

# Request for Evaluation

in consideration for a historic district in Sunset Park, Brooklyn

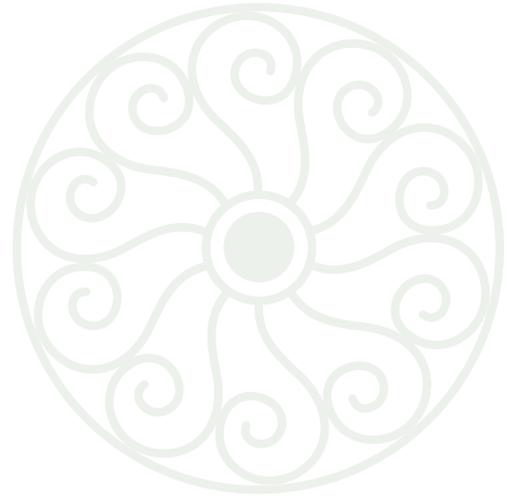


Submitted to the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission in March of 2014

Prepared by the Sunset Park Landmarks Committee  
PreserveSunsetPark.org • info@preservesunsetpark.org







## **Table of Contents**

Architectural and Cultural History of Sunset Park .....1

Photo Highlights .....12

Map #1: Neighborhood Boundaries .....18

Map #2: Historic District Study Area.....19

Support Findings .....21

Building Data.....23

Letters of Support .....223





## Architectural and Cultural History of Sunset Park

**T**he enclosed **Request For Evaluation** for the proposed Sunset Park New York City Historic District Study Area is the result of a vigorous survey, site photography, and outreach efforts on the part of the Sunset Park Landmarks Committee and its numerous volunteers. This effort began in late 2012 and has mapped an area of 22 blocks within the Sunset Park National Register Historic District that are architecturally meritorious and worthy of designation and protection under the New York City Landmarks Law, as they have very closely retained their original appearance. These blocks, which encompass approximately 880 residential buildings, were chosen based not only upon the historic integrity of their architecture, but also upon local homeowner support. Extensive outreach was performed to gauge the support level of those living on these blocks, which has been overwhelmingly favorable. 15 of the 22 blocks were canvassed (approximately 660 houses), which yielded 402 support letters from homeowners (see study area map #2, which includes a breakdown of homeowner support levels by block). Community-wide outreach beyond the study area blocks also revealed great support from residents throughout the neighborhood. Over 2,600 residents, owners and renters alike, living inside and outside the study area, have signed the Sunset Park Landmarks Committee's petition in support of neighborhood preservation. The map and supporting documentation represent a carefully considered landmarks proposal that meets the current needs and desires of the community.

## Sunset Park Request For Evaluation

---

Unlike many other neighborhoods in Brownstone Brooklyn, Sunset Park was mostly built for members of the working class and remains a predominantly working class neighborhood. Though sections of the neighborhood have been remodeled, many blocks are, for the most part, intact and visually cohesive, showcasing their architectural form and beauty, which creates delightful and livable streetscapes. These streetscapes, which are included in the proposed Sunset Park study area, show the care that individual homeowners have taken with their historic homes.

However, in recent years, disturbing threats to the neighborhood's historic character have emerged. Every year, more and more two- and three-family homes are irreparably altered with historically insensitive changes: such as the removal of historic architectural elements (stoops, cornices, and lintels); rooftop additions; replacement of stone façades with historically inaccurate brick or tile; replacement of wrought-iron fences and gates with stainless steel; installation of brick in-fill to diminish the size of original six-foot-tall windows; construction of street-facing balconies; and the insertion of parking pads in place of basement apartments. In the worst cases, entire houses are demolished to construct out-of-context and out-of-scale new buildings. When such changes happen to even a single building, the impact reverberates up and down the block, diminishing the visual glory of neighboring buildings and forever altering a block that stood in harmony for more than a century. For this reason, many residents favor protection by the Landmarks Law because they feel that Sunset Park is under attack and in danger of losing its sense of place and its neighborhood feel.



*6th Avenue between 54th Street and 55th Street—previously a symmetrical vignette of brownstones.*

## Sunset Park Request For Evaluation

---

Efforts to protect the architectural heritage of Sunset Park date back to 1976, with the formation of an earlier group, the Sunset Park Restoration Committee, which worked to raise awareness and pique the community's interest in local history and architecture. That Committee hired architectural historian Andrew Scott Dolkart to write a National Register of Historic Places nomination for Sunset Park and in 1988, the Sunset Park Historic District was listed on the National Register. With 3,237 contributing and 205 non-contributing buildings, this is one of the city's largest National Register districts. The nomination drew upon the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission's 1977 survey of the area. A New York Times article from 1985, entitled "If You're Thinking of Living in Sunset Park," announced that "The city's Landmarks Preservation Commission has three sections under consideration for landmarking - 47th and 48th Streets between Fifth and Sixth Avenues and that section of Sixth Avenue; 40th to 43d Streets between Fourth and Fifth Avenues and 53d Street, 54th Street and the north side of 55th Street from Fifth to Sixth Avenues." The first two of these sections are within the enclosed study area.

The time has come to celebrate the built environment of Sunset Park by protecting the blocks that best represent its contribution to Brooklyn and New York City. While inappropriate changes are happening at an alarming rate throughout the neighborhood, the blocks advocated for in the study area instill a sense of place, history, and pride for all who live, work, or simply stroll in Sunset Park.

### Establishment of Neighborhood Boundaries

From the time of the first European settlements in the 17th century, neighborhood names and boundaries in Brooklyn were established in a variety of ways. They were often based on the names of pre-existing villages (Flatbush, Bushwick), topographical features (Brooklyn Heights, Bay Ridge), or, in the case of Sunset Park, a local resource.

