

**LANDMARK SITE OF FORMER NEW BRIGHTON VILLAGE HALL,**  
66 Lafayette Avenue, Staten Island.

Landmark Site: Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 71, Lot 117

On December 12, 2006, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed rescission of the Landmark and Landmark Site of the New Brighton Village Hall (Item No. 1). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A representative of the owner and of City Councilmember Michael McMahon spoke in support of the rescission. Representatives of the Historic Districts Council, the Preservation League of Staten Island, the Tottenville Historical Society and a member of the public did not take a position on the rescission.

**DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS**

Designation

On October 14, 1965, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designated the New Brighton Village Hall as a New York City Landmark and Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 71, Lot 117, as its Landmark Site. New Brighton Village Hall was constructed c. 1871 to the designs of James Whitford. The three-story brick building with a mansard roof featured a projecting central section on the main façade, which contained a small porch and front door. Arched windows lit the main floor and the building was surmounted by a slate mansard roof with gabled dormers containing round-headed windows. The small but impressive French Second Empire building was erected at a time when the northern Staten Island village of New Brighton was the suburban home of many prominent New Yorkers. Whitford was a local architect who arrived in Staten Island from England in 1852.

Regulatory History

Prior to designation the building was used as a medical center for the Health Insurance Plan (HIP) from 1955 to 1965. At the time of designation, the building was owned by the City of New York and it was empty and some of the windows were boarded up. It remained vacant until it was demolished in 2004.

A 1968 inspection of the building by the New York City Housing Authority observed that the “third tier of beams, however, seems to have sagged and a crack is visible in the wall.”

On November 1, 1969, the building suffered damage due to a fire.

In October 1971, the city auctioned the building and it was acquired by Martin Luther King Heritage House for \$26,000, a not-for-profit organization which planned to use the building as a community center. Heritage House, however, was unable to raise money to restore the building and in 1974, and again in 1975, the Department of Buildings issued an unsafe building report (U. B. 119 1974) that ordered the building to be sealed and recommended demolition. Work began on the rehabilitation including the removal of floors but was abandoned. Heritage House defaulted on its real estate and mortgage taxes and the building was reacquired by the city.

In 1980 a Department of Buildings inspection reported: “the premises remain vacant, open and littered with debris, and protective fence has been removed from perimeter of property,” it recommended that the building be made safe or demolished.

In 1981 the city auctioned the building and it was acquired by a trio of investors, who planned to use the building as a medical facility. The owners were unable to attract tenants and did not submit any applications for work to the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Retrovest Associates purchased the building in 1985, and in 1987 it received a Certificate of Appropriateness (LPC 87-1220) for the renovation of the original structure and the construction of an addition. The renovation never occurred.

As a result of a Department of Buildings inspection of October 13, 2000 an emergency violation was issued with the remedy of a child proof fence and the sealing of all openings.

After numerous, unsuccessful efforts to have responsible parties make repairs to the building, on June 18, 2001, the Landmarks Preservation Commission initiated a lawsuit against Retrovest Associates and other responsible parties for the failure to maintain the building in a condition of good repair as is required by the Landmarks Law. While the lawsuit was pending, several severe winter storms caused, in February 2003, partial collapses of what remained of the roof. In April 2003, the Department of Buildings issued an unsafe building proceeding (U. B. 5009-03). During the same period the owner began negotiations with the Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corporation to take control of the property, stabilize the building and preserve and adaptively reuse the building as senior citizen housing. Despite a number of attempts, the Sisters of Charity Corporation was unable to receive funding that would enable it to preserve the building.

### Demolition

On December 31, 2003, the Department of Buildings determined that the building was unsafe, posed an immediate danger to the public, and ordered it demolished. What remained of the New Brighton Village Hall was demolished in February 2004.

In May 2005, the “demolition by neglect” action was settled with the owner giving the former site of the New Brighton Village Hall to the City of New York. The site was appraised as being worth \$985,000. The owner also paid \$50,000 in a financial penalty, and paid the demolition costs and various other expenses resulting in a settlement package worth approximately \$1.1 million dollars.

The City of New York donated the site to the Sisters of Charity for the construction of fifty-nine units of subsidized low-income housing for the elderly.

### Rescission

From November 27, 2006 through December 12, 2006 the Landmarks Preservation Commission published a notice in the City Record for a hearing to consider the rescission of the Landmark and Landmark Site of the New Brighton Village Hall.

The public hearing to consider the rescission of the Landmark and Landmark Site of the New Brighton Village Hall was held on December 12, 2006. At the public hearing the Robert B. Tierney, Chair, confirmed that demolition had occurred and the site was vacant (see photo).

Because nothing of architectural or historical significance remains of the Landmark or on the Landmark Site of the New Brighton Village Hall, the designation of the Landmark and Landmark Site is being rescinded.

Report prepared by  
Mary Beth Betts  
Director of Research  
John Weiss  
Deputy Counsel

## **FINDINGS AND RESCISSION**

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this Landmark and Landmark Site, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the site of the former New Brighton Village Hall no longer possess special character or special historic or aesthetic interest or value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that the New Brighton Village Hall has been demolished, and that the site has been cleared of all structures.

