

Historic Preservation in New York City

Tara Kelly Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts

What is a landmark?

“A **landmark** is a building, property, or object that 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.”

-NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission

Grand Central Terminal

Built 1913

Designated 1967



Henry Street Settlement

Built 1830s

Designated 1966



SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District

Period of significance 1850-1900; 1960s

Designated 1973



Manufacturer's Hanover Trust

Built 1954

Designated 1997



Grand Concourse Historic District

Period of significance 1917-1959

Designated 2011



Apollo Theater

Built 1913

Designated 1983



Buildings tell the **story** of New York

Historic Preservation in New York City

- Origins of preservation in NYC
- Preservation policy
- Why preserve?

How did the landmarks law come about?



Pennsylvania Station

Built 1910

Charles Kim, McKim, Mead & White



Pennsylvania Station Today



Pennsylvania Station

Demolished, 1963-1965





Before Penn Station...







Lenox Library

- Richard Morris Hunt, 1875
- Demolished in 1913
- Current site of Frick Museum



W.K. Vanderbilt Mansion

- Richard Morris Hunt, 1883
- Demolished in 1925
- Great-grandson of “The Commodore”

Early Advocacy/

1941: Civic groups compiled first list of threatened historic buildings

- 1941 Ely Jacques Kahn forms committee to work for the preservation of “New York’s remaining historic buildings” as well as “areas still graced by the “architectural charm of the past.”
- Columbia professor Talbot Hamlin draws up list of “buildings worth saving” representing the finest works of each age and style
- The buildings dated prior to 1860
- Inspired formation of Society of Architectural Historians in 1946

Post-War Development/



- Building boom following World War II
- Large swaths of the city were cleared for Urban Renewal projects
- Civic groups warned of the loss of New York's cultural and historic heritage, fighting the efforts of developers
- But by the 1950s, many notable buildings around New York City were lost to redevelopment

The Bard Act/

1956: Bard Act allows for protection of structures of “special historic or aesthetic value”

- In 1954 Albert S. Bard drafted an act to enable cities in New York State to pass laws to protect their landmarks
- On April 2, 1956, the Bard Act - which for the first time allowed cities to take aesthetics, history, and cultural associations into account for zoning laws - was passed into a law
- The Bard Act was the piece of the legislation puzzle that was missing in order for New York City to pass landmark protection legislation

1957: Municipal Art Society publishes *New York Landmarks: An Index of Architecturally Notable Structures in New York City*

- Combined effort of MAS and Society for Architectural Historians
- Included buildings that dated prior to 1930
- 127 of this list of 183 were eventually designated individual New York City landmarks

Fall 1965: Demolition of the Brokaw Houses is announced, a protest is held



February 1965: Brokaw Houses are demolished



LANDMARKS BILL SIGNED BY MAYOR

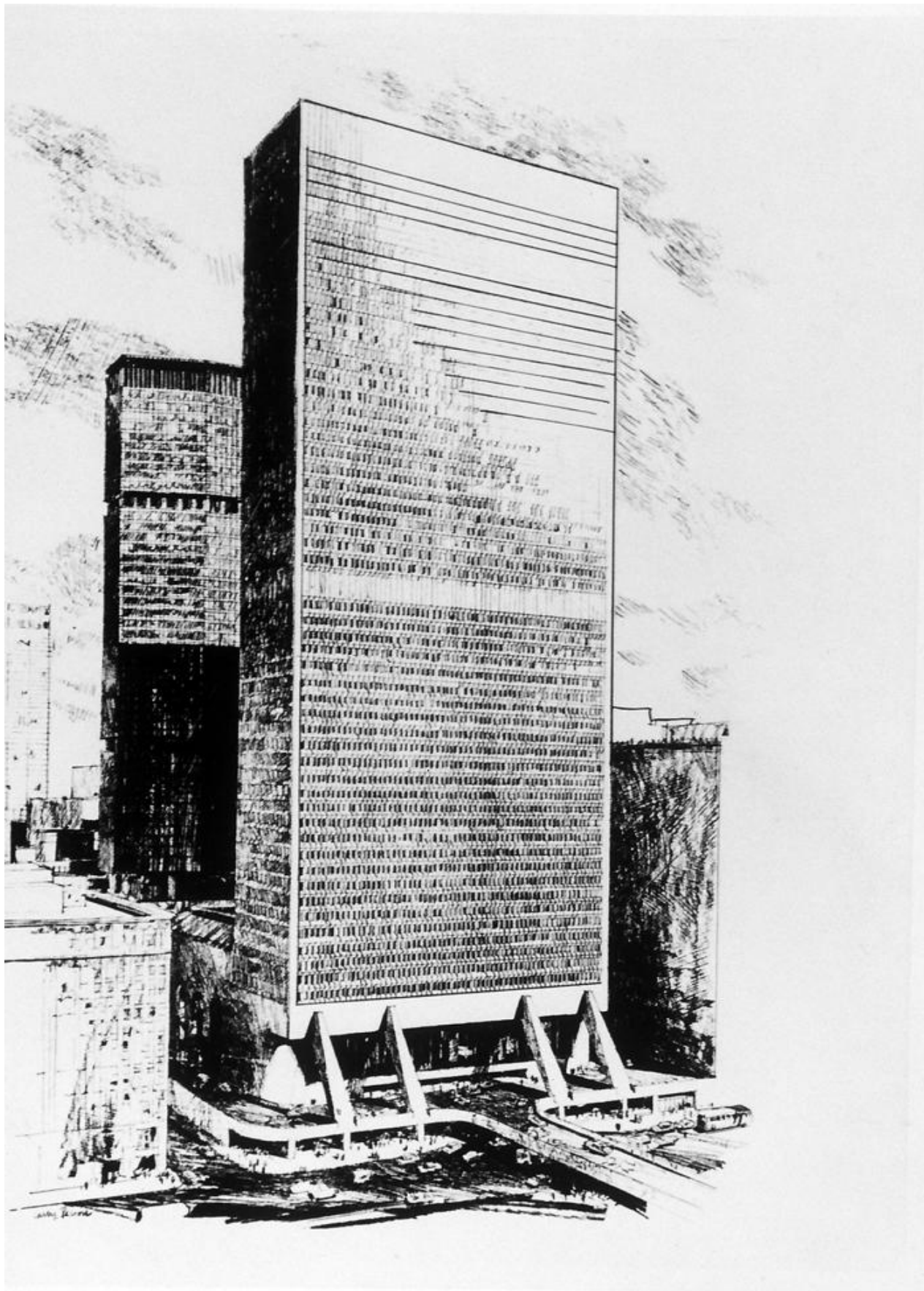
April 1965: Landmarks Preservation Law establishes permanent Landmarks Preservation Commission