In the mid-19th century, Kings County was divided into geographic sections called Wards. In 1891, the City set aside a 14-acre plot of undeveloped land between Fourth and Seventh Avenues and 41st to 43rd Streets in the 8th Ward. It was named Sunset Park for its sweeping views of the sunset looking west over New York Harbor. Thus, this section of Brooklyn's 8th Ward not only acquired a place from which to look out over the growing city and to take advantage of the recreational and spiritual opportunities it provided, but the park gave the neighborhood an identity. Though the area was considered to be part of Bay Ridge ("lower Bay Ridge"), it was also referred to as the Sunset Park neighborhood of Bay Ridge. By 1969, however, the neighborhood was exclusively called Sunset Park and has been ever since. The park was extended to 44th Street, enlarging it to 24.5 acres in 1903 and subsequent urban development continued to shape the neighborhood. Today, Sunset Park's boundaries are generally considered to be Prospect Expressway to the north, 8th Avenue to the east, 65th Street to the south and the waterfront to the west. (See map #1.)

### Catalysts for Development

At Sunset Park's northern border is the historic and beautiful Green-Wood Cemetery, which opened in 1838 and was the city's first rural cemetery and its first great park. People from all over travelled to enjoy its lush surroundings, putting this rural neighborhood on the map before any major development took place. Green-Wood is also the highest topographical point in Brooklyn – and a site in the Battle of Brooklyn, which took place on August 27, 1776. The cemetery gates and chapel are designated New York City landmarks and the entire site is a National Historic Landmark.

Sunset Park's first major development began after the Civil War, when manufacturing enterprises were established on its waterfront. This sparked inland development of the area, which included housing for the middle and working classes, places of worship and commercial thoroughfares. One such waterfront enterprise was the Bush & Denslow Company, a small oil refinery owned by Rufus T. Bush. Irving T. Bush, his son, purchased the property in the 1890's and, over roughly thirty years, transformed it into a major international marine terminal and the largest multi-tenant industrial complex in the country. Although now officially named Industry City, most area residents still call it Bush Terminal. At its height, this enormous complex covered roughly 200 acres between 27th and 50th Streets and included its own railroad, power plants, fire and police forces and deep-water piers. It employed roughly 25,000 workers, many of whom resided in Sunset Park. Just south of Bush Terminal is the Brooklyn Army Terminal, constructed by the Federal government in 1918. During World War II, roughly 85% of army equipment and personnel were shipped overseas from this 95-acre complex.

Another major stimulant of growth in the area came in 1889, when the 39th Street Ferry opened with service to and from Manhattan. In 1890, the Fifth Avenue elevated rail line opened, transporting ferry-riders inland to Fifth Avenue and by 1893, the line traveled as far as 65th Street. With these transportation enhancements, the area became attractive to developers. In tandem with the boom in housing and amenities the city's subway system, a major turning point for New Yorkers' mobility, was also under construction. The Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company's Fourth Avenue line was built between 1909 and 1915, making Sunset Park much more easily accessible as a commuter neighborhood. In the 1890's, Fourth Avenue was planned as a "parkway" to South Brooklyn, with planted malls down its center and wide sidewalks for "promenading," a popular 19th and early 20th century pastime, and hence several grand civic and religious buildings were constructed along this former grand boulevard. Unfortunately, the malls were demolished to make way for the subway vents of the new Fourth Avenue line, but the wide avenue remains a favored walking route.

### Development of Sunset Park

The development of Sunset Park occurred mostly from the 1880's through the 1930's, when the inland area blossomed as a residential neighborhood for middle- and working-class families. Unlike other sections of Brooklyn, such as Park Slope or Clinton Hill, where rows of extravagant mansions

## Sunset Park Request For Evaluation

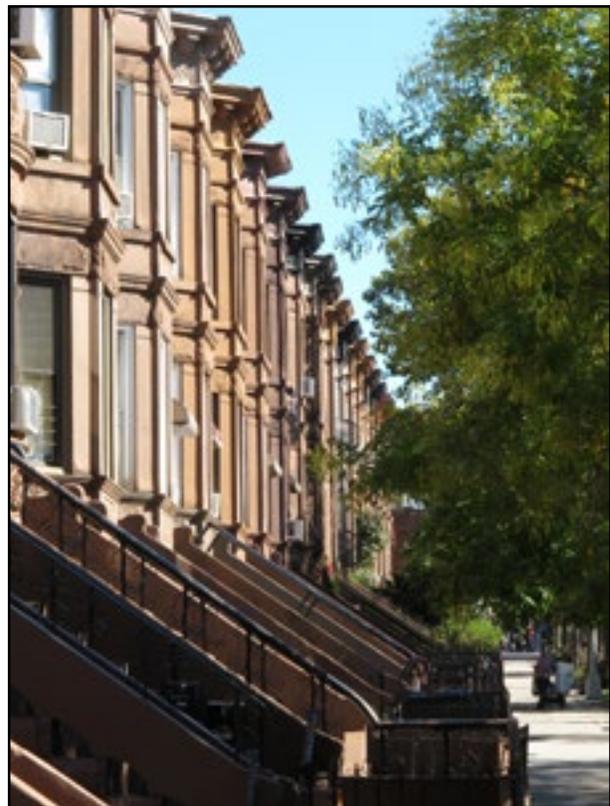
---

were laid out to entice wealthy commuters, Sunset Park's rowhouses used the same styles and details popular for rowhouse construction at the time, albeit on a more modest scale. Most of the houses constructed in Sunset Park were two stories or two stories over a raised basement, a relatively small size at the time. Though these houses give the outward impression of single-family residences, they were almost entirely configured for two-family occupation. In fact, Sunset Park contains one of the earliest and most extensive concentrations of two-family masonry rowhouses in the city. Such graceful construction for what was largely workers' housing is remarkable, not only for its time, but also because of the fact that these houses continue to be owned and occupied by members of the working and middle classes. In this way, the enduring intention and purpose of Sunset Park's development lends its architecture a unique cultural significance.

