see a comprehensive study of historic preservation needs and options. This planning document attempts to provide a set of recommendations based on the collective vision of the community for preservation in Central Harlem. CB 10 seeks to develop a broad consensus around this plan and advance its many recommendations.

This report outlines various methods the Board should explore for preserving the character and buildings of the District, as well as acknowledging

and celebrating the history of the neighborhood.

Though all of Harlem is historic, CB 10 believes it is important to set aside certain areas that are of particular architectural and cultural significance to preserve for future generations. Through research, site visits, interviews, and community engagement, CB 10 has identified areas worthy of consideration for historic designation and urges the Landmarks Preservation Commission to further investigate these areas and move forward with designation where appropriate. The landmarks proposed in this document represent important places in the history of the District, but by no means are representative of the entire history of the District. As these designations are further researched, efforts should also be made to include other places not listed in this document. The plan also provides recommendations for creating a State Heritage Area in Harlem and designating many sites, including 125th St., in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. In addition, the plan includes recommendations for future contextual rezonings and should be used more broadly by CB 10 as a guide for future land use decisions.

II. CONTEXT

Harlem existed for 250 years as a farming community: densely forested, with large plantations and a few small villages. During the 19th Century, as immigration and economic development caused the population of New York to skyrocket, residential development moved further and further uptown. Transportation improvements allowed the city to expand geographically and led to the rapid development of Harlem between the years of 1876 and 1920. Harlem was built almost all-at-once – a dense metropolis built on empty fields and felled forests in less than a generation.

Starting in 1876, row houses were constructed in large numbers for middle- and upper-class white New Yorkers. Generally four stories, these row houses featured uniform street fronts, continuous cornice levels, and were built in the Italianate, Romanesque and Queen Anne styles. In 1893, the overbuilding of row houses led to a steep drop in real estate values, which attracted large waves of German-Jewish and Italian immigrants. This growing population was too large to be housed in row houses. So, in the years before the turn of the century, construction in Harlem shifted to tenements and apartment buildings.

Anticipation of changes in housing laws¹ led to another speculative wave of construction before 1901, which again caused housing prices to fall precipitously. This drop in prices attracted waves of African-American and Afro-Caribbean immigrants who were increasingly being priced out of lower Manhattan and emigrating from the American South. By 1930, 70 percent of Central Harlem's residents were black.

The Great Depression hit Harlem hard: as many as 50 percent of the city's African-Americans were out of work in the 1930s, and jobs in Harlem stayed scarce for decades. Starting after World War II, suburbanization led many of New York's large businesses to leave the city altogether. Population loss in the city as a whole during the 1970s was particularly pronounced in Central Harlem. From 1976 to 1978 alone, Central Harlem lost one third of its population. By 1987, the city owned 65 percent of the housing stock in Harlem due to abandonment. In 1985, Mayor Koch announced his 10 Year Housing Plan that would invest \$5.1 billion into renovating the 100,000 City-owned apartment buildings. This wave of investment finally stopped the 35-year tide of decline in Central Harlem and helped lead to the reinvestment that we see today.

From its peak population of 237,468 in the 1950 Census, Central Harlem's population had fallen to 101,026 in 1990. Over the past twenty years, Central Harlem has experienced a rapid turn around. The population is now approximately 120,000. Property values rose 300% from 1990 to 2000, compared with just 12% growth citywide. This population increase has resulted in numerous construction projects that can be seen in every corner of the neighborhood.

Despite wholesale disinvestment over 35 years and a concentration of tall Modernist housing complexes, Central Harlem has by-and-large maintained the built character of its 19th Century origins. Most of the buildings in the District are either five- and six-story apartment buildings or three- and four-story row houses built with no setbacks from the streetwall. Current development pressures, however, threaten to alter the built context of the neighborhood. The majority

of the District is zoned R7-2, which allows medium density apartment buildings with no height limits and low lot coverage. Currently, much of the District is under built, and the existing zoning designations allow developers to stack unused development rights from neighboring buildings to construct even taller, out-of-context buildings. Because the majority of the District is built no higher than six stories, high-rise buildings offer unobstructed views, which make them even more appealing and profitable to developers.

New development and maintaining the existing built context of the neighborhood are not mutually exclusive. Measures can be taken now to direct new development into appropriate areas. By directing development along avenues and commercial corridors, Community Board 10 can protect the current scale of the neighborhood while promoting economic development. The remainder of this document provides a set of tools as well as specific recommendations for preserving the character of the District, while allowing for much needed development.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRESERVATION

A. CONTEXTUAL ZONING

Currently, most of CD10 is residentially zoned R7-2 with commercial C1-1 and C2-2 overlays along the avenues. These designations include 'height factor' options that encourage development of tall towers set back from the street. This form of building is inconsistent with the low-to mid-rise character of the district that is typified by con-

sistent street walls and cornice lines. The existing zoning, most of which has not been updated since 1961, does not protect the character of the brownstones areas because of a lack of height limits and the

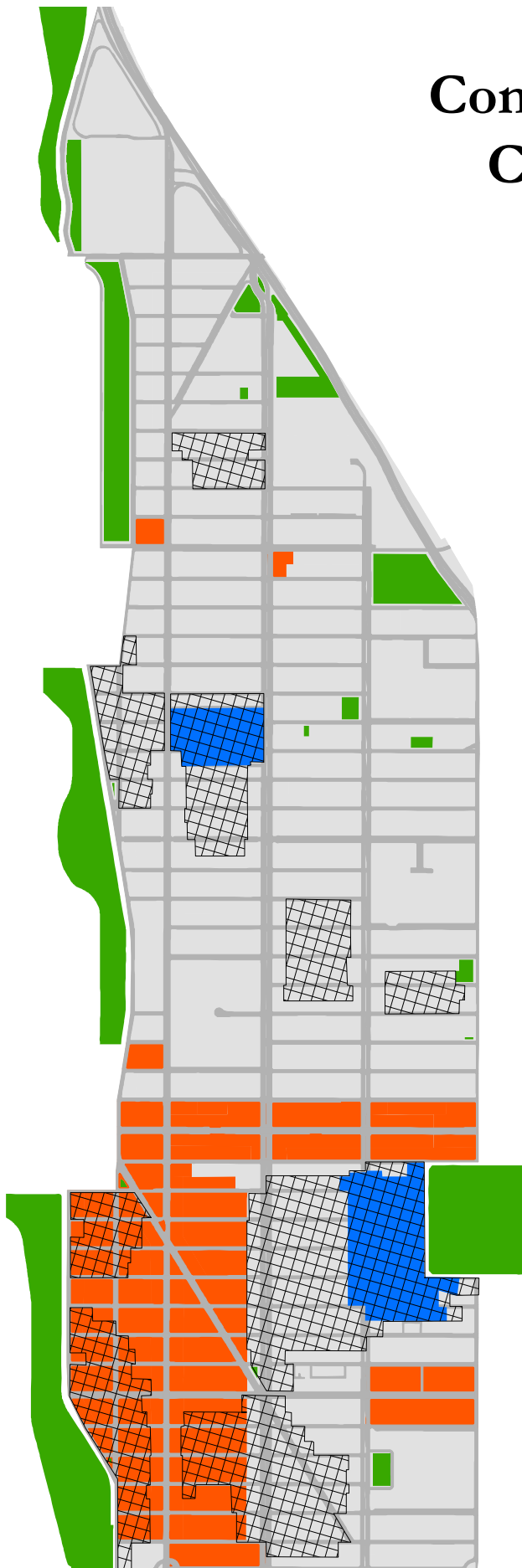
ability to transfer unused development rights to neighboring parcels. The current zoning also does not protect the street wall character of the District, allowing for setbacks from the sidewalk that diminish a street's sense of scale and continuity.

