



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**CHRISTINE BERTHET**  
Chair

**Jesse R. Bodine**  
District Manager

April 16, 2015

Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair  
Landmarks Preservation Commission  
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North  
New York, NY 1007

re: Landmark Backlog Process

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) applauds the decision by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) to postpone the administrative action to de-calendar a number of sites, including two in the Clinton neighborhood of Manhattan Community District 4 (MCD4). While we understand the pressing need of LPC to address the large number of calendared sites, we welcome LPC's February 23, 2015, announcement that it will seek public input on the backlog.

The two sites in MCD4 which were slated to be de-calendered are the Interborough Rapid Transit Powerhouse on West 59th Street and the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin at 448 West 56th Street.

The IRT Powerhouse, now owned by Consolidated Edison, is not only important for the design of its exterior by Sanford White but also as a monument of the history of transportation and technology in New York City. This Board has long advocated for its designation as a New York City landmark (see attached letter from October 6, 2008).

The Mission of the Immaculate Virgin, a handsome Beaux-Arts style building completed in 1903 for a Catholic charity, remains one of the most outstanding examples of the style in the Clinton community.

It is important that these sites be brought to a public hearing, that the public be allowed to comment on their merits, to insure a clear, consistent, and transparent, designation process and, if warranted, that the LPC respond swiftly and approve their designation. We support Borough President Gale A. Brewer's plan calling for moving items to designation and providing a 60-day noticing requirement to ensure transparency and public discourse.

**Background**

The Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) has the power to designate landmarks under the 1966 Landmarks Law. Landmarks include Historic Districts, Scenic Landmarks (Central Park),

Individual Landmarks (Brooklyn Bridge) and Interior Landmarks (Lobby, Film Center Building).

The first step toward designation is being placed on the calendar for a hearing. However, no hearing date actually needs to be set. There are no set timeframes or milestones in the same way ULURP has in order for an item to be officially designated.

There are approximately 100 items that have been on the calendar for five years or more, and some of these items date back to 1966. In November 2014, the LPC proposed removing these items from the calendar in an administrative action with no regard to merit.

LPC's decision in February 2015 to postpone the administrative action to de-calendar a number of sites was a welcome decision to this Board.

We look forward to a public hearing on the two items in MCD4 where we can comment on the merits of both items.

Sincerely,



Christine Berthet  
Chair



Jean-Daniel Noland  
Chair, Clinton / Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee

cc: Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Corey Johnson, City Council  
Hon. Helen Rosenthal, City Council