Immigrants from diverse backgrounds were among those who originally settled in Sunset Park, and continue to call it home today. Its first waves of immigrants were Irish, German and Scandinavian, but by the late 19th century, immigrants from Italy, Greece, and Poland also arrived. Puerto Rican and other Latin American populations began settling here in the 1940's, and large numbers of Asian immigrants arrived in the 1980's, establishing Brooklyn's first, and New York City's third, "Chinatown" along Eighth Avenue. Recently, Middle Eastern populations have established mosques in the neighborhood, as well. This mix of cultures continues to enliven Sunset Park today.

### Architectural Significance and Typologies

Sunset Park's standout building type is the masonry rowhouse. Mostly built between 1885 and 1912, these stunning residential blocks are complemented by commercial thoroughfares and institutional and religious buildings mostly completed by the early 1930s. The submitted study area celebrates Sunset Park's rowhouse typology, with blocks showcasing the progression of styles popular around the turn of the 20th century, including neo-Grec, Romanesque Revival and neo-Renaissance. Sunset Park's architectural cohesiveness results from the purposeful repetition of a small number of graceful forms and styles. Interestingly, the study area also includes a row of six-family tenement structures on 40th Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues as well as some early examples of non-profit cooperative apartment buildings at 44th Street and Sixth Avenue.



*50th Street between 4th and 5th Avenues exemplifies Sunset Park's classic masonry rowhouses.*

## Sunset Park Request For Evaluation

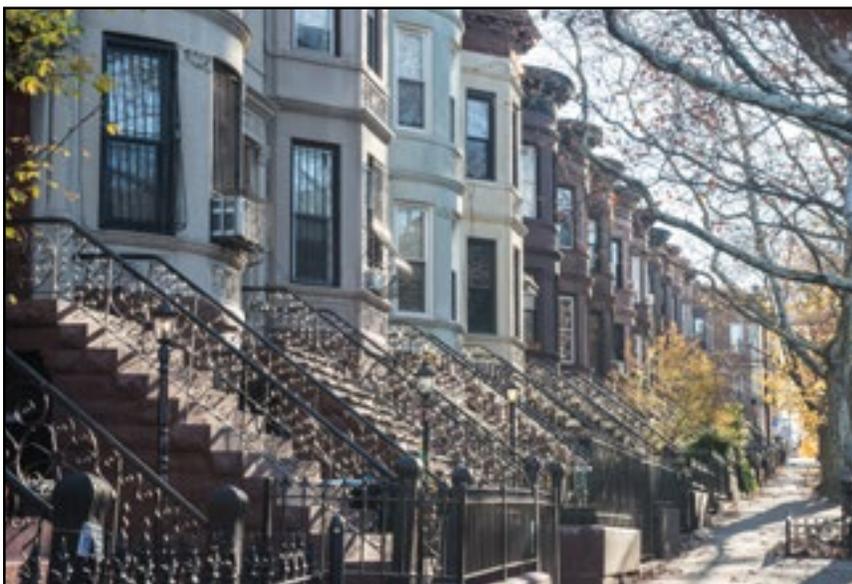
---

This lovely cohesiveness is the specialty of Sunset Park's most prolific architect, Thomas Bennett, who was responsible for the design of over 600 buildings in a variety of types and styles throughout the neighborhood. His work includes swaths of rowhouses, apartment houses, as well as factories and public buildings. Bennett was a resident of Sunset Park, although, ironically, he did not design his own house at 435 55th Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues, one of the study area blocks.

Some early masonry rowhouses constructed in Sunset Park are 430-436 54th Street, designed in 1893 by Henry Spicer in the neo-Grec style, which was nearing the end of its popularity. Their brick façades are trimmed with stone and feature angled bays, bracketed cornices and wrought-iron stoop railings. Some of these railings include Sunset Park's iconic wheel motif, which appears on many wrought-iron railings in the proposed historic district. The motif has become a symbol of Sunset Park's architectural personality.

Romanesque Revival forms became popular around 1892 and lasted until 1896. 54th Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues displays several examples of neo-Grec rowhouses with Romanesque Revival elements, including round arches, textured stonework and Byzantine carvings. All constructed in 1892, 449-451 and 457-459 54th Street were designed by Robert W. Fritt and 460-466 54th Street were designed by P. L. Burnett.

The majority of rowhouses within the study area were designed in the neo-Renaissance style, which became popular in America beginning in the 1880's. An example of the early use of Renaissance-inspired architecture in the study area is at 423-439 55th Street, designed by Thomas W. Edwards in 1894, and the row in which Thomas Bennett resided. This row of homes can best be described as "transitional", as it employs details common to the neo-Grec, Romanesque Revival, and neo-Renaissance styles. The early houses designed entirely in the neo-Renaissance style were clad in brownstone, which was still popular in the early stages of the Classical trend in



*Left: The iconic wheel motif in a wrought iron railing. Above: 47th Street between 5th and 6th Avenues has railings with the wheel motif.*

## Sunset Park Request For Evaluation

---

architecture. However, as is evident on 55th Street, many rows within the district include houses clad in various building materials, creating a rich tableau of colors, textures and styles.