Contextual zoning in the District could allow for new development that is compatible with the existing form of the neighborhood. According to the Department of

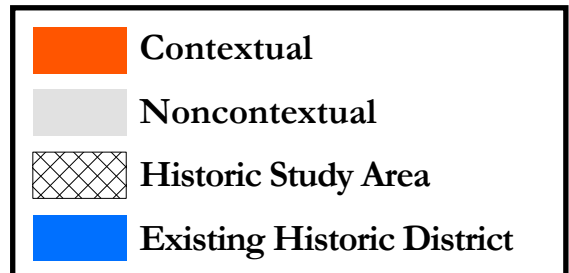
Most of Community District 10 is
currently zoned with no height limits

¹ The Tenement House Act was signed into law in 1901 and required outward-facing windows in every room, an open courtyard, indoor toilets and fire safeguards

Contextual Zoning Areas Community District 10

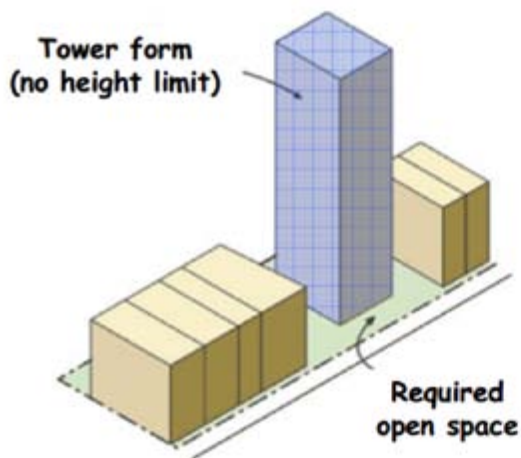


75% of Community District
10 is zoned non-contextually



Contextual vs. Non-Contextual Zoning

Non-contextual Zoning



Contextual Zoning

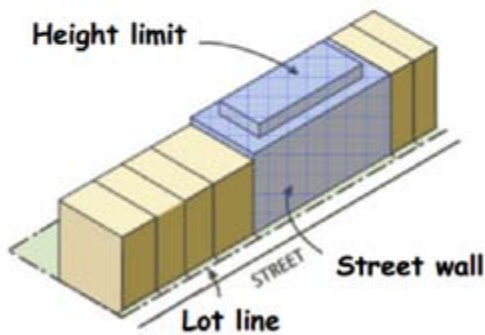


Diagram from the Department of City Planning

City Planning, “contextual zoning regulates the height and bulk of new buildings, their setback from the street line, and their width along the street frontage, to produce buildings that are consistent with existing neighborhood character.”²² There are currently only a handful of contextual zoning districts in CD10: the 125th St. corridor, the area around Frederick Douglass Blvd from 110th St. to 124th St., portions of West 116th St., and portions of West 145th St.. This means that nearly 75% of the buildings in the District are zoned with non-contextual designations. In addition, a large contextual rezoning of West Harlem is currently in the final stages of review and could provide an excellent model for a rezoning of CD10. Coupled with targeted up-zonings, updated commercial overlays, and inclusionary housing programs, a rezoning

of the District could protect against out-of context development, while promoting mixed-use development and affordable housing.

B. DESIGNATION THROUGH THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is responsible for identifying and designating the city’s landmarks and regulating changes to already designated landmarks. The Commission was created in 1965 as a result of the Landmark Law, which came about as a response to growing concern over important buildings being lost to demolition. Designation with the LPC is not just an acknowledgement of historical significance, it is a strict set of regulations concerning the physical characteristics of a property. Any alteration to the exterior of a building, including major restorations and small repairs, must be approved by LPC and the community. This section, the largest in this document, deals with proposals for the creation of individual, scenic and interior landmarks as well as historic districts through LPC.

There are four types of LPC designation:

- An individual landmark is a property, object, or building that has been designated by LPC. These properties or objects are also referred to as “exterior” landmarks because only their exterior features have been designated. Wadleigh High School for Girls, the Hotel Theresa, and Abyssinian Baptist Church are examples of individual landmarks in CD10.
- An interior landmark is an interior space that has been designated by LPC. Interior landmarks customarily must be accessible to the public. The Apollo Theater and the Jackie Robinson Play Center Bath House are the only interior landmarks in CD10.

LPC Designation in CD 10 Today

- 28 Individual Landmarks
- 2 Interior Landmarks
- 2 Historic Districts
- No Scenic Landmarks

- A scenic landmark is a landscape feature or group of features that has been designated by the Landmarks Commission. Scenic landmarks must be situated on City-owned property. While there are no scenic landmarks in CD10, Morningside Park and Central Park are scenic landmarks that adjoin the district.
- A historic district is an area of the city designated by the LPC that represents at least one period or style of architecture typical of one or more areas in the city's history; as a result, the district has a distinct "sense of place." In CD10 there are two historic districts, St. Nicholas (Striver's Row) and Mount Morris Park.

State of Designation in District Today

Currently, very little of CD10 is designated historic by the LPC. The District contains 28 individual landmarks and two small historic districts, the Mount Morris Park Historic District and the St. Nicholas Historic District (Striver's Row). These historic districts make up only 3.6 percent of CD10. Comparatively, 10.6 percent of Manhattan is designated as historic districts. Community District 2,

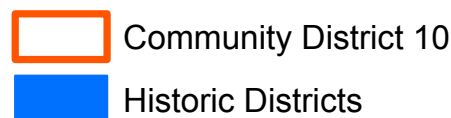
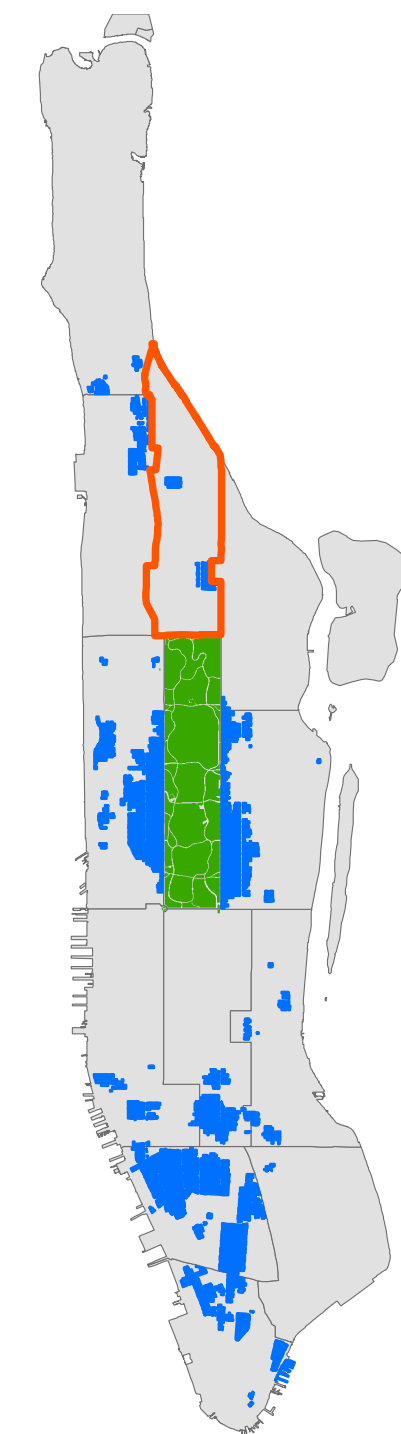
Historic Districts make up only 3.6 percent of CD10, while 26 percent of the Upper West Side is protected

in the West Village, is the most designated area of the city, with 45 percent of its buildings included in historic districts. Similar in age to Commu-

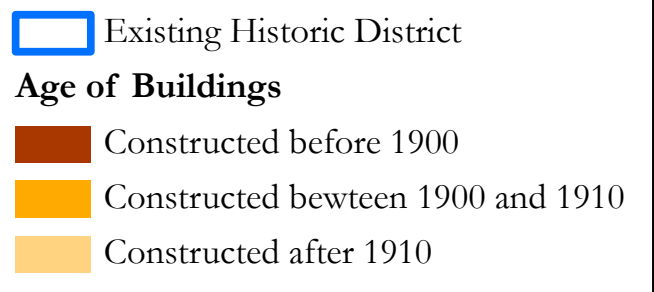
nity District 10, the Upper West Side has 26 percent of its area covered by historic districts. The Mount Morris Park Historic District and the St. Nicholas Historic District are rather limited in scope because in the early years of the LPC, district designations were rather cautious, as the legality of historic districts in general was questionable. Today, there are legal precedents and countless success stories to justify the expansion of many historic districts.

The area that was designated in Mount Morris Park, for example, consisted of many of the most elegant and earliest buildings in the area, in blocks that were by and large untouched by new development and were easily justified as historic. The areas just outside this designation, however, also consisted almost entirely of historic homes, many of which were built before 1910 and all of which were built before World War II. Today, those buildings remain, just outside of the designated area, but their fate is less

Historic Districts in Manhattan



Historic Buildings CD 10



than certain. On 123rd St., west of Malcolm X Blvd., new contemporary condominiums encased in glass and metal have already dramatically altered the feel of the block. Immediately to the east of the historic district, the new “5th on the Park” building stands at 28 stories, dwarfing the low-rise historic district and dramatically altering the context of the area.

As mentioned above, Central Harlem has a high concentration of century-aged buildings, all built during a short period of time around the turn of the 20th Century. There are many blocks that are worthy of designation that currently have no protection in place to preserve the architectural

legacy. Considering the number of historic and architecturally significant buildings in Central Harlem, the two current historic districts are far from sufficient.