Mayor Robert F. Wagner



Penn Central vs. NYC/



- 1967 - Grand Central Terminal designated a landmark
- 1968 & 1969 - The owner, Penn Central Railroad, proposes to build office building above the Terminal, both schemes were denied by LPC
- Penn Central sues the City (Penn Central v City of New York)
- February 1975 – State Supreme Court rules in favor of Penn Central

Penn Central vs. NYC/

- December 1975 – State Supreme Court decision overturned by appeal
- Spring 1977 – NY State Court of Appeals maintains appellate decision
- Penn Central appeals to U.S. Supreme Court
- 1978 Landmarks Law upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court



U.S. Supreme Court Decision

- Designation of Grand Central Terminal was not an unconstitutional taking
- New York's law of historic designation was a legitimate exercise of the police power

Preservation **policy** today

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC)

Established in 1965 by the NYC Landmarks Law

Mission:

- Safeguard the city's historic, aesthetic, and cultural heritage
- Help stabilize and improve property values in historic districts
- Encourage civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past
- Protect and enhance the city's attractions for tourists
- Strengthen the city's economy
- Promote the use of landmarks for the education, pleasure, and welfare of the people of New York City

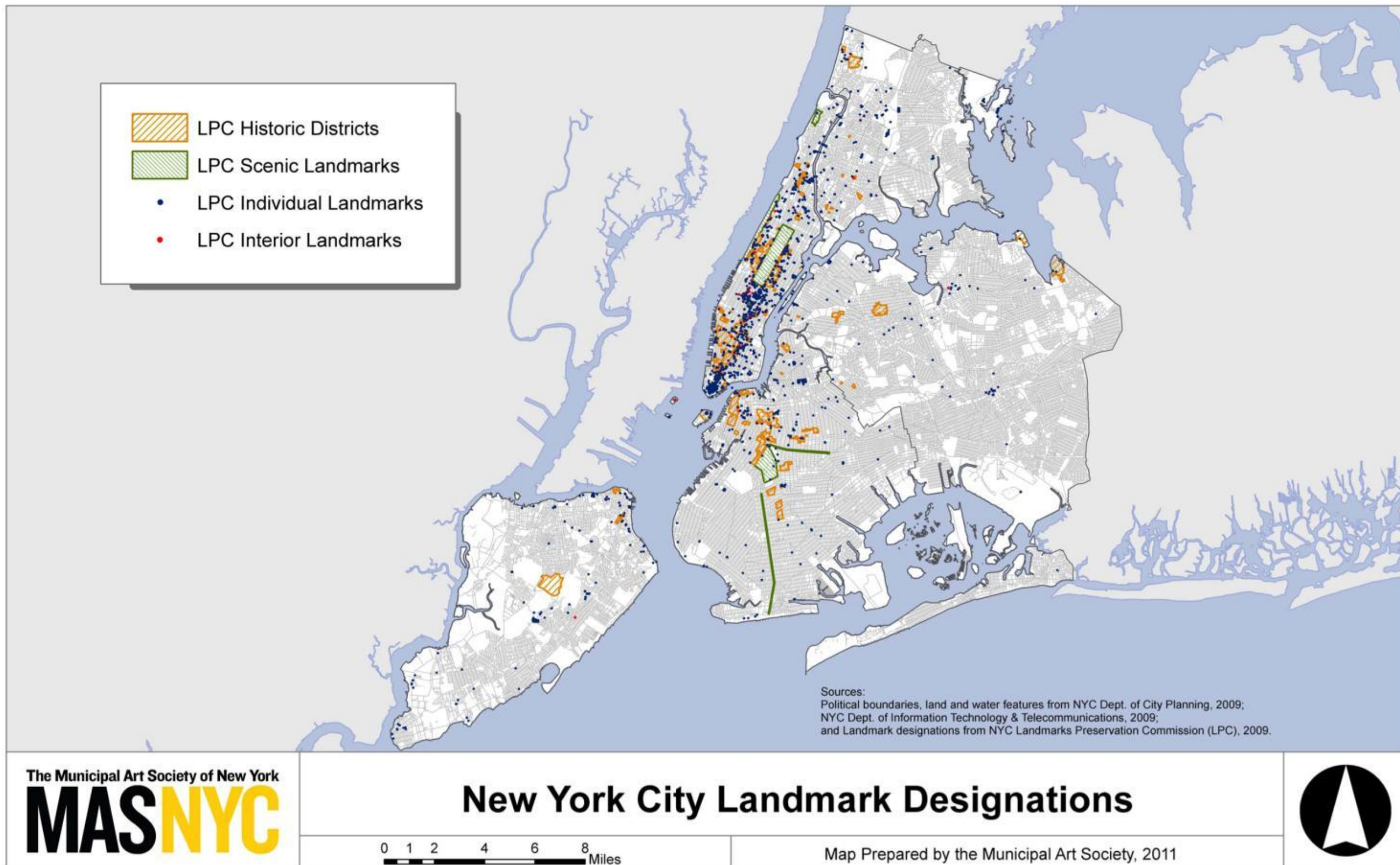
Preservation Policy/

Criteria for landmark designation



- At least 30 years old
- Have architectural, cultural or historic significance
- Historic districts must have “distinct sense of place”

Preservation Policy/



Over 30,000 properties are designated landmarks or are in historic districts – 3% of all NYC

Individual landmarks

Individual structures that can range from bridges to rowhouses to skyscrapers; examples include the Chrysler Building, the Langston Hughes House in Harlem, and the Wonder Wheel at Coney Island



Chrysler Building



Wonder Wheel

Preservation Policy/

Interior Landmarks

Building interiors that are “customarily open or accessible to the public,” such as the Marine Air Terminal at LaGuardia Airport, the RCA Building Lobby, and the Ed Sullivan Theater



Beacon Theater interior



Astor Hall - NYPL

Scenic Landmarks

City-owned parks or other landscape features, such as Prospect Park, Central Park, Eastern Parkway and Ocean Parkway



Central Park



Prospect Park

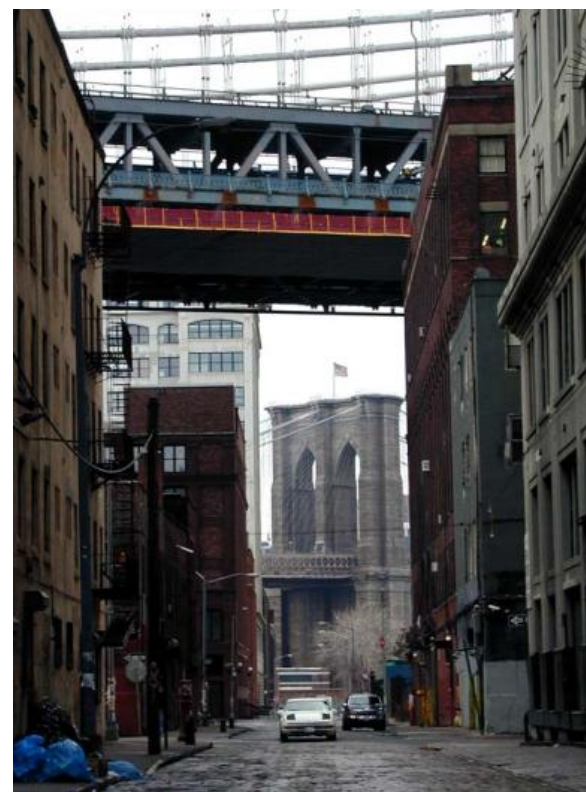
Preservation Policy/

Historic Districts

Areas of the city that possess architectural and historical significance and a distinct "sense of place," such as Ladies Mile in Manhattan, Cobble Hill in Brooklyn, or Douglaston in Queens