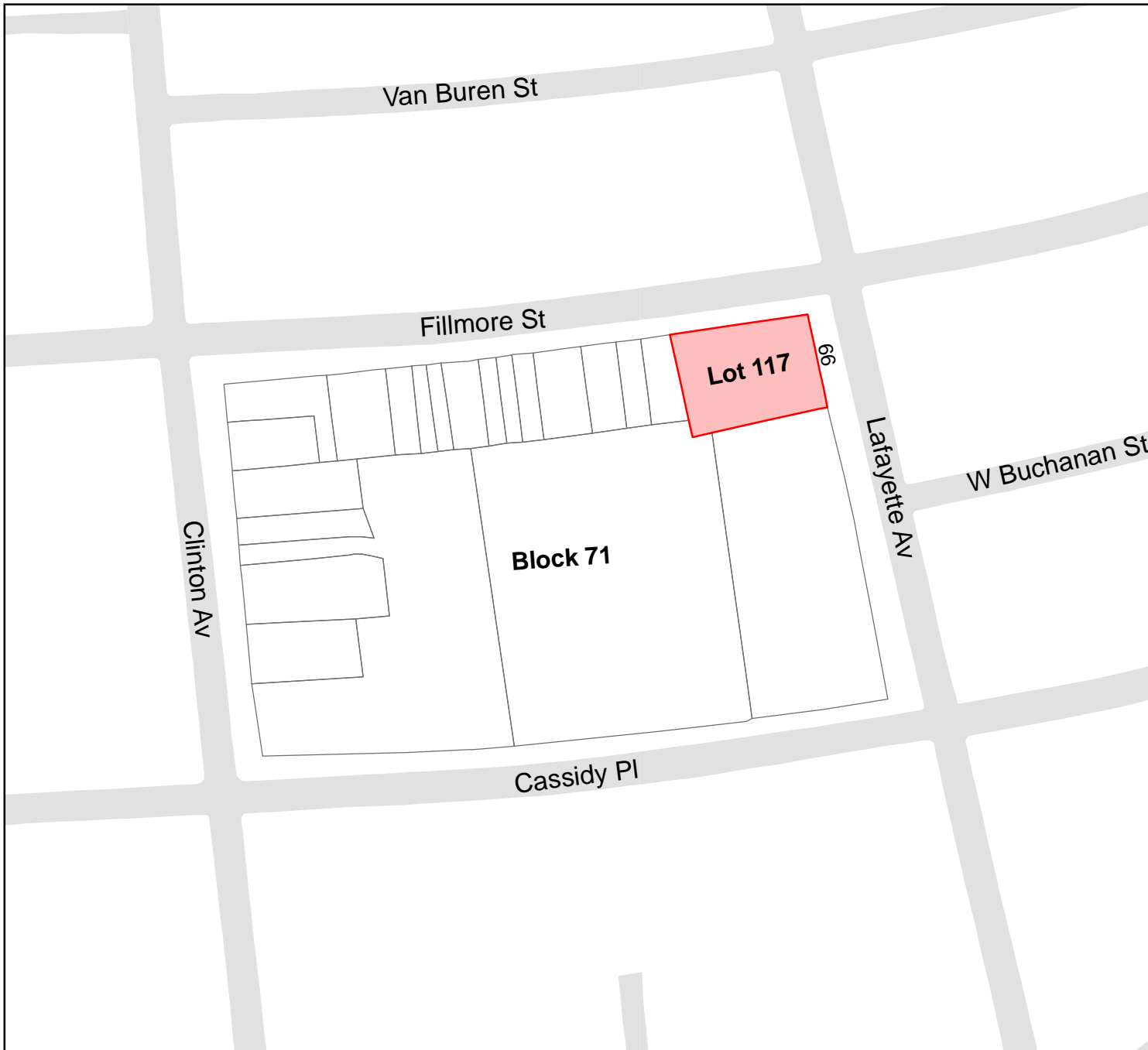
Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission rescinds the designation of the Landmark of the New Brighton Village Hall and Landmark Site, which consists of Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 71, Lot 117.

Robert Tierney, Chair

Pablo Vengoechea, Vice Chair

Stephen Byrns, Joan Gerner, Roberta Brandes Gratz, Christopher Moore, Margery Perlmutter, Thomas Pike, Elizabeth Ryan



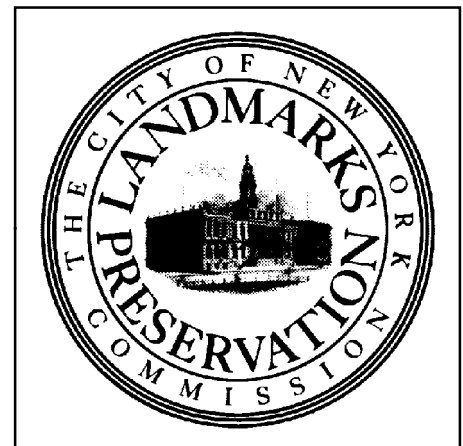


66 Lafayette Avenue  
 Rescission of the Landmark & Landmark Site  
 Borough of Staten Island, NY  
 Landmarks Preservation Commission

- Item Proposed for Rescission
- Existing Historic Districts & Individual Landmarks
- Proposed Historic Districts & Individual Landmarks

0.02 Miles

Date: 12.11.2006  
 Author: JLM



Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 03C, December 2003.

**New Brighton Village Hall (LP-2222), 66 Lafayette Avenue.  
 Rescission of Landmark and Landmark Site: Borough of Staten Island, Tax Map Block 71, Lot 117.**