Benefits of Designation

1. Financial Incentives for Historic Preservation

There are a wide range of financial benefits for owners of historically designated buildings, from grants and low interest loans to generous tax credits. Most of the grants and loans are targeted at individual families and non-profit organizations. The tax credits, which allow tax reduc-

Financial Incentives for Preservation

New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

- *Federal Investment Tax Credit for Income Producing Properties*
SHPO administers this federal program that allows owners of income producing historic properties to take a tax credit worth 20% of the cost of substantial rehabilitation work.
- *Historic Tax Credit Program for Income Producing Properties*
Owners who qualify for the Federal tax credit may also be eligible for this additional benefit, which allows them to receive 30% of the federal credit value, up to \$100,000.
- *Historic Homeownership Rehabilitation Tax Credit*
Rehabilitation of owner-occupied buildings in distressed census tracts is eligible for this tax credit of up to 20% of the cost of work, up to \$25,000.

More information on the SHPO programs can be found at www.nysparks.state.ny.us/shpo

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC)

- *Historic Preservation Grant Program*
LPC offers grants of \$10,000 to \$15,000 for restoration and repair of historic buildings in low-income households. The grants cover exterior repairs, primarily of the street façade.
- *Historic Preservation Grant Program for Nonprofits*
This is a grant of up to \$25,000 for non-profits that own and occupy individual landmarks or buildings in historic districts, for the improvement of building exteriors.

Further information on LPC financial incentives can be found at nyc.gov/landmarks

The New York Landmarks Conservancy

- *Historic Properties Fund*
This fund offers low-interest loans and project management assistance for exterior work and structural repairs ranging from \$20,000 to \$30,000. Most of the loans go to low- and moderate-income communities.
- *City Ventures Fund*
This fund helps nonprofit developers retain significant historic detailing on buildings being converted to affordable housing or other uses serving low-income communities with grants from \$5,000 to \$30,000. Unlike other programs listed, this fund is specifically for buildings not designated as historic landmarks.
- *Sacred Sites Program*
This program provides financial and technical assistance for the repair or rehabilitation of religious properties.

For more information visit www.nylandmarks.org/assistance.php.

New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development

- *J-51 Program:*
The J-51 Program offers tax exemptions and abatements to owners for the significant restoration of residential buildings.

Visit www.nyc.gov/hpd.

tions based on the amount of money invested into rehabilitation, can add up to a considerable amount of money to make large rehabilitation projects more feasible. It is the combination of these programs that allow for rehabilitation projects aimed at affordable housing like Astor Row or the recent PS90 residential conversion.

A detailed list of all of the financial incentives available to owners and tenants in historic buildings was prepared by the Historic Districts Council.

Their report can be accessed at hdc.org/preservation-resources.

2. Economic Development and Affordability

Historic Districts are often criticized for having a stifling effect on economic development. In reality, this could not be further from the truth. The concern stems from the fact that buildings in historic districts face a curtailment of property rights in the form of restrictions against alterations and demolition. Theoretically, this would make a property less profitable, thus lowering property values and discouraging redevelopment. However, an Independent Budget Office study of the effects of historic districts in New York City shows that prices in historic districts appreciated at the same or higher rates than non-designated buildings, and that properties held their value better during times of economic decline.³ This is likely due to three main factors:

- Inclusion in a historic district provides guarantees against the demolition or out-of-context renovation of neighboring properties.
- Historic districts act as implicit branding and marketing for individual properties
- Federal and state tax benefits are associated with the purchase and rehabilitation of historic buildings

In addition to increased property values, historic districts in New York have been shown to be magnets for redevelopment and investment. A great example of this is the Ft. Greene neighborhood in Brooklyn, where designation immediately preceded a wave of investment and rehabilitation.

Historic designation is also often cited as contributing to

gentrification. As districts have been shown to be associated with higher property values, this concern is certainly understandable. To the extent that they impede new, larger buildings from being built, historic districts indeed, to a small extent, contribute to high rents city-wide. At a more local level, however, rents have not been shown to be significantly higher in historic districts when compared with similar buildings just outside of historic districts. Were historic districts created in the study areas that follow, new high-rise apartment buildings would be impeded from being built. With affordability and development concerns in mind, the study areas have excluded major avenues and other areas where large-scale development may be appropriate.

Community Board 10 Landmark Proposals

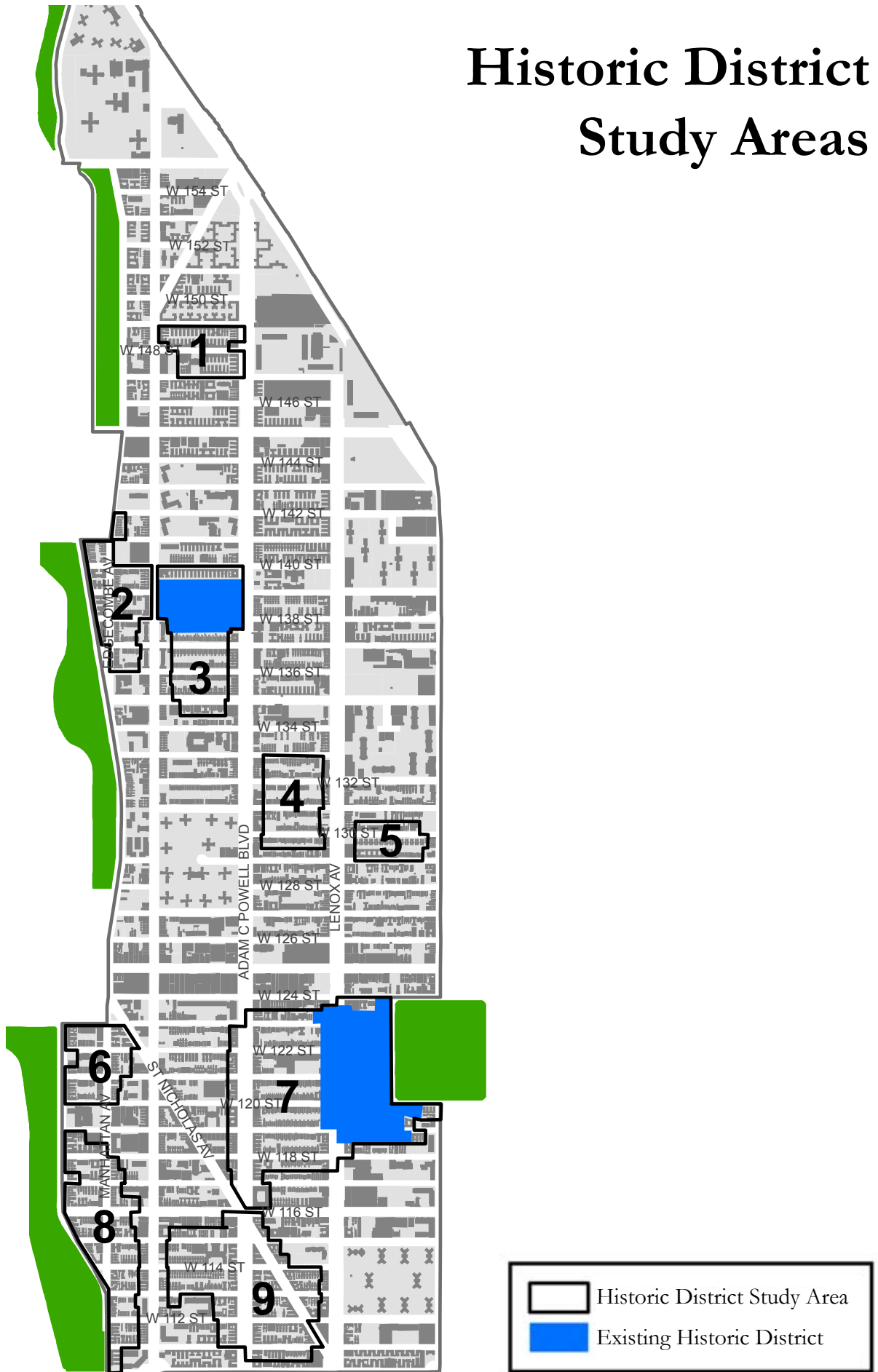
Methodology

Areas of potential interest were selected by plotting the ages of buildings listed in the City's geographic property database, MapPLUTO, with further investigation based around concentrations of older buildings. This study focused on buildings built between 1880 and 1920, the period of rapid development in the area. Specific geographic zones worthy of further study were selected based on field research noting the type of buildings present and the historical feel of the block. Study areas were formed based on three main criteria: consistent architectural period of the buildings on each particular block, age and condition of the buildings, and clustering of more than a single block of historic buildings. This methodology and site selection was informed by discussions with historians, preservation experts at the Historic Districts Council, and the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

A note on brownstones:

Much of the district is made of up single-family row houses. Though almost all of these were built during a wave of speculative development from 1880 to 1910, it would not be feasible to designate every brownstone in Harlem. The study areas proposed include single family homes that are contextually consistent and architecturally distinct.