Another such tableau is located on 47th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, which is often regarded as the most architecturally unique block in the neighborhood. Its streetscapes feature rows of neo-Renaissance townhouses with Romanesque Revival and Byzantine-style details and carvings. The north side was built in two stages for different developers between 1901 and 1906, and is more typical of the area's uniform rows, while also including a mix of limestone and brownstone cladding. The rowhouses on the south side of the block were all designed by Thomas Bennett (except for the end house, number 572). The south side is a symphony of alternating styles and materials, with rounded or angled bays or flat-fronted façades with a mix of brownstone, limestone, or specialty stone. Completed in 1897-99, each house has a different door or window treatment, and the decorative panels and banding are also varied. Despite its variety, the south side displays a balanced harmony, with two pairs of flat-fronted houses inserted into the alternating angled and rounded bays about a third of the distance in from both of the avenues.

It is noted in the National Register of Historic Places nomination form that the rows of houses on "54th, 55th, 56th and 58th Streets between Fourth and Fifth Avenues and on 47th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, were generally among the most expensive erected in the area." It is for this reason that we find homes that were constructed as single-family houses, rather than the two-family construction that dominated the neighborhood. In addition to being some of the earliest rowhouses in the neighborhood, these were also some of the most architecturally distinguished.

59th Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues is also noteworthy, as it showcases some of the rowhouse architecture that defines Sunset Park. On the north side are 26 houses, numbers 411-471, which are unusual for their flat-fronted façades, all designed and built by Henry Spicer in 1895. Across the street are two sets of 13 houses, numbers 412-440 (built in 1896) and 444-468 (built in 1902). While designed by two different architects, Frank S. Lowe and Henry Pohlmann, respectively, all of these rowhouses feature projecting bays, an interesting counterpoint to the flat walls of the north side.

Other beautiful examples of limestone-clad neo-Renaissance rowhouses within the study area include 4701-4721 Sixth Avenue, between 47th and 48th Streets, and 514-560 44th Street, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. Both of these rows have limestone cladding on their upper stories and brownstone bases. 4701-4721 Sixth Avenue were designed by Henry Pohlman of Pohlman & Patrick in 1904, and feature angled bays, prominent bracketed cornices and fanciful carvings, including a dragon-like motif, which was a popular representation at the time. Pohlman added visual interest by including one brownstone-clad house on either end of the row, creating a bookend effect. Sloping down the hill from Sixth Avenue, 514-560 44th Street were designed by Thomas Bennett in 1908. The row features rounded bays, bracketed cornices with garland motifs and intricate carvings.

## Sunset Park Request For Evaluation

---

With increased demand for housing around the time that the Fourth Avenue subway was being built, there was also a push to construct larger, multi-family dwellings to accommodate the growing population. At 44th Street and Sixth Avenue are four apartment buildings designed by Eisenla & Carlson in 1913-14 at 566, 570 and 574 44th Street and 4404 Sixth Avenue. Shortly after their completion, the Finnish Home Building Association purchased and converted them into cooperatively-owned apartment buildings. The Association formed in 1916, breaking ground on two buildings at 816 and 826 43rd Street (respectively called Alku, meaning “beginning”, and Alku Toinen, toinen meaning “two”), the nation’s first non-profit, cooperatively-owned apartment buildings (not in the current study area). Roughly 10 years later, Sunset Park became home to Brooklyn’s “Finntown”, with a cooperative shopping complex and roughly 50 cooperative apartment buildings, including these four. They are outstanding in their architectural details, with Classical ornament, ornate brickwork, and beautifully detailed iron and glass canopies on numbers 566 and 570. A full study of these buildings is beyond the scope of this proposal, but their history and development certainly warrants future research.

The only free-standing mansion in the study area, and in all of Sunset Park, was also designed in the neo-Renaissance style. Located at 404 55th Street, it originally belonged to the director of the nearby Bay Ridge Savings Bank, Dr. Maurice T. Lewis. The brick structure with a rusticated limestone base was designed in 1907 by Harde & Short, a prestigious firm that was also responsible for many grand apartment houses, including the fanciful individual landmark Alwyn Court on Seventh Avenue and West 58th Street in Manhattan.



*Left: The pastime of stoop sitting may be lost as more stoops are torn off during redevelopment. Above: Uniform rowhouses often have carvings unique to their facade, giving each house personality while maintaining continuity of the streetscape.*

### Conclusion

With a development period of less than thirty years, Sunset Park's rowhouse blocks exhibit a variety of styles, most notably the progression of neo-Grec to Romanesque Revival to neo-Renaissance, and buildings that display elements of more than one of these. The neighborhood presents a tableau of the architectural expressions that resonated during those thirty years. Unusually, these aesthetically pleasing and well-proportioned houses were constructed for the working and middle classes as an "architecture for the masses" to uplift and inspire.

In order to ensure a future in which residents and visitors may enjoy Sunset Park's distinct sense of place and better understand its rich history, it is important to be thoughtful in the present. After close consideration, the blocks on the following pages have been identified as representatives of Sunset Park's best. Despite being over one hundred years old, these houses have been carefully maintained and retain their historic integrity. As is evidenced by blocks which have not been so fortunate and where changes are occurring at an alarming rate, it is imperative that we protect and celebrate what we still have. This preservation effort is the result of widespread community concern for the architectural legacy and quality of life in Sunset Park, in which, to date, over 2,600 signatures have been collected in favor of the designation of a historic district.



