

Meenakshi Srinivasan
Chair

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MOUNT MORRIS PARK EXTENSION APPROVED AS A NEW YORK CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT

Commission Approves Landmark Status for 276-Building Historic District in Harlem



(New York)-The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission today unanimously approved the designation of the 276-building Mount Morris Park Historic District Extension in Manhattan. The newly protected Harlem properties are primarily located on six blocks immediately west of the existing Mount Morris Park Historic District, which was designated by the Commission in 1971.

The extension consists of more than 250 row houses and approximately 12 apartment buildings, which display a variety of architectural styles popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This area shares its development history with the previously designated Mount Morris Park Historic District, as many of the architects and developers responsible for structures within the existing historic district were also responsible for the buildings within the new extension.

The streets of the Mount Morris Park Historic District Extension are lined with masonry row houses of exceptional quality and reflect Harlem's development as an affluent residential community following the extension of rapid transit into the area around 1880. The row houses, mainly built as single-family dwellings, were originally occupied by prosperous middle-class households. At the turn of the twentieth century, a new population, consisting mostly of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, began to settle in the area and many of these residences were converted into rooming houses and small apartment buildings.

By the late 1920s, Mount Morris Park began to attract a large African-American population, and became an important part of Harlem and home to numerous prominent black residents. By 1930, West 119th Street from Lenox to Seventh Avenues was a fully-integrated block, and during that decade several interracial families lived in Mount Morris Park. Today, the area remains one of New York City's most vibrant African-American communities.

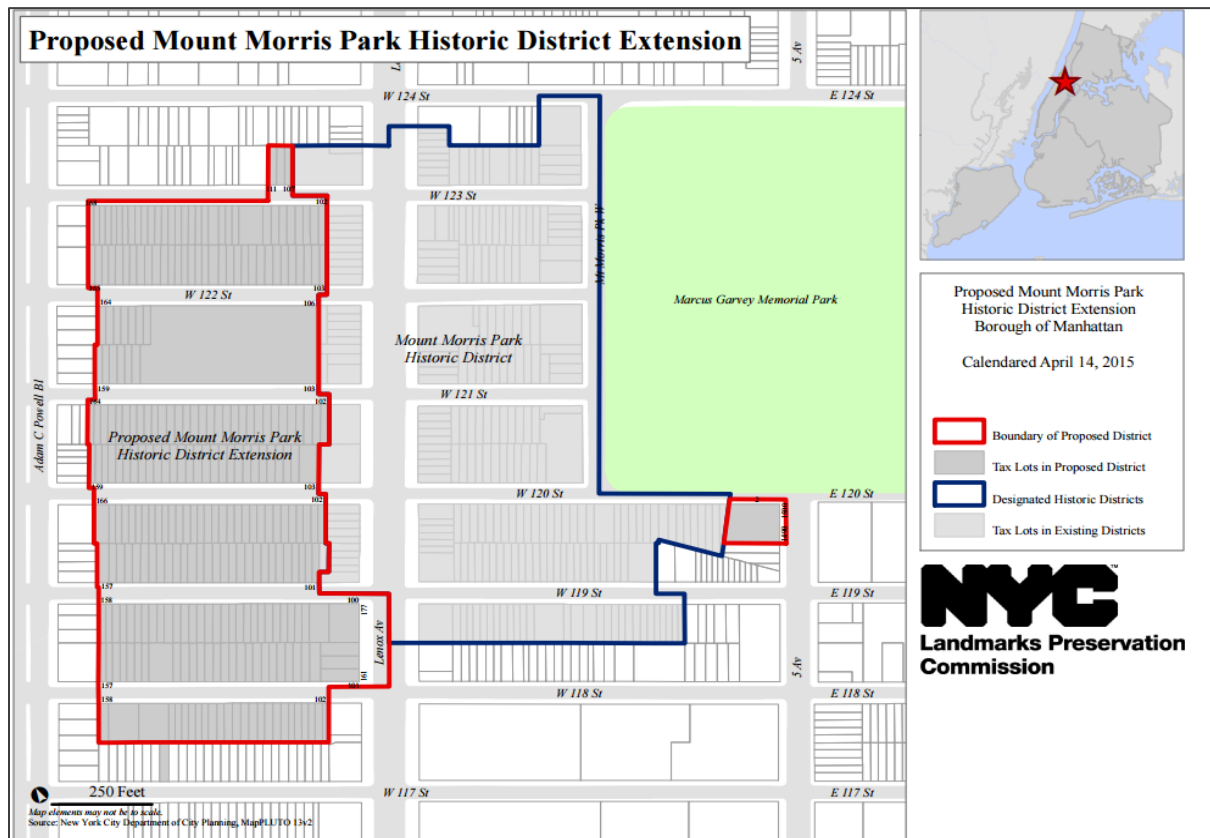
"This historic district extension speaks not only to Harlem's rich architectural diversity, but also to its extraordinary cultural and social history," said Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair Meenakshi Srinivasan. "I am proud to have advanced this district and we look forward to preserving and protecting all that it represents for future generations. This designation is a testament to the Commission's strong commitment to designating areas in all five boroughs that illustrate the layered history of New York City."

The oldest buildings in the historic district extension are three c. 1870 Second Empire style brick row houses with mansard roofs at **124 to 128 West 123rd Street** (at right). Other noteworthy buildings include six Queen Anne style row houses at **133 to 143 West 122nd Street** (below), which exhibit many of the hallmarks of the Queen Anne Style, including the mixed use of materials (brick, sandstone, and terracotta) and geometrical ironwork.



Notable residents include American screenwriter Bud Wilson Schulberg (*On the Waterfront*), who lived at 2 West 120th Street from his birth in 1914 to 1922; pioneering African American photographer James Van Der Zee, who lived and worked at 272 Lenox Avenue from 1942 to 1969; and James Watson, one of the first African Americans elected to judicial office, who lived at 117 West 120th Street from 1925 to the early 1950s.

Many of the houses in the designated neighborhood retain a high degree of integrity. Together, the buildings within the Mount Morris Park Historic District Extension represent a cohesive unit whose quality, design, and workmanship create an exceptional character and a strong sense of place.



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