Historic District Study Areas

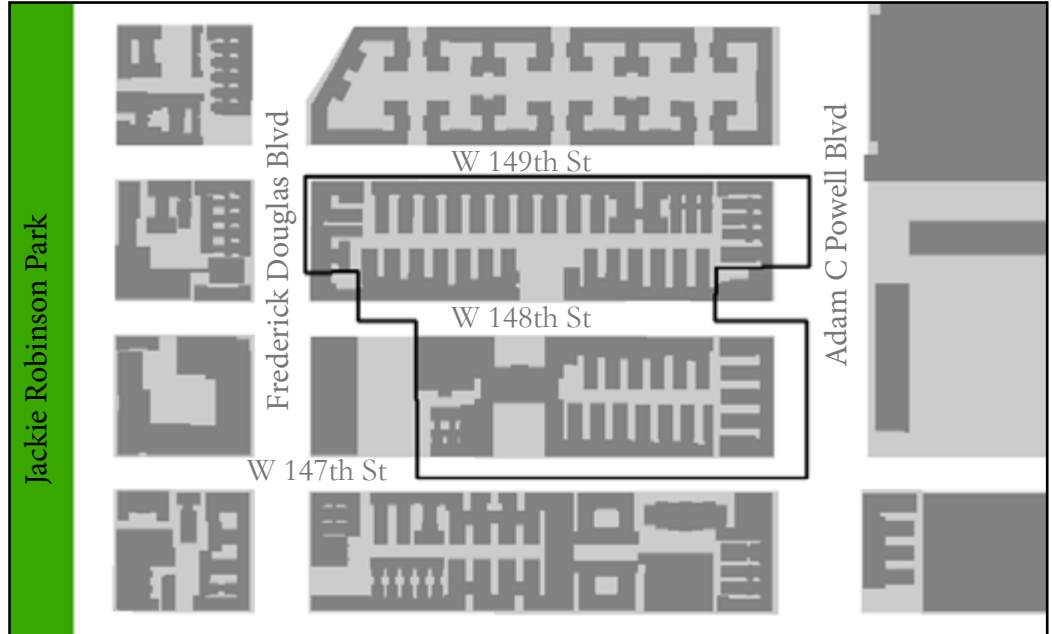


Historic District Study Areas

1. West 147th-159th St.

The 60 contributing buildings in the West 147th -149th Sts. Historic District were designated in the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. This area consists of 58 tenements, one stable, and one school. With the exception of the two-story stable on 148th St., all of the buildings are five or six stories, erected within a few years of each other, around 1905. Immediately to the north of the study area are the Dunbar Apartments, which are also designated Historic Landmarks by the LPC. The tenement buildings in this area form a strongly cohesive group, with white limestone first stories and beige brick upper floors. All of the buildings feature pressed-metal cornices. Also included in the study area is

Public School 90, mentioned above, which has recently been restored and turned into condominiums. Designed by Charles Snyder, the H-plan school building is built in the Collegiate Gothic style.



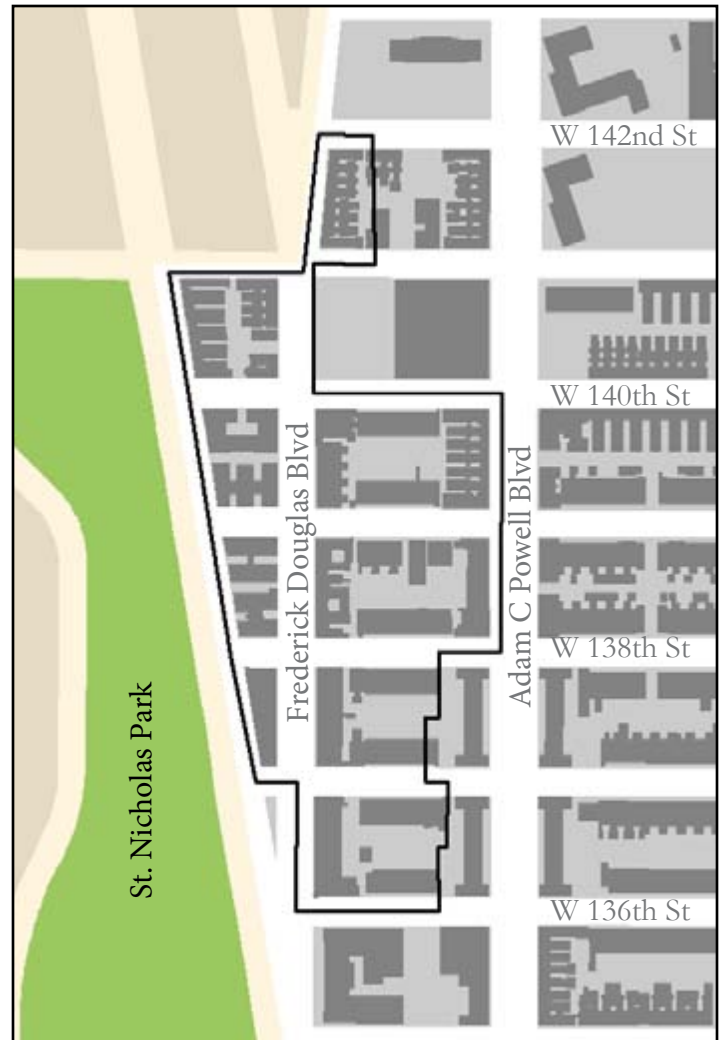
From the NYPL digital archive
PS90 and neighboring buildings, seen here in 1920



Photo by Tom Cunningham
In 2012, the buildings look much the same

2. Edgecombe Avenue from 136th St. to 141st St.

This study area includes 163 buildings of varying styles, including two historic churches. The study area is bordered to the east by the St. Nicholas Historic District and to the west by St. Nicholas Park, which now includes the historic Hamilton Grange. The study area includes an impressively diverse set of Queen Anne style row houses. Along Frederick Douglass Blvd. and St. Nicholas Blvd. are tenements and apartments built before the turn of the 20th Century. Most, like 2611 Frederick Douglass Blvd., built in 1896, still retain their original cornices and period detailing. Unfortunately, some of the apartment buildings along St. Nicholas Ave., 560 St. Nicholas for example, currently lack any cornice detailing. The most notable buildings in the study area are its two gothic churches. The gothic-inspired, yellow sandstone St. Mark's United Methodist Church, located at 49-55 Edgecombe Ave., was designed by Sibley & Fetherston and was completed in 1926. Its style echoes the collegiate gothic architecture of its across-the-park neighbor City College. At 116 Edgecombe Ave., the Mt. Calvary Baptist Church was built in 1898 as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Atonement. The area just north of the study area, along Edgecombe Ave. to 145th St. is also worthy of further study as a potential historic district, but since this area is in Community District 9 it was not included in this report.



From the NYPL digital archive

St. Marks United Methodist Church, at 49 Edgecombe Ave. echoes the gothic architecture of its neighbor across the park, City College



Photo by Tom Cunningham

307-323 138th St. all are built in this style. Though the style of the homes is very different, the brick used on these homes is reminiscent of the south side of 139th St. in Striver's Row

3. Striver's Row Extension (North and South)

The area designated as the St. Nicholas Historic District includes four rows of houses built by developer David King in 1891. Although not built by the same developer, the block directly north and the two blocks south of the district were developed at the same time and are similarly well maintained. The south side of 137th St. is a particularly fine example featuring matching Queen Anne style houses with Renaissance Revival detailing. Though distinct from the row houses featured throughout the rest of the district, the south side of 140th St. from 7th Ave. to Frederic Douglass Blvd. features an entire block of matching apartment buildings with identical detailing and cornices.



Photo by Tom Cunningham



From the NYPL digital archive

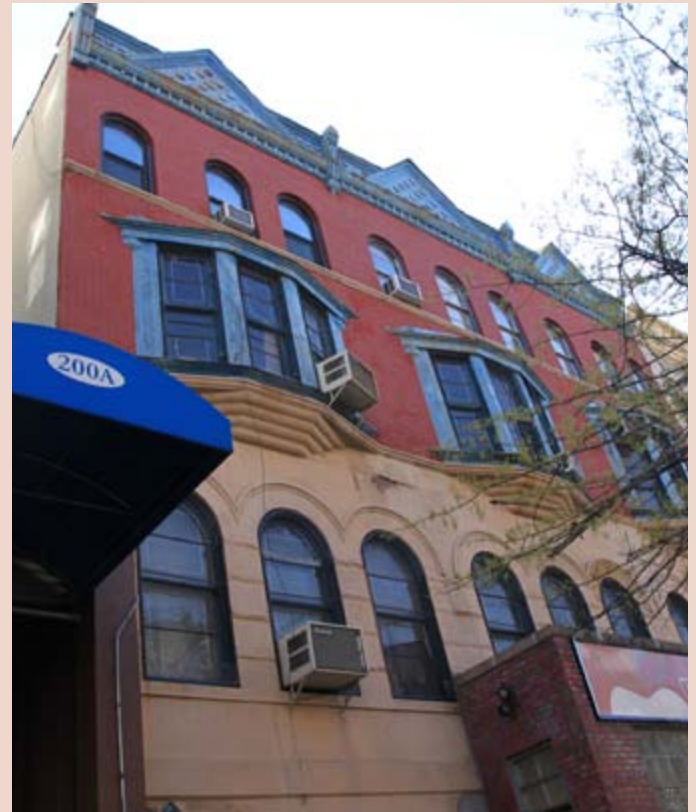


Photo by Tom Cunningham

Aside from the out-of-context addition at the entrance of the building, 202-204 136th St. remain very much in their original condition, including the interesting circle pattern on the gables.