*Gaslight still illuminates a yard on 56th Street between 4th and 5th Avenues.*





## Sunset Park Request For Evaluation

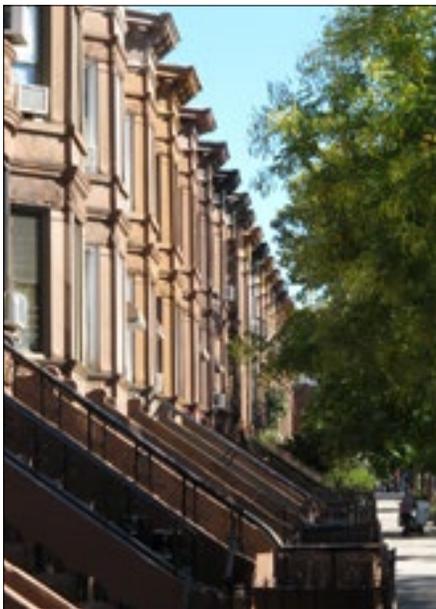
---

### Highlights of Sunset Park

Sunset Park's aesthetically pleasing and well-proportioned houses were constructed for the working and middle classes as an "architecture for the masses" to uplift and inspire.



*44th Street between 5th and 6th Avenues.*



*Left: 50th Street between 4th and 5th Avenues. Right: 43rd Street between 4th and 5th Avenues.*

Sunset Park Request For Evaluation



*47th Street between 5th and 6th Avenues.*



*47th Street between 5th and 6th Avenues.*



*55th Street between 4th and 5th Avenues.*



*59th Street between 4th and 5th Avenues.*

## Sunset Park Request For Evaluation

---

### Historically insensitive redevelopment

In recent years disturbing threats to the neighborhood's historic character have emerged. Every year more and more two- and three-family homes are irreparably altered with historically insensitive changes.

*Below: 6th Avenue between 54th and 55th Streets.*



*Above: 6th Avenue between 54th and 55th Streets.*

*Below: 59th Street between 4th and 5th Avenues.*



# Sunset Park Request For Evaluation

---



*6th Avenue between 54th and 55th Streets.*



*49th Street between 7th and 8th Avenues.*



*42nd Street between 4th and 5th Avenues.*



*48th Street between 6th and 7th Avenues.*





**Map #1: The neighborhood boundaries of Sunset Park, Brooklyn**



Map #2: Historic District Study Area



**What is a study area?**

The 22 study area blocks are those shaded in blue and light blue.

A study area is a group of blocks that are architecturally meritorious and visually worthy of landmark designation because most of the houses are close to their original appearance.

**Support level details:**

Block	Support	Unreachable	Opposed
43rd St (4+5 Aves)	77%	21%	2%
44th St (5+6 Aves)*	65%	35%	0%
47th St (5+6 Aves)	80%	20%	0%
6 Ave (47+48 Sts)	65%	35%	0%
48th St (5+6 Aves)	78%	22%	0%
50th St (4+5 Aves)	86%	14%	0%
54th St (4+5 Aves)	45%	55%	0%
55th St (4+5 Aves)	87%	9%	4%
56th St (4+5 Aves)	78%	22%	0%
57th St (4+5 Aves)	13%	87%	0%
58th St (4+5 Aves)	56%	44%	0%
58th St (5+6, Aves)	49%	51%	0%
59th St (4+5 Aves)	44%	50%	6%
59th St (5+6 Aves)	38%	62%	0%
59th St (6+7 Aves)	35%	65%	0%
4th Ave (42+43 Sts) courthouse			Landmarked

*Meritorious, but support level unknown:*

Between 4th + 5th Aves: 40th St, 41st St, 42nd St, 45th St, 46th St, 47th St, 51st St. 6th Ave (46+47 Sts)

\*Support levels listed for 44th St rowhouses only, 4 coops buildings on 44th St: unknown support.



# Support Findings

## Homeowner Outreach

We canvassed 15 blocks in the 22 block study area (approximately 660 houses).

**RESULT:** Not all homeowners were reachable, but we did speak to over 400 of them. **We found 6 opposed and 403 in support.** 251 were not reachable despite repeated attempts. Block by block homeowner support levels are shown on the study area map.

## Neighborhood Outreach

The Sunset Park Landmarks Committee held 16 tabling events throughout the neighborhood.

**RESULT: 2,600 Sunset Park residents signed the Sunset Park Landmarks Committee petition in support of a historic district.** These supporters are owners and renters alike. These are all Sunset Park residents, including people who live on the study area blocks as well as those who don't. The petition is not "padded" with signatures of non-neighborhood residents.

Walking Tours – We gave 7 walking tours (over 160 attendees), highlighting the history and cultural diversity of Sunset and discussing the need for both affordable housing and preservation.

## Elected Officials

- Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez is in support of a historic district.
- Councilman Carlos Menchaca is in support of a historic district.

## Outreach To Community Organizations and Institutions

- **Community Board 7** is in support.
- **UPROSE**, located in Sunset Park, UPROSE is Brooklyn's oldest Latino community based organization and is dedicated to environmental and social justice. UPROSE is in support.
- **Sunset Park 5th Ave BID** is in support.
- **Green-Wood Cemetery** is in support of a historic district.
- **Chinese-American Planning Council**, located in Sunset Park, the CPC is one of the largest Asian Social Services organization in the United States, and is in support of a historic district.
- **Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce** is in support of a historic district.
- **Bethelship Norwegian United Methodist Church** is in support.
- **Fifth Avenue Committee**, a community organization in South Brooklyn fostering economic and social justice, is not opposed to a historic district.

The Sunset Park Landmarks Committee continues to reach out to more organizations, such as:

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Trinity Lutheran Church, Lutheran HealthCare,  
Brooklyn-Chinese American Association



## **Building Data**

What follows is a presentation of the buildings on the 15 blocks which were canvassed and where homeowner support is known. Therefore, not all 22 blocks on the study area map are included in the Building Data section. However, it must be recognized that those blocks, while un-canvassed, are architecturally meritorious.