Greenwich Village



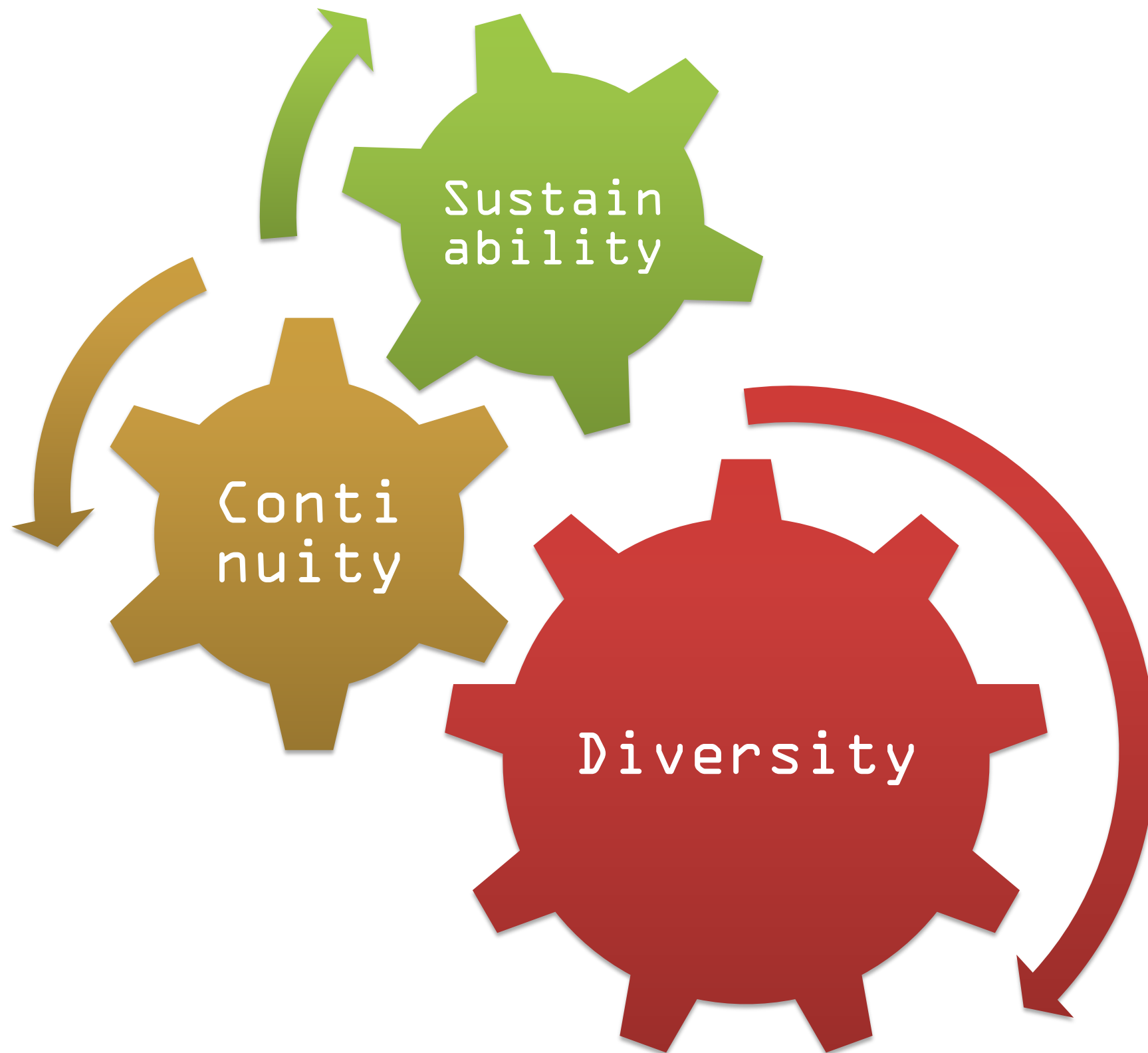
DUMBO



Prospect Heights

Why preserve?

Preservation: A Tool to Manage Change/



Why Preserve?

- **Diversity**

Maintaining a variety of building types, density, and use greatly contribute to the economic and social vitality and vibrancy of neighborhoods and cities

- **Continuity**

Places keep our accumulated experiences active, creating a narrative that links the past to the present

- **Sustainability**

Preservation furthers environmental goals in the form of rehabilitation and adaptive use



Identify Places That Matter/




Architecturally significant




Culturally significant

Build a Case: Research/

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NYC Department of Buildings
Building Information Search

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Search by Property

1

2

3

4

House No:

Block:

Building Identification Number (BIN):

Browse Block and Lot
Block: Lot (optional):