4. 130th to 133rd St. between Malcolm X Blvd and Adam Clayton Powell Blvd

The 130th St. to 133rd St. study area consists of 190 row houses built before the turn of the 20th century as part of one of the earliest row house neighborhoods in Upper Manhattan. This area was originally built for upper class white families, but was one of the first neighborhoods to become predominantly African-American. There is a diversity of architectural styles present in the study area. Most notable are the Renaissance Revival and Queen Anne style homes. 160-164 W 130th St. are particularly fine examples of the diverse Queen Anne style. All three homes feature L-shaped brownstone stoops and brick upper floors, but the detailing on the three is quite varied. Two homes have arched doorways, one has a mansard roof, and two have distinct bay windows. The most striking feature of the three homes is the gable on number 164 that resembles a bell tower. Unlike oth-

er study areas in this plan, this study area includes a number of vacant lots and boarded-up buildings. The creation of a historic district in this area would allow for additional financing for the rehabilitation of the homes on these blocks and would ensure contextual infill development.



From the NYPL Digital Archive

157-159 W 132nd St. photographed in 1932 and 2012. Both buildings appear recently renovated. The multipane window in no. 157 has been replaced, as has the L-shaped stoop on no. 159, but for the most part both retain their historic character.



Photo by Tom Cunningham

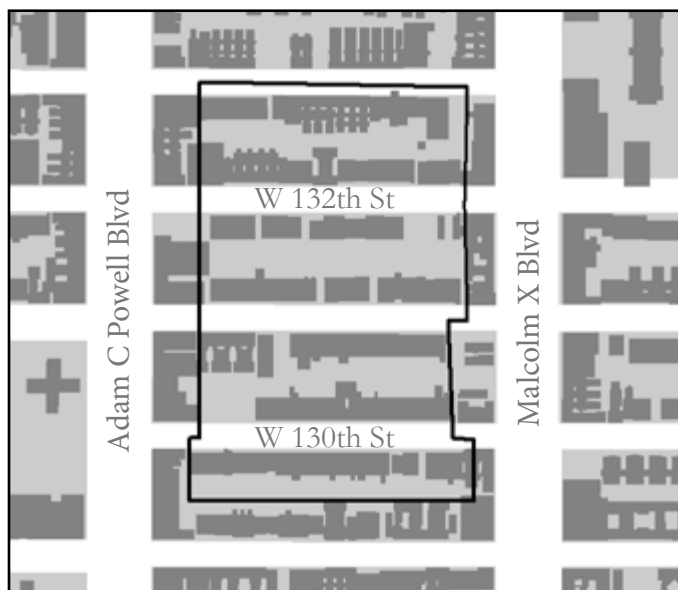


Photo by Tom Cunningham

160-164 W 130th St., mentioned above

5. Astor Row

The Astor Row homes, built from 1880 to 1883 by William Backhouse Astor, are already designated as individual landmarks by the LPC. The semi-detached homes are distinct because of their Victorian-style porches, which have been dutifully restored and rebuilt following their LPC designation in 1981. Though these individual landmarks are already protected, the north side of 130th St., across from the homes, consists of large, attractive brownstones that are left unprotected. The creation of an Astor Row Historic District would protect the feel of the block as a whole, and maintain the distinct context of the Astor Row homes. Also included in the study area is the Neo-Gothic St. Ambrose Episcopal Church built in 1873. The church was designed by James W. Pirsson and is notable for its attached rectory. The north side of 129th St. is also included in the study area. The block includes 12 Old Law tenements and eight dumbbell-style apartment buildings. Though the south side of 129th St. does not maintain this consistent context, the house at 12 W 129th St. is already a designated LPC landmark. The home was built in 1863 and is typical of early Harlem suburban development. The home's porch, added in 1883 is its most distinct feature, with unique Moorish inspired arches.

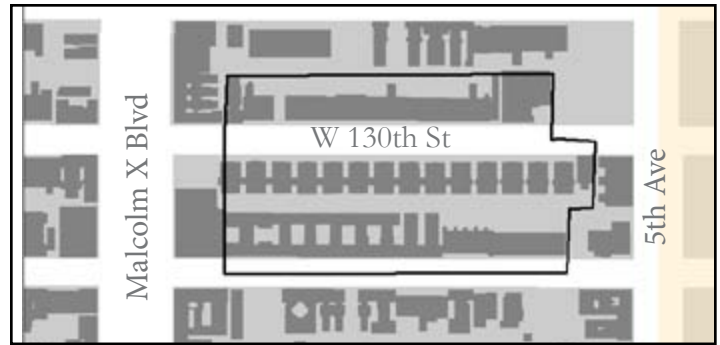


Photo from maps.google.com

12 W 129th St., across the street from the Study Area, is already an LPC Landmark, having been designated in 1982.



From the NYPL digital archive



From maps.google.com

13-35 W 129th St., photographed in 1932 and 2012. These images show that very little has changed since 1932 on the north side of 129th St. The distinctive arches set these homes aside from the rest of Community District 10.

6. Manhattan Ave / 120th to 123rd St

This study area consists of 109 contributing buildings bounded by Morningside and Manhattan Avenues from 120th to 123rd St.. Two non-contributing buildings on Morningside Avenue have been omitted from the study area boundaries. The study area consists of unbroken blocks of residences, each three-stories above a raised basement, that were built between 1886 and 1896. The homes represent a progression of styles that typify this period of residential development. The houses were built in blocks by builder/architects as part of Harlem's speculative boom at the end of the 19th century. The apartment buildings on Morningside Ave consist of Old Law Tenements and walk-up apartment buildings that are typical of the period. These three blocks, excluding the apartment houses on Morningside Ave, were designated in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991.



Manhattan Ave between 120th and 121st sts. (west side) shows some of the diversity of row house styles included in the study area.



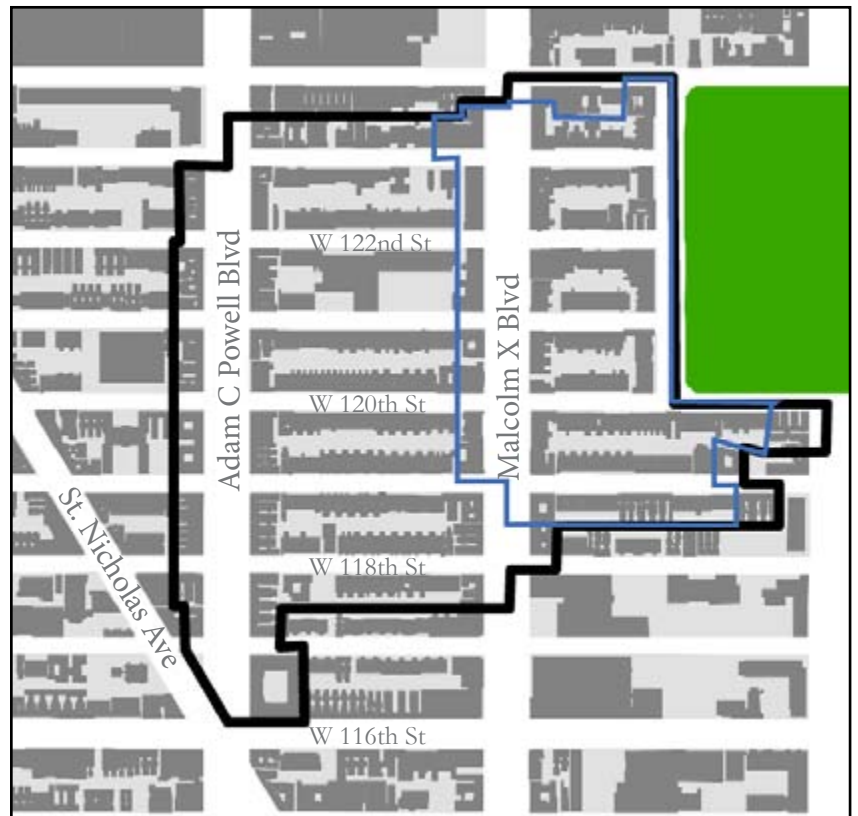
The side entrance to 59 Morningside Ave is particularly ornate