Each entry contains a photo, the block and lot, address, architect (if known), date built (if known), and major alterations. Minor alterations such as non-original awnings are not noted.

All data is from the National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form which was compiled in the 1980s. However, the photographs are as recent as 2013 and the note sections are from an in-person site survey and reflect changes to the buildings as of December 2013.

The blocks are presented in sequence starting at the north end of the neighborhood and proceeding south. Within the data for a specific block, first the north side of the street is presented followed by the south side of the block. With one exception being 6th Avenue where the west side is first then the east side.

The address numbering system in Sunset Park skips many numbers. You may see 514, 516, 518, 522. Seemingly 520 is missing, but it is not; 520 does not exist.

### **Table of Contents for Building Data**

43rd St (4+5 Aves) .....	25
44th St (5+6 Aves) .....	39
47th St (5+6 Aves) .....	47
6th Ave (46+47 Sts) .....	63
6th Ave (47+48 Sts) .....	67
48th St (5+6 Aves) .....	73
50th St (4+5 Aves) .....	87
54th St (4+5 Aves) .....	101
55th St (4+5 Aves) .....	115
56th St (4+5 Aves) .....	131
57th St (4+5 Aves) .....	145
58th St (4+5 Aves) .....	159
58th St (5+6, Aves) .....	173
59th St (4+5 Aves) .....	185
59th St (5+6 Aves) .....	199
59th St (6+7 Aves) .....	207

## The Building Data is documented in separate downloadable files.

- The building data files contain a photo of each building, the year built, the style and the architect.
- There are 16 individual files of building data organized by block.
- Each block can be downloaded as a separate file.



# Letters of Support

In addition to the 403 letters of support from homeowners, we also have letters of support from:

- **Councilman Carlos Menchaca**
- **Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez**
- **Former Councilwoman Sara Gonzalez**
- **Community Board 7**
- **UPROSE**
- **Sunset Park 5th Ave BID**
- **Green-Wood Cemetery**
- **Chinese-American Planning Council**
- **Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce**
- **Bethelship Norwegian United Methodist Church**
- **Historic Districts Council**

□ **DISTRICT OFFICE**

5601 5TH AVENUE, S-2  
BROOKLYN, NY 11220  
**TEL:** (718) 439-9012  
**FAX:** (718) 439-9042

□ **CITY HALL OFFICE**

250 BROADWAY, SUITE 1759  
NEW YORK, NY 10007  
**TEL:** (212) 788-7372  
**FAX:** (212) 788-7768

**E-MAIL:** [cmenchaca@council.nyc.gov](mailto:cmenchaca@council.nyc.gov)



THE COUNCIL OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

**CARLOS MENCHACA**

COUNCIL MEMBER  
38<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT, BROOKLYN

**CHAIR**

IMMIGRATION COMMITTEE

**COMMITTEES**

GENERAL WELFARE

RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY

SMALL BUSINESS

STANDARDS & ETHICS

TRANSPORTATION

March 19, 2014

Commissioners  
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioners:

I am proud to represent the Sunset Park community, which contains one of the largest National Register Historic Districts in the United States. Greenwood Cemetery in Sunset Park is a National Historic Landmark, and its gates and chapel are New York City Landmarks. Several other buildings in the district are also city and national landmarks. However, these well-deserved distinctions for Sunset Park do not protect the homes and streetscapes in historic neighborhoods from out-of-character development that diminishes the character and history so important to our diverse communities. I support the creation of a landmark district in Sunset Park, to preserve the beauty and continuity that has made this area such a desirable place to live, work, and visit in Brooklyn for over a century.

Sunset Park has traditionally been a beacon, offering the opportunity for home ownership to immigrants and the middle class. Sunset Park has allowed people of modest means to live in some of the most historically and culturally significant exemplars of Renaissance Revival, Romanesque Revival, neo-Grec; Classical Revival and neo-Renaissance homes in the world. One hidden feature of the houses in the proposed landmark district that distinguishes it is that the outwardly appearing one-family homes actually house two families. This enables one of the units to be used as a source of rental income.

Residents of Sunset Park fear that out-of-scale and out-of-character development may threaten the unique fabric of the existing building environment and the neighborhood. Landmarking the most exemplary blocks in Sunset Park will preserve the treasured architecture for current and future generations, and continue to make the neighborhood an attractive destination in New York City to visit and to live.

Over 2,600 residents, the vast majority of homeowners in the study area, as well as a leading coalition of community organizations have expressed support for the creation of a landmarked historic district in Sunset Park. While I have heard legitimate concerns regarding the increased red tape, upkeep and improvement project expenses bore by homeowners, and the potential rent increases that could flow from that, these concerns have been few and I am committed to working with all affected residents to address these concerns streamline the process for home repair and improvement approvals if and when the landmark district is created. In conclusion, I urge the Landmarks Preservation Commission and my colleagues in the City Council to approve the creation of the landmark district in Sunset Park. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carlos A." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Carlos Menchaca  
Council Member for the 38<sup>th</sup> Council District

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

NYDIA M. VELAZQUEZ

7TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

March 4, 2014

Commissioners  
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to express my strong support for a NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission historic district designation in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, requested by the organization Sunset Park Landmarks Committee.