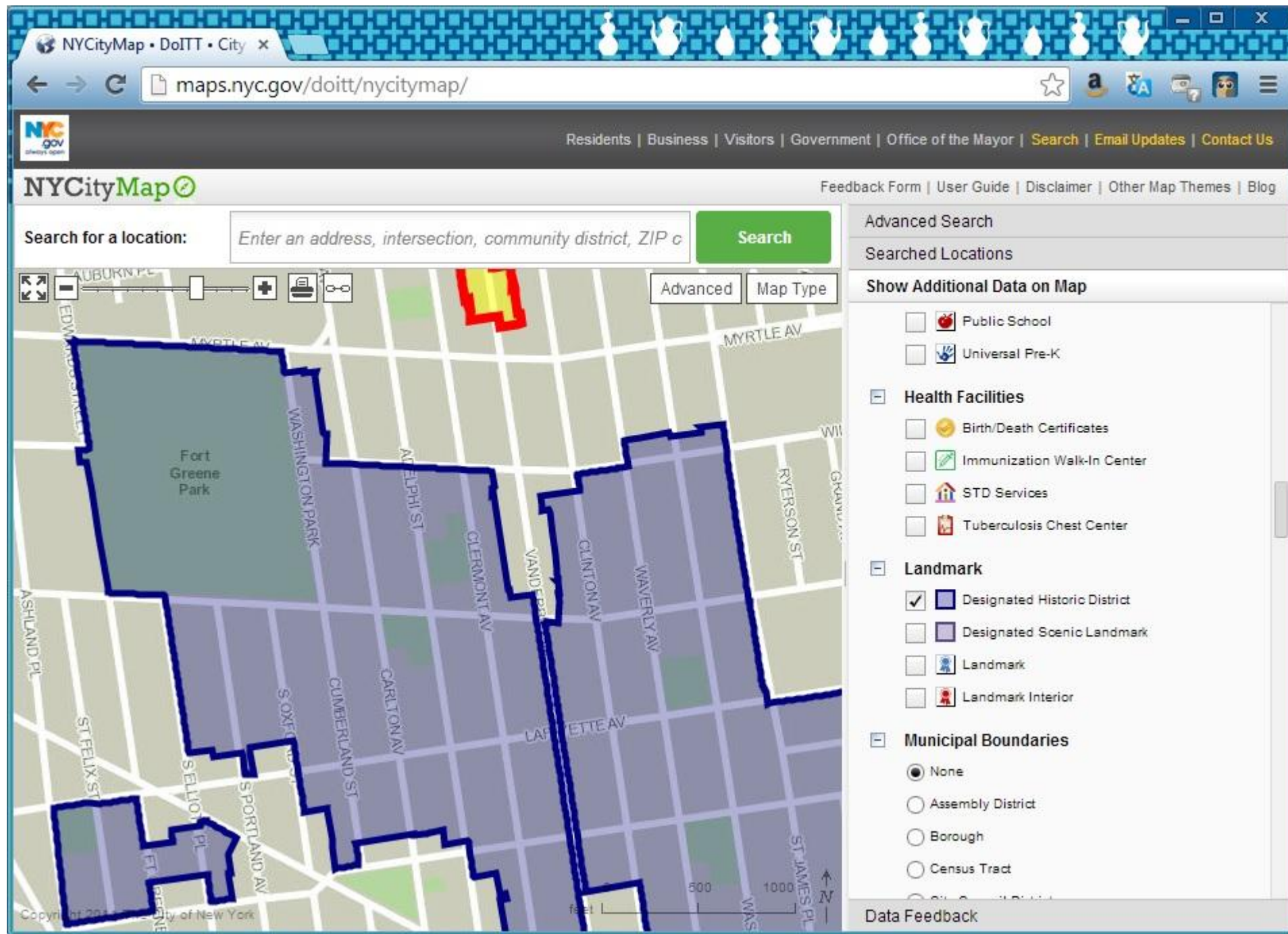
Street:

Lot:

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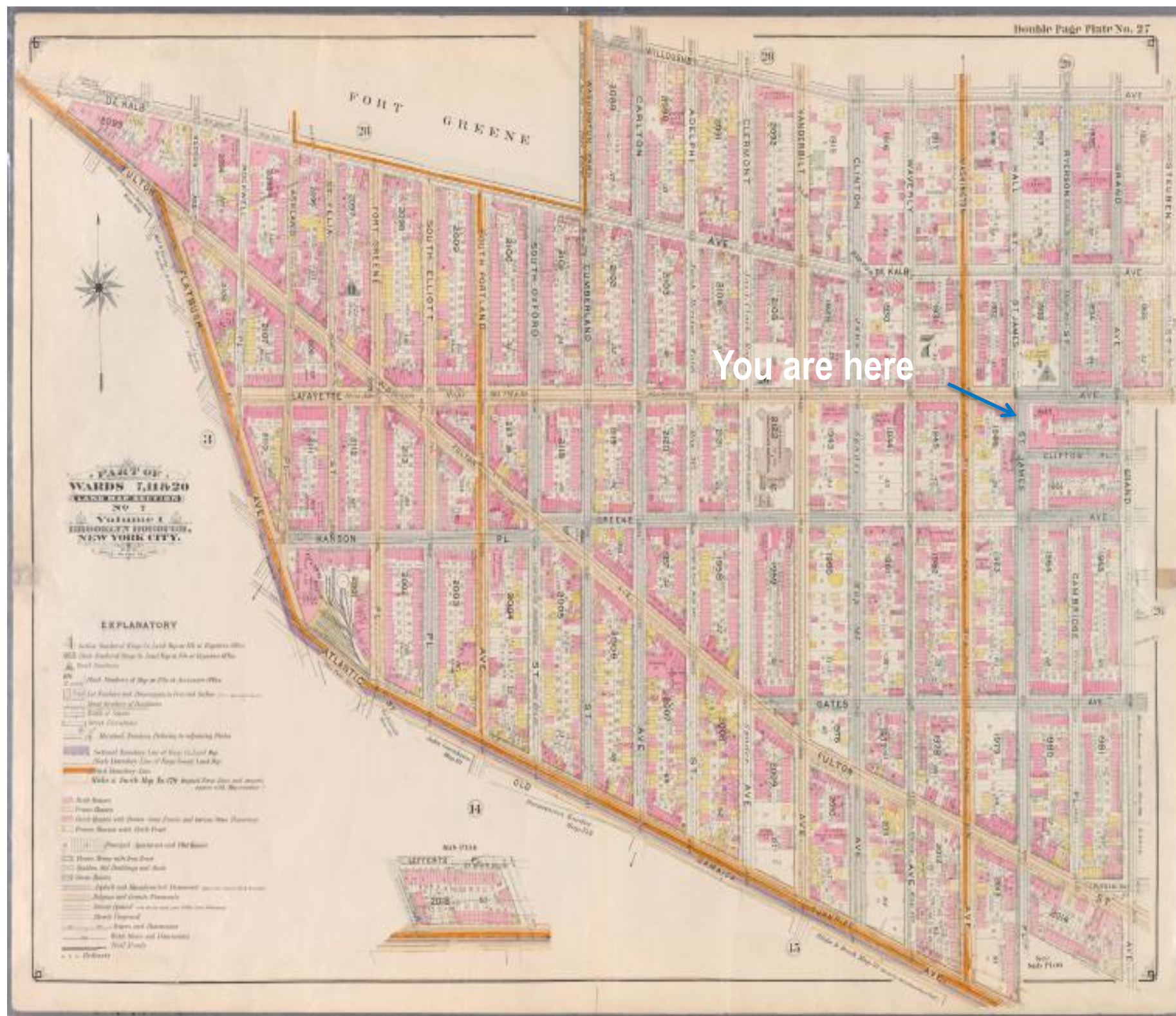
- Buildings Information System (BIS)
- Block & Lot

Build a Case: Research/



- City Map: <http://maps.nyc.gov/doitt/nycitymap/>
- Is my building already landmarked? Is it in a historic district?

Build a Case: Research/



- Historic maps, atlases; tax photographs
- Municipal Archives; New York Public Library; Museum of the City of New York

Build a Case: Research/



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Direct Me NYC 1940

Use old phone books to unlock the Federal Census

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New York City's road to the 1940 Federal Census begins here...

1



Suppose you are looking for **John H Fedeler**, live-in superintendent at The New York Public Library, 1910-1940.

2

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Fedelman M 851W177	WT ckshen
Feder A A brkr 30Pine	WA douth
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Feder A L	CA ledonia

Use our 1940 NYC telephone directories to **find his address**.

3

CODE	NAME	RELATI
	of each person whose place of abode on April 1, 1940, was in this family	Relationship to the head of family
	Enter surname first, then the given name and middle initial, if any	
	Include every person living on April 1, 1940. Omit children born since April 1, 1940	
4791	Fedeler	John H. Head
		Conchita Wife
		John Jr. Son
		Martha Daughter

Convert the address into a census enumeration district, then find his record at the National Archives.

It's easy! **Learn more in our FAQ,**

Build a Case: Research/



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Search by Property

1 House No: Street:

2 Block: Lot:

3 Building Identification Number (BIN):

Browse Block and Lot

4 Block: Lot (optional):

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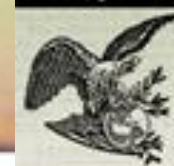
Build a Case: Other Sources/



I received a very unexpected email last week:

ed a building in Ridgewood, Queens, and while clearing out the basement we

Brooklyn Public Library



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About Brooklyn Daily Eagle Online

This project was produced by Brooklyn Public Library's Brooklyn Collection and funded by the Library and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, a federal agency that fosters innovation, leadership and a lifetime of learning.

The Brooklyn Daily Eagle was published from 1841 to 1955, then revived for a short time from 1960 to 1963.

Because of the enormous number of pages in the entire run, the digitization of the historic Brooklyn Daily Eagle newspaper from reels of microfilm has been broken down into more than one phase. Phase 1, which are at present be

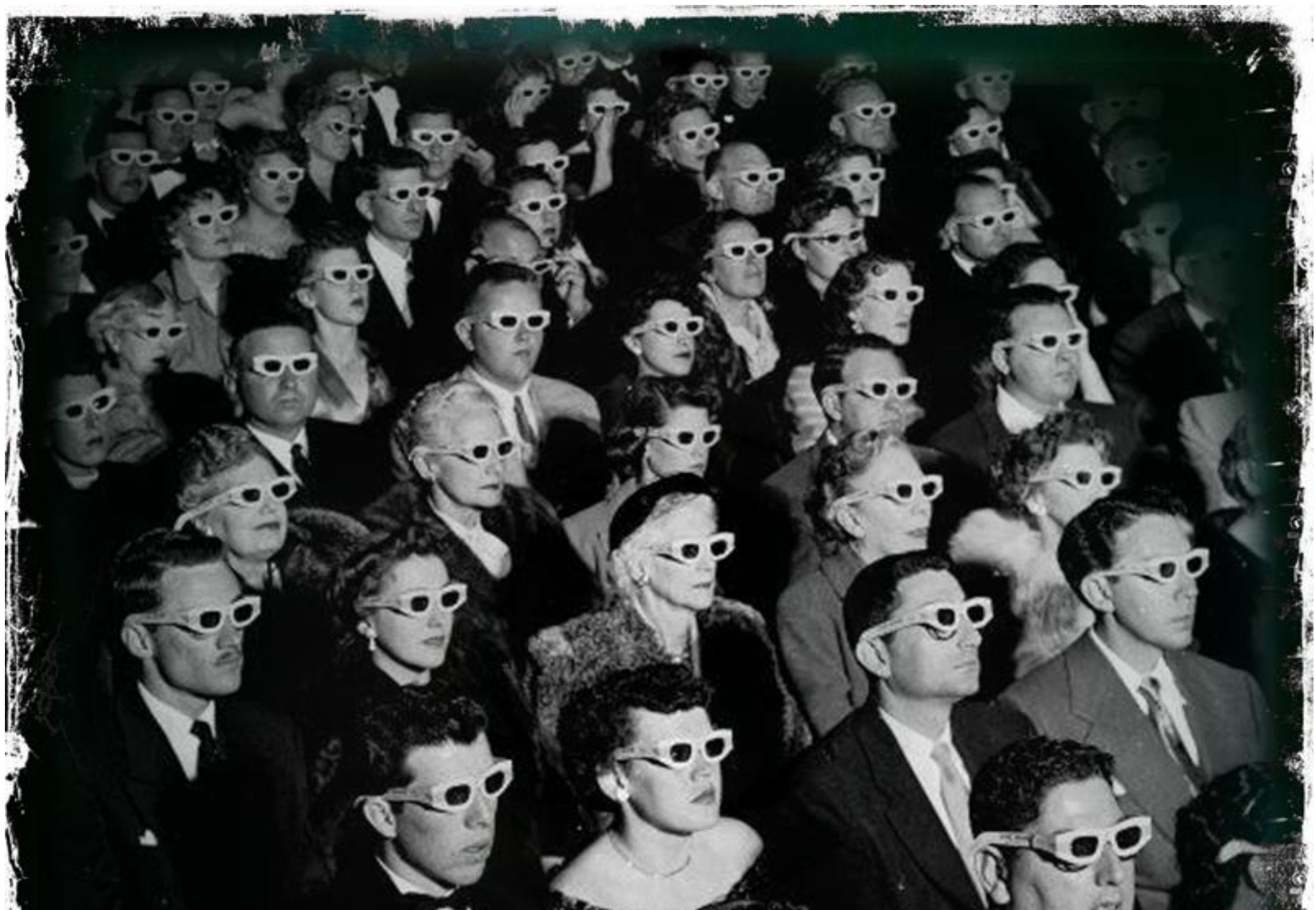


SHORPY

"ALWAYS SOMETHING INTERESTING"

Buildings tell the **story** of New York

Tell the Story/



Tell the Story: Identify Partners/



Tell the Story: Build Awareness/

The screenshot displays the PlaceMatters web application interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the placeholder text "Address, neighborhood, or place" and a "SEARCH" button. To the right is a "HELP" link. On the left side, a "LEGEND" panel lists various categories with corresponding icons and checkboxes, all of which are currently checked. The categories include: Select/Clear All, Featured, Residential, Public Art, Industrial, Commercial, Infrastructure, Roadway/Sidewalk, Parks & Gardens, Institution, Theatre, Open Space, Burial Site, Market, Office Building, Pools, and Public Hall. The main area shows a map of Brooklyn with numerous colored markers representing these categories. A popup window for the "Magnolia Tree Earth Center" is open, showing a description: "Environmental center and site of a 'living' landmark". Below this, there is a section titled "MORE INFORMATION" with a photograph of the center's entrance, which features a mural of a woman. At the bottom of the popup is a "ZOOM TO" button. In the bottom right corner of the map area, it says "POWERED BY esri".