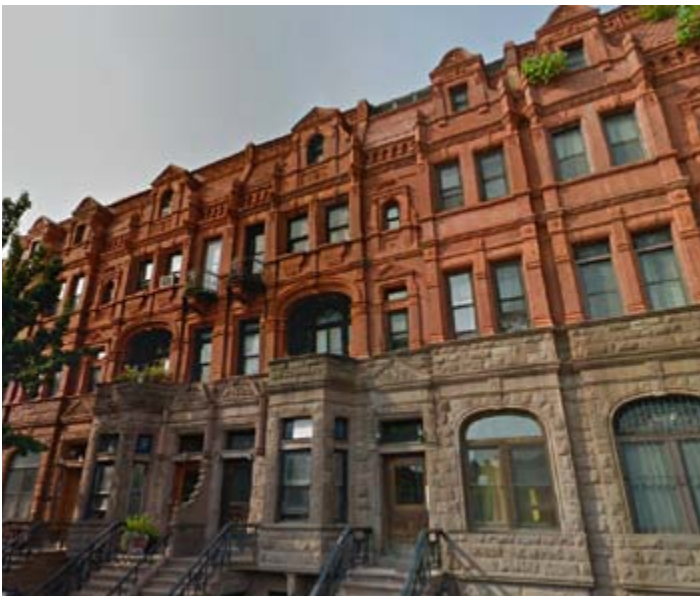
The brownstone roofs over the doors and windows on 529-553 Manhattan Ave are carved to resemble shingles

7. Mount Morris Park Historic District Expansion

The Mount Morris Park neighborhood consists of row houses and churches primarily from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The area that became the Mount Morris Park neighborhood was owned by the Benson family and was sold and platted in 1851, the park having been donated to the City 10 years earlier. With the construction of the elevated train line to 125th St. in 1878, development began in earnest and stately townhomes were constructed around Mount Morris Park (renamed Marcus Garvey Park in 1973) for wealthy families. The mansions in the neighborhood were built by prominent architects and were occupied by important political figures, professionals, and entertainers. The LPC designated boundaries that exist today do not reflect the traditional boundaries of the neighborhood, leaving many buildings of the same character, scale, style and history unprotected. The blocks between 118th and 124th Sts. between Malcolm X and 7th Ave., with a few exceptions, match the style and the feel of the already designated blocks. The vast majority are pre-war buildings, mostly townhouses and small apartment complexes. There are more buildings that were constructed between 1910 and 1940 in this expansion area than in the original district. When the district was originally designated, many of these buildings were only 30 years old, hardly worth noting as “historic.” Today, however, these



buildings are 70 to 100 years old and represent an important stage in the history of Harlem and the Mount Morris Park neighborhood. The new boundaries add 385 buildings to the existing district including LPC landmarks the Greater Metropolitan Baptist Church, built in 1897, and the Graham Court apartment building, built in 1899.



From maps.google.com
133-139 W 122 St. lie just outside the boundary of the Mount Morris Park Historic District, between Malcolm X Blvd and 7th Ave



From maps.google.com
Expanding the Mount Morris Park Historic District would add many impressive homes deserving of preservation, like these on 120th St.

8. Morningside Ave /110 St. to 119th St.

This study area comprises 192 buildings in the blocks just east of Morningside Park, from Cathedral parkway to 119th St.. The buildings in this area represent a wide variety of architectural styles typifying the speculative wave of development that hit Harlem just before the turn of the 20th Century. The block bounded by Morning-side and Manhattan Avenues between 116th and 177th Sts. shows the three key building types found in the area: row houses, tenements and mid-rise apartment buildings. Along the west side of Manhattan Avenue are 11 three-story row houses built by the same developer. The houses are built in the eclectic Queen Anne style, which dominated in New York row house architecture in the 1880s. They feature brownstone first floors with red brick upper floors and are notable for the quoined brownstone window surrounds and alternating ornate cornices. Around the corner, on 117th St. is a row of five- and six-story Old Law Tenements. As the population of in this area of Harlem grew in the 1880s and 1890s, property values rose to the point that row houses were no longer profitable. Tenements with simple detailing on the facades, like those on this block of 117th St., were built to house the wave of German-Jewish immigrants that were settling in the neighborhood. Around the same time, Harlem saw its first elevator apartment buildings for wealthy families. An example is also found on this block, across from Morningside Park at 116th St.. Another notable building is the Monterey apartment building at 114th St. and Morning-

side Avenue. Designed by Thomas O. Spier and built in 1892, the building's most striking feature is the prominent arch above the door.



From maps.google.com

Manhattan Ave. between 116th and 177th Sts., Mentioned above

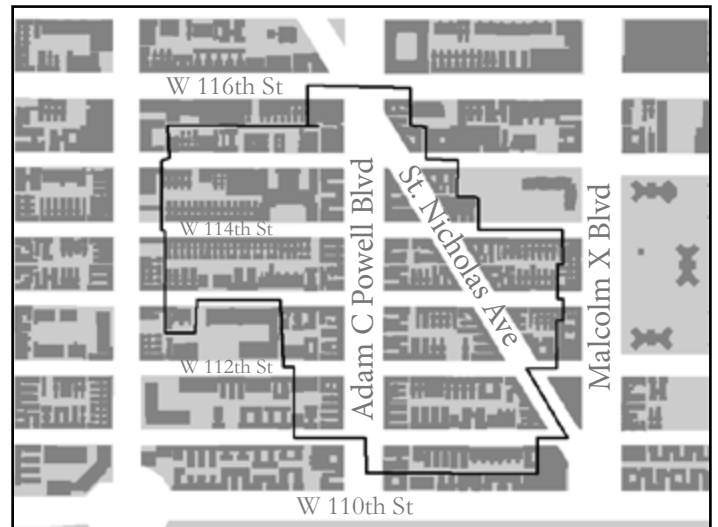


Photo from the New York Times

The Monterey Building opened in 1892

9. St. Nicholas Avenue

This study area consists primarily of apartment buildings and tenements from the 1890s. There are three individual landmarks included in the study area: Wadleigh High School for Girls, the 115th St. Branch of the New York Public Library, and the Regent Theater (now the First Corinthian Baptist Church). In addition to these landmarks, the A. Philip Randolph Houses are also of note. This New York City Housing Authority development consists of 36 tenement houses built in 1890. Both 7th Ave. and St. Nicholas Ave. have been included in the study area. Unlike many of Harlem's avenues, this section of the two avenues features exclusively historic apartment buildings, the character of which should be preserved.



From maps.google.com

Though most of the study area is apartment buildings, there are some row houses, like these on 133th St.



From maps.google.com

An arched doorway at 124 W 112th St.



harlemworldmag.com

NYCHA's A. Philip Randolph houses were built in 1891.



From the NYPL digital archive

Wadleigh High School for Girls is an LPC designated landmark

Individual Landmarks

Blumstein's Building at Tuoro College – 230 W 125th St.

The Blumstein's Department Store building at 230 W 125th St. is the second Blumstein's building to occupy the site. German-Jewish immigrant Louis Blumstein opened his first store on Hudson Street, but quickly moved his store to 125th St. to serve the growing population of German-Jewish immigrants in the area. Following his death in 1920, his family replaced the building with a five-story Art Nouveau structure designed by Robert D. Kohn and Charles Butler. As the neighborhood changed, the majority of Blumstein's customers were African-American, but the store refused to hire non-whites. A large-scale boycott in 1934, organized by Rev. John H. Johnson of St. Martin's Church, forced the store to capitulate. The store went on to have the first African-American Santa Claus, become the first company to use black models and mannequins, and successfully appeal to cosmetic manufacturers to produce make-up for non-white skin tones. The building was sold in 1976 and is now occupied by Tuoro College of Osteopathic Medicine. The majority of the original façade remains, though the first floor has

been broken up into multiple storefronts, and the building's original cast iron awnings and grand entryways have been removed.



Digital Collection of the Museum of the City of New York

This photo from 1923 of Blumstein's Department Store, shows the grand awnings that have since been removed. Most of the facade of the building, however, remains intact.

New York Public Library Harlem Branch – 9 W 124th St.

The Harlem Branch of the New York Public Library, at 9 West 124th St., has been serving the community since 1826. Its current building was designed by the noted architectural firm McKim, Meade and White and opened in 1909. Like many libraries in the city, its construction was funded by a gift from Andrew Carnegie. In 2004, the building underwent a

\$3.9 million renovation, which made no changes to the façade.

The Imperial Order of Elks Lodge – 160-164 W 129th St.

160-164 W 129th St., now home to the Faith Mission Christian Church, was built in 1922 as the Imperial Elks Lodge. The building was designed by Vertner Tandy, New York's first licensed African-American architect. Tandy designed many of Central Harlem's landmarks including St. Philips Episcopal Church. The Imperial Lodge has a long and important history. A. Philip Randolph started



Photo from maps.google.com

LPC Designation of the former Hotel Olga would aid in financing the much-needed restoration of the building.



Photo by Thomas Cunningham

The Faith Mission Christian Fellowship Church, on 129th St., was originally built as the Imperial Elks Lodge.

the first national black labor union there, and the influential documentary *Paris is Burning* was filmed in the lodge's dance hall.