The Sunset Park neighborhood, located in my Congressional District and where I lived for many years, occupies a unique place in New York and American history. With New York Harbor's dominance in North American shipping during the 19th century, the neighborhood up the slope from the Bush Terminal waterfront grew with thousands of row houses constructed for middle- and working-class families. From the late 1880's through the turn of the century, row houses were built in a variety of styles ranging from frame neo-Grec, to masonry Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, and neo-Renaissance. At the top of the hill, Green Wood Cemetery boasts monuments and buildings executed by some of the most prominent architects and artists of their time. In 1988, the U.S. Department of Interior, National Parks Service together with the State of New York Historic Preservation Office added 3,237 Sunset Park buildings to the New York State and National Register of Historic Places, constituting one of the largest in the Northeastern United States. However, with increasing development pressures threatening the fabric of the neighborhood, National and State historic designation is not enough to protect the integrity of these two- and three-family buildings. The Sunset Park neighborhood deserves the protections that NYC landmark designation and afford.

I wholeheartedly support the Sunset Park Landmarks Committee's application. I am proud of the neighborhood's architectural beauty, and trust you will agree it warrants city historic designation. Should you require additional information from my office, please contact Dan Wiley of my staff at (718) 222-5819. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,



Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

**SARA M. GONZALEZ**  
COUNCIL MEMBER, 38<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT  
BROOKLYN

**DISTRICT OFFICE**  
5601-5<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE, SUITE #2  
BROOKLYN, NY 11220  
TEL (718) 439-9012  
FAX (718) 439-9042

**CITY HALL OFFICE**  
250 BROADWAY, ROOM 1725  
NEW YORK, NY 10007  
TEL (212) 788-7372  
FAX (212) 788-7768

gonzalez@council.nyc.ny.us



THE COUNCIL  
OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

**CHAIR**  
JUVENILE JUSTICE

**COMMITTEES**  
LAND USE  
YOUTH SERVICES

**SUB – COMMITTEES**  
PLANNING, DISPOSITIONS &  
CONCESSIONS

Commissioners  
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor  
New York, New York 10007

December 6, 2013

Dear Commissioners,

In recent years, there has been a growing call within one of the largest neighborhoods in my District, Sunset Park, for landmark protection. With the unfortunate proliferation of out-of-scale, out-of-context development, many homeowners and residents have become increasingly worried about losing the historic and contextual character of the area.

To that end, I strongly supported and ushered through a 125-block rezoning of Sunset Park in 2009. This rezoning downzoned the area in order to protect the low-rise, rowhouse character of local side streets, many built between 1890 and 1910. In 2012 a local grassroots coalition of concerned residents formed as the Sunset Park Landmarks Committee (SPLC). My office assisted and supported the SPLC, which led to Sunset Park winning a spot in the HDC's 2013 "Six To Celebrate" program.

Over the course of 2013, the SPLC has worked diligently to inform the Sunset Park community about the importance of landmarking in our neighborhood. The SPLC has hosted monthly meetings, canvassed homeowners on fifteen blocks within the proposed landmark area, held sixteen tabling events to inform the general public of their efforts, and hosted seven walking tours of Sunset Park, showing off our neighborhood to people from all over the city. They have been met with enthusiastic support and have garnered 2,500 signatures supporting this cause.

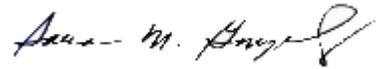
Very real concerns persist over the level of threat to the historic integrity and character of the neighborhood. While there are a few significant landmarked buildings sprinkled throughout the area (including the former 68th Police Precinct Station House and the Sunset Park Recreation Center), most of Sunset Park's residential blocks have been overlooked, despite the neighborhood being home to New York State's largest federal historic register district. The United States Department of the Interior and New York State Historic Preservation Office have listed thousands of homes between 4th Avenue and 7th Avenue, from 38th to 64th Street on the National and State Registers of Historic Places, making this the largest historic district in the

northeast United States. Unfortunately, such designation does not offer the sort of protections many residents seek.

I strongly support the Sunset Park Request for Evaluation to the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Additionally, 2,500 residents have signed the SPLC petition to support preservation and on several of the canvassed blocks there is high homeowner support of 75% and above.

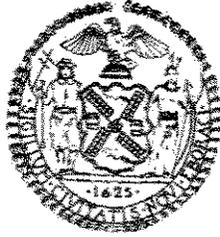
I sincerely thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sara M. González". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "S" and "G".

Sara M. González  
Councilwoman, District 38

---



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN  
COMMUNITY BOARD #7  
March 24, 2014

Daniel A. Murphy  
Chairperson

Jeremy Laufer  
District Manager

Eric Adams  
Borough President

Hon. Robert B. Tierney  
Chair  
Landmarks Preservation Commission  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Chair Tierney:

At Community Board 7's Board Meeting, on March 19, 2014 our Board unanimously<sup>1</sup> voted to support the Sunset Park Landmarks Committee's (SPLC), Request for Evaluation (RFE), in consideration for a historic district in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, which will shortly be submitted to the Landmarks Preservation Commission for the City of New York (LPC).

Our Board was extremely impressed with the community outreach and engagement efforts by SPLC over the past 18 months. SPLC's efforts included: canvassing more than two thirds of the blocks in the Sunset Park neighborhood, obtaining 2,600 signatures of support for the establishment of the historic district from neighborhood residents and over 400 individual letters of support from the residents of the block designated for land marking.<sup>2</sup> It was very clear to our Board Members that SPLC's public outreach and education program was extensive and thorough.

SPLC's efforts to keep the Community Board informed of their progress and to educate our Board Members included a tour of the blocks that are proposed for landmark designation. In addition SPLC presented the Land Use/Landmarks Committee a comprehensive and well-documented report in support of their case for the establishment of a Sunset Park Historic District. At a Public Hearing of Community Board 7 to consider the SPLC's REF over 130 members of the community attended of which 26 gave testimony in favor of the historic/ landmark designation and there were none opposed.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Community Boards vote in favor of SPLC's RFE was 33- in favor, 0-opposed, 0-abstentions.

<sup>2</sup> SPLC also received the support of Representative Nydia Velazquez and community organizations such as UPROSE, Chinese-American Planning Council and Fifth Avenue Committee.

4201 Fourth Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11232 (718) 854-0003 FAX (718) 436-1142

E-mail: [Communityboard7@yahoo.com](mailto:Communityboard7@yahoo.com)

Twitter: @BKCB7

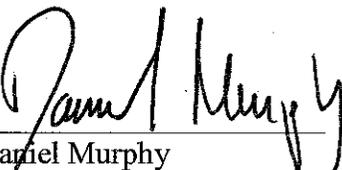
Facebook Page: Board Seven Brooklyn

*Serving Sunset Park, Greenwood and Windsor Terrace*

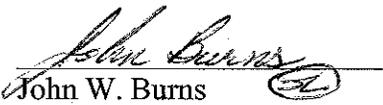
Our Board Members are enthusiastic about SPLC's proposal because, as many noted, an historic district is the next step to preserving what is left of this old brownstone community, which is under constant development pressures and has resulted in the lost of many historically significant and architectural masterpieces over the last few years. The Community Board believes that the proposed historic district will help the Sunset Park community achieve many of the preservation goals we had hoped to achieve through the rezoning of the majority of our residential community in 2009. We are grateful that our neighbors, SPLC, has taken on this task and we whole-heartedly endorse SPLC's study and plan and request LPC's approval of it in its entirety.

On behalf of the members of Community Board 7 we thank you in for the opportunity to make this submission to the LPC.

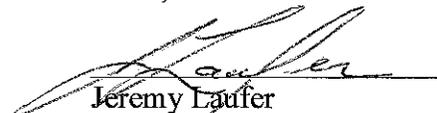
Respectfully submitted,



Daniel Murphy  
Chair, Community Board 7



John W. Burns  
Chair, Land Use/ Landmarks Committee



Jeremy Laufer  
District Manager

cc: Hon. Carlos Menchaca, Councilman  
Sunset Park Landmarks Committee



March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Commissioners  
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Commissioners:

It is with great pleasure that UPROSE strongly supports the Sunset Park Landmarks Committee Request For Evaluation for the creation of a historic district in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. UPROSE, founded in 1964, is Brooklyn's oldest Latino community based organization. UPROSE is dedicated to the development of Southwest Brooklyn and the empowerment of its residents primarily through broad and converging environmental, sustainable development, and youth justice campaigns.

We see preserving and landmarking our community as a way of addressing climate change. It is necessary to prevent over development that uses non-sustainable materials and increases the carbon footprint of this large walk-to-work community. Preservation also addresses our concerns of local displacement.

Unlike many other areas in "Brownstone Brooklyn," Sunset Park was built primarily for members of the working class and remains a predominantly working class neighborhood. Though some sections of Sunset Park have been remodeled, many blocks are, for the most part, intact and visually cohesive, showcasing the architectural form and beauty crucial to the community's delightful, welcoming streetscapes. These streetscapes show the care that individual homeowners have taken with their historic homes.

Right now, however, there are very real concerns about the neighborhood losing its character and sense of place. A disturbing, rapidly escalating trend has emerged as every year more and more two- and three-family homes are irreparably altered with historically insensitive changes. The rowhouses in Sunset Park deserve to be protected by landmark designation.

Thank you for considering a historic district in Sunset Park.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth C. Yeampierre, Esq.  
Executive Director



# Sunset Park District Management Association

## Sunset Park Business Improvement District

Serving Sunset Park's 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Community since 1995

5116A 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 200 / Brooklyn NY 11220

PHONE: (718) 439-7767 / FAX: (718) 439-7794

EMAIL: [info@sunsetparkbid.org](mailto:info@sunsetparkbid.org) / WEBSITE: [sunsetparkbid.org](http://sunsetparkbid.org)

LOG ON: !SUNSET PARK FREE WIFI



**Brooklyn's Fifth: Many cultures, many shops, ONE avenue!**

March 13, 2014

NYC Landmarks Commission  
Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> floor  
New York NY 10007

Dear Commissioners:

The Sunset Park Business Improvement District represents 26 blocks of mostly mixed-use commercial buildings along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Sunset Park from 38<sup>th</sup> Street to 64<sup>th</sup> Street. Located within the largest New York State and National Register of Historic Places in the northeast United States, the Sunset Park BID recognizes the importance of both progress and the necessary protection of our heritage.

Therefore, the Sunset Park Business Improvement District supports the efforts of the Sunset Park Landmarks Committee to preserve the rich history of our residential community, which has played a significant role in the history of New York City and America.

Sincerely,

Delvis Valdes  
President



500 25th Street  
Brooklyn, New York  
11232-1755  
green-wood.com

---

The Green-Wood  
Cemetery  
(718) 768-7300

---

The Green-Wood  
Historic Fund  
(718) 210-3080

January 8, 2014

Commissioners  
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to express Green-Wood Cemetery's support for the designation of a historic district in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

As a National Historic Landmark and resident of this neighborhood for 175 years, Green-Wood shares the commitment of the Sunset Park Landmark Committee to the preservation and promotion of this community's long history.

The distinctive row houses of Sunset Park have graced the streets around Green-Wood for the past century. In fact, many of the workers that Green-Wood has employed over the last century have lived in the historic residential buildings surrounding the Cemetery. Happily, several blocks are essentially intact and remain visually cohesive, creating welcoming