LEGEND ▲


Address, neighborhood, or place SEARCH HELP

- ☒ Select/Clear All
- ☒ ★ Featured
- ☒ 🏠 Residential
- ☒ 🗿 Public Art
- ☒ 🏭 Industrial
- ☒ 🏢 Commercial
- ☒ 🛣️ Infrastructure
- ☒ 🛣️ Roadway/Sidewalk
- ☒ 🌳 Parks & Gardens
- ☒ 🏛️ Institution
- ☒ 🎭 Theatre
- ☒ 🌿 Open Space
- ☒ 🪦 Burial Site
- ☒ 🏪 Market
- ☒ 🏢 Office Building
- ☒ 🏊 Pools
- ☒ 🏛️ Public Hall

Magnolia Tree Earth Center X

Environmental center and site of a "living" landmark

MORE INFORMATION



ZOOM TO

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Tell the Story: Build Awareness/



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www.PreservationNation.org

Tell the Story: Get the Word Out/



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Preservation

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PRESERVATION WATCH

Weighing in on the never-ending preservation debate at 510 Fifth Avenue, the World Monuments Fund has included the boxy landmark in their 2012 watch list, released just this morning. Published every two years, this year's list highlights 66 of the most **at-risk** sites around the world. The organization included the former bank on the grounds that its recent changes have put "into question the **legality of the alterations and the capacity** of the New York City Landmarks Commission to enforce protective regulations." With 510 Fifth officially dubbed an endangered species, wonder if Vornado sympathizes? Mmm, probably not. [NY Times; [previously](#)]



MIDTOWN/MIDTOWN WEST

COMMENTS

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BROWNSTONER

brooklyn inside and out

JEREMIAH'S VANISHING NEW YORK

A.K.A. THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS:
A BITTERLY NOSTALGIC LOOK AT A CITY IN THE PROCESS OF GOING EXTINCT

THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2012

Bill's Gay 90s

VANISHING

We've been hearing speculation for months that the wonderful [Bill's Gay 90s](#) would be closing. Now it's official. [Marty visited this week](#) and talked to the bartender and the owner. They confirmed that **the last day for Bill's will be March 24**.



BLOG ROLL

[CLICK FOR ALL LINKS](#)

RECENT COMMENTS

Anonymous commented on [University Diner](#): I had dinner here on Christmas once, with my mother. I'll never forget it.

Shawn C. Little commented on [University Diner](#): I had dinner here on my Sunday break. Thanks for the...

Ephemeral New York

Chronicle an ever-changing city through faded and forgotten artifacts

A view of a smaller-scale Fifth Avenue in 1900

September 20, 2012

I'm not sure when this postcard was made, but the postmark is stamped 1906; I think it has to be a bit earlier.



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- > About Wild New York
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- > Ephemeral in the Sunday NEW YORK POST!
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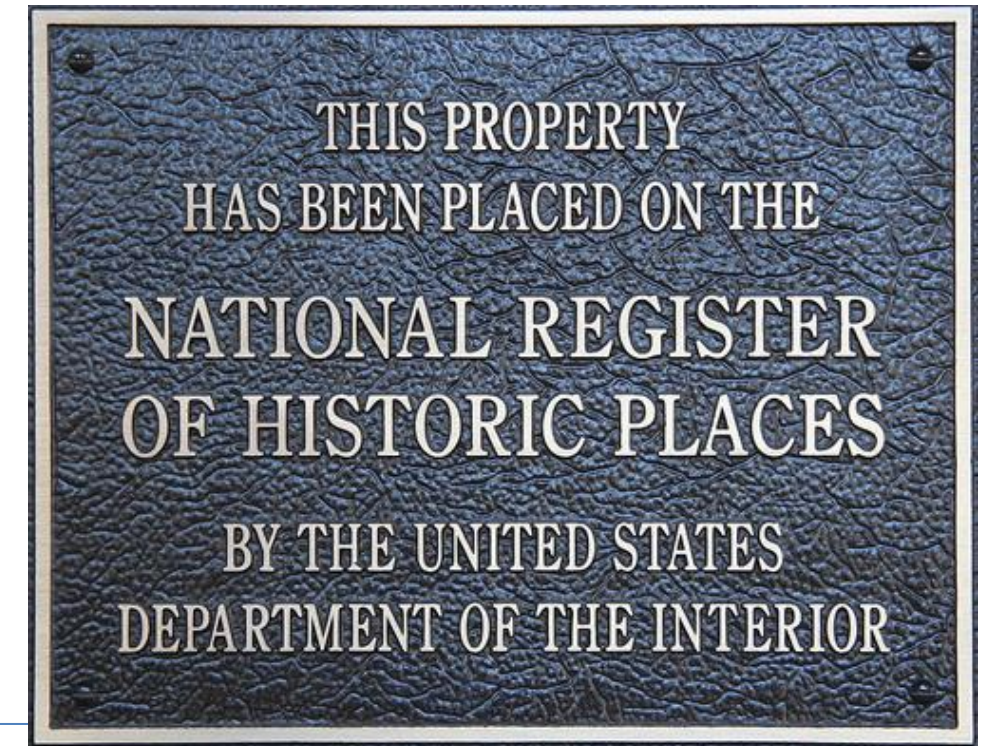
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Questions?

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