Hotel Olga – 695 Lenox Ave.

The Hotel Olga building at 695 Lenox Ave. is a modest yet remarkably important building in Central Harlem. It was built in 1902 as the North-End Hotel for brewer Jacob Rupert, based on designs by Neville & Bagge. From 1918 to 1937, the Hotel Olga served as Harlem's leading lodging for African Americans, who were excluded from the Hotel Theresa and other places.

Scenic Landmarks

Rucker Park – 155th St. and Frederick Douglas Blvd.

In 1950, Harlem teacher Holcombe Rucker started a basketball tournament to help impoverished youth in the neighborhood pursue college careers. Though the original tournament was not held in the park now bearing Rucker's name, the amateur basketball tournament has been held there for over 50 years. The park is considered the "Mecca of Streetball" and has hosted legendary professional players and amateurs alike. The courts at Rucker



Photo from ruckerparklegends.com

A basketball game at the famous Rucker Park. The park has been the home of an amateur basketball tournament for over 50 years.



Photo by Betty Dubuisson

The Hansborough Recreation Center Natatorium opened in 1925 to promote public health and hygiene.

Park are an important location in the history of basketball and are internationally acclaimed. Because of their location on City-owned property, it is possible to designate the courts as scenic landmarks.

Interior Landmarks

Lenox Lounge – 288 Malcolm X Blvd.

The Lenox Lounge was built in 1939 by the Greco family, who owned it until it was sold to its current owner, Alvin Reid Sr., in 1988. It is known for its Art Deco Zebra Room, and the bar. The bar has been a staple in the Jazz world for over 70 years, having played host to countless famed performers including Miles Davis, John Coltrane and Billie Holliday, who had a booth reserved for her weekly. Its current owner undertook a major renovation to restore its original interior. The exterior façade of the club is largely unchanged since it was built in 1939, making it another candidate for Individual Landmark status.

Natatorium at Hansborough Recreation Center – 35 W 134th St.

The Hansborough Recreation Center in Jackie Robinson Park opened as the 134th St. Bathhouse on June 1, 1925. Along with many other bathhouses built around the same time, it was intended to promote public health, hygiene, and recreation. The natatorium (meaning indoor swimming pool, from the Latin *natare*, to swim) was decorated with tiles, mosaics, and ceramic panels depicting various sea creatures. In addition to the pool, there were 164 showers and 6 bathtubs on the first floor and a gymnasium, running track, locker room, and showers on the second.

The Process for LPC Designation

Becoming a New York City Landmark or Historic District is a long and involved process. All of the study areas and individual landmarks proposed in this document, once approved by the Board, will begin the process towards designation. It is unlikely that all of them will become designated historic landmarks. To be considered, the law requires that a building or district be at least 30 years old and possess “a special character or special historical or aesthetic interest or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the city, state, or nation.”

Step 1: Request for Evaluation.

An individual or a community group can request evaluation for any type of landmark designation from the LPC. **This document will be considered a request for evaluation by CB 10, on behalf of the larger community.**

Step 2: Evaluation

Once the LPC receives a request, a committee of LPC staff members evaluates the submitted documents, makes site visits, and conducts research as necessary. LPC’s findings at this stage will determine the full scope of what will be considered.

Step 3: Calendaring and Commission Review

If the LPC determines that a proposed historic property merits further consideration then a photograph, statement of significance, and the committee’s recommendations are sent to each individual commissioner for their comment. The Chair of the Commission decides whether the proposed landmark will make it to the full Commission. At a public meeting, the full Commission reviews potential landmarks and can schedule a public hearing if they believe it merits further review. For individual landmarks, the owner is often contacted at this point to discuss potential regulatory issues.

Step 4: Public Hearing

At the public hearing, a member of the LPC’s Research Department makes a presentation about

the property or area under consideration. All interested parties, especially the owner, are then encouraged to present their opinions both at the meeting and in written statements.

Step 5: Discussion and Designation Report

While a historic district is under consideration by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the Research Department writes a detailed report describing the architectural, historical, and/or cultural significance of the historic district and a detailed description of each building within the proposed district. Building owners are mailed a draft copy of their building’s description for review and comment. The Commissioners also review the draft report and use this report, along with public testimony, as the basis for their decision-making.

Step 6: Commission Vote

The Commission then votes on the designation at a public meeting. Six votes are needed to approve or deny a designation. By law, landmark designation is effective upon the Commission’s vote, and all rules and regulations of the Landmarks Law are applicable.

Step 7: City Planning Commission Report.

For all designations, the City Planning Commission has 60 days to submit a report to the City Council regarding the effects of the designation as it relates to zoning, projected public improvements, and any other city plans for the designated area. For historic districts, the City Planning Commission must hold a public hearing before issuing their report.

Step 8: City Council Vote

The City Council has 120 days from the time of the LPC filing to modify or disapprove the designation. A majority vote is required. This can be vetoed by the mayor within five days, and the City Council can overturn the mayor’s veto with a two thirds vote.

C. NEW YORK STATE HERITAGE AREA DESIGNATION

A State Heritage Area is an act of legislature by New York State that establishes a partnership between the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and a local municipality, in order to develop, preserve, and promote the area's cultural and natural resources as an expression of our state's heritage. The program has four main goals: preservation, education, recreation and economic revitalization. Unlike the other preservation methods discussed in this plan, State Heritage Areas do not include land-use controls. They are a method for recognizing cultural heritage but will not preserve the existing built environment of the District. The designation of a Harlem State Heritage Area, however, would provide tremendous opportunities for the community to attract needed funds to improve the public landscape, market local businesses and institutions, and spur economic growth.

Tourism is one of the largest generators of economic activity in the city and Harlem has an abundance of cultural and historic resources. Unfortunately, these resources are not always maintained, fully developed, or promoted, and the potential economic activity generated by tourism is not fully realized. A State Heritage Area could help channel public and private dollars to the preservation, development and promotion of these cultural and historic resources. Baltimore, Maryland provides a great example of how heritage tourism has led to economic development. Baltimore was able to leverage cultural tourism into a revitalization of its downtown waterfront.

In November 2004, legislation sponsored by State Senator David Patterson and Assemblyman Denny Ferrell was signed into law designating a Heights Heritage Area for West Harlem and Washington Heights. The boundaries of this area did not include Central Harlem or Community District 10, and the proposed programming only focuses on maritime history, military war history and the Northern Manhattan migration. The Heights Heritage Area is managed by the City's Parks Department and has seen little activity. There is no website or visitor center and, currently, no programs to encourage tourism.

The creation of a Harlem Heritage Area would reinforce current economic revitalization efforts and capitalize on growing tourist interest by developing a comprehensive development plan that would promote the rich history

of Harlem beyond just 125th St.. In order for this program to be successful, however, an appropriate managing agency must be selected or created. Designation as a State Heritage Area would allow funding for things like a visitor center, walking tours and landscape improvements. These programs could encourage tourists to visit Harlem and spend money. In turn, visitor spending helps to diversify a neighborhood's economy, while preserving the unique character of a community. Legislation should be passed to create a new Harlem Heritage Area that would include Central Harlem with a focus on the themes of the Harlem Renaissance, architecture, arts and culture, and social and political activism. All of these developments must be pursued by an agency that considers them to be a priority.

D. NEW YORK STATE AND NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The State and National Registers of Historic Places are the official lists of buildings, structures, districts and sites that are significant in the history, architecture, archeology, and culture of New York and the nation. The criteria for inclusion are the same for both lists. Both programs are administered in New York by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Unlike designation by the LPC, designation in the State and National Register of Historic Places has no restrictions on private owners of registered properties. Properties listed by SHPO may be sold, altered, or disposed of at the discretion of the owner.

Registered properties and properties determined eligible for the Registers receive a measure of protection from the effects of federal and state agency sponsored projects through a notice, review, and consultation process. For any projects in CD10, this process would involve consultation with the Community Board.

Registration with SHPO should be a priority for Community Board 10 for all properties, districts and landmarks listed in this document in order for those places to be eligible for the financial benefits of SHPO designation. In addition, 125th St. should also be proposed for designation in order to involve the community further in future development projects and to grant the corridor recognition for its important place in the history of this city.

Further research is needed to find the full extent of potential sites that could be added to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Below is a list of some in-

dividual landmarks in CD 10 that should be considered. These sites should also be considered by LPC as individual landmarks.

Suggested SHPO/NRHP sites:

1. *2309 7th Ave.*
Home of comedian Bert Williams.
2. *80 Edgecombe Avenue*
Sisters Sarah Louise “Sadie” Delany and Annie Elizabeth “Bessie” Delany lived here with their mother. Alelia Walker also lived in the building.
3. *90 Edgecombe Avenue*
Singer Jules Bledsoe and civil-rights activist Walter White both lived in this building.
4. *278 W 113th St.*
Magician Harry Houdini lived here from 1904 until his death in 1926.

5. *68 West 118th St.*

Comedian Milton Berle was born in this five-story walk-up.

6. *13 W 131st St.*

Real-estate entrepreneur Philip A. Payton, Jr. lived here.

7. *115 W 143rd St.*

Professional tennis player Althea Gibson lived here.

8. *El Nido Building at 116th and St. Nicholas*

This triangular-shaped building, across from the Graham Court building, is one of the few of its kind in the city.

More information on the process for designation with SHPO can be found at <http://nysparks.com/shpo/>

The Process for SHPO Designation

The State and National Register nomination process is designed to assist in the development of complete and accurate documentation of each eligible property according to the professional and archival standards of the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). In order to achieve its designation goals CB 10 must work closely with the SHPO as well as property owners, legislators and the larger community.

Step 1: Nomination

A sponsor may initiate the nomination process by completing a State and National Registers Program Applicant Form and a Historic Resource Inventory Form. These materials will be evaluated by the SHPO staff using the National Register of Historic Places Criteria for Evaluation.

Step 2: Development

Proposals which appear to meet the listing criteria and match current preservation priorities are assigned to staff for further development. In most instances, staff site inspections will be required in order to develop a more in-depth understanding of the historic property prior to the preparation of a National Register Nomination Form. Preparing this form and the required research, maps and

photographs is primarily the responsibility of the sponsor (in this case, CB 10).

Step 3: Comment Period

Upon receipt of a satisfactory draft nomination, SHPO will formally seek the comments of the property owner and local officials. At this time a review by the New York State Board for Historic Preservation (commonly referred to as the State Review Board) will be scheduled.

Step 4: Review by State Review Board

The board meets quarterly and nomination reviews must be scheduled three months in advance in order to satisfy public notification requirements. If recommended, the nomination form is finalized and forwarded to the State Historic Preservation Officer for review and signature.

Step 5: State and National Register Listing

Once signed, the nomination is entered on the New York State Register of Historic Places and transmitted to the National Park Service where it is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. If approved, the nomination is signed and listed on the National Register.

IV. NEXT STEPS

- **Develop and execute a long-term implementation plan with specific timelines based on the recommendations listed in this document.**
- **Submit this document to Landmarks Preservation Commission as a formal Request for Evaluation to initiate LPC's process for reviewing CB 10's recommendations.**
- **Submit this document to the NY State Historic Preservation Office for consideration in the Nationals and State Registers of Historic Places.**
- **Coordinate with City Council Members and the Department of City Planning to initiate a comprehensive zoning study of Community District 10 with the primary goal of implementing contextual zoning.**
- **Coordinate with state elected officials to create legislation for a Harlem State Heritage Area with a focus on the themes of the Harlem Renaissance, architecture, arts and culture, and social and political activism.**
- **Conduct informational/educational seminars inclusive of the community in conjunction with historic preservation agencies and non-profits with a focus on:**
 - General historic preservation education
 - Financial programs for restoration and repair
 - Federal and state tax incentives
- **Continue to monitor progress and review the plan for future additions**

IV. APPENDIX: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Frequently Asked Questions below were taken from the websites of the Landmarks Preservation Commission and Historic Districts Council.

- **What is a landmark?**

A landmark is a building, property, or object that has been designated by New York City's Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) because it has a special character or special historical or aesthetic interest or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the city, state, or nation. Landmarks are not always buildings. A landmark may be a bridge, a park, a water tower, a pier, a cemetery, a building lobby, a sidewalk clock, a fence, or even a tree. A property or object is eligible for landmark status when at least part of it is thirty years old or older.

- **What is the Landmarks Preservation Commission?**

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is the New York City agency that is responsible for identifying and designating the city's landmarks and the buildings in the city's historic districts. The Commission also regulates changes to designated buildings. The agency, consisting of eleven Commissioners and a full-time staff, is called the Landmarks Preservation Commission, and the name is also used to refer to the eleven Commissioners acting as a body. The LPC was established in 1965 when Mayor Robert Wagner signed the local law creating the Commission and giving it its power. According to the Landmarks Law, the eleven Commissioners must include at least three architects, one historian, one city planner or landscape architect, and one realtor. The Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor, with the advice and consent of the City Council, for three-year terms. The Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are designated by the Mayor.

- **Why is it important to designate and protect landmarks and historic districts?**

As the Landmarks Law states, protection of these resources serves the following purposes:

1. *Safeguarding the city's historic, aesthetic, and cultural heritage;*
2. *Helping to stabilize and improve property values in historic districts;*
3. *Encouraging civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past;*
4. *Protecting and enhancing the city's attractions for tourists, thereby benefitting business and industry;*
5. *Strengthening the city's economy; and*
6. *Promoting the use of landmarks for the education, pleasure, and welfare of the people of the city.*

- **What types of designations can the Commission make?**

There are three types of landmarks: individual (exterior) landmarks, interior landmarks, and scenic landmarks. The Landmarks Preservation Commission may also designate areas of the city as historic districts.

1. *An individual landmark is a property, object, or building that has been designated by the LPC. These properties or objects are also referred to as "exterior" landmarks because only their exterior features have been designated. Grand Central Terminal in Manhattan is an example of an individual landmark.*
2. *An interior landmark is an interior space that has been designated by the LPC. Interior landmarks must be customarily accessible to the public. The lobby of the Woolworth Building in Manhattan is an example of an interior landmark.*

3. A scenic landmark is a landscape feature or group of features that has been designated by the LPC. Scenic landmarks must be situated on City-owned property. Prospect Park and Central Park are examples of scenic landmarks.

4. An historic district is an area of the city designated by the Landmarks Commission that represents at least one period or style of architecture typical of one or more areas in the city's history; as a result, the district has a distinct "sense of place." Fort Greene, Greenwich Village, Mott Haven, and SoHo are examples of sections of the city that contain historic districts.

- **What is the difference between a New York City historic district and a National Register district?**

A New York City district is overseen by the LPC and protects the character of the district through the local Landmarks Law. A National Register district is recognized through the U.S. Department of the Interior and administered by the New York State Historic Preservation Office. National Register of Historic Places listings are largely honorific and usually do not prevent alterations or demolition of structures within the district, but may entitle owners to tax benefits. Many, if not most of the City's historic districts are also on the State and National Registers.

- **If my neighborhood or building is designated, will I be required to restore my property?**

No. The LPC does not require restoration or force owners to return buildings to their original condition. The LPC only regulates proposed work on designated structures. It may, however, make recommendations for restorative treatment when other work is undertaken to the property.

- **Will I be restricted in the kind of changes I can make?**

Yes. New York City landmark designation does place additional restrictions on historic properties, which most often involve exterior changes. Designation is designed to protect and preserve properties and neighborhoods. This can be beneficial to a property owner by preventing inappropriate changes to neighboring buildings that could take away from property values and the ambiance or enjoyment of the property.

- **What procedures do I follow to make changes to my landmarked property?**

To make changes, you must apply for a permit from the LPC, which will review your plans and issue a permit or suggest appropriate alterations. The majority of LPC permits is for exterior work and can usually be issued within a few weeks.

- **Does it cost more to maintain a landmarked building?**

It may. Although there can be an additional expense for historically appropriate repair and maintenance of designated buildings, property owners generally find the extra costs offset by higher resale revenue and property values.

- **Will living in a designated historic district raise my taxes?**

No. There is no evidence that those living in an historic district pay higher property taxes than residents outside of the district.

- **How does historic district designation affect real estate values?**

Studies all over the country show that designation improves property values. In 2003 the Independent Budget Office published a study showing that properties within designated New York City historic districts appreciate more in value over the long term than identical properties not in historic districts.

- **How does historic district designation affect development values within a district?**

Development is permitted in historic districts. Developers are subject to the same approval process by the LPC as are other property owners. Even though development may be reviewed in terms of aesthetics, height and bulk, developers may benefit from the prestige and association that come with designation. To encourage sensitive alterations and renovations, federal and state tax credits are available. The real estate community markets historic properties in a way that places emphasis and greater value on the building's and neighborhood's special character.

- **Doesn't becoming a landmarked district speed up the process of gentrification?**

No. There are no definitive studies that prove this. By preserving and protecting existing historic structures, designation prevents rapid, out-of-scale development that often leads to displacement

- **How does living in an historic district affect zoning?**

Zoning is a separate feature of a neighborhood's character. The zoning dictates how large a building may be, its general shape and use. The LPC oversees all changes in an historic district but does not regulate contemporary use.

- **How does a neighborhood become an historic district?**

The process of designating an historic district starts when the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) begins to consider an area worthy of special protection. However, rarely does the designation of a neighborhood happen without substantial community involvement. For a full description of the process see Page 21. The Historic Districts Council recommends that before the official steps listed on Page 21 are taken, the majority of the community and its elected representatives be involved in and supportive of the effort early in the process by organizing a community group to promote landmark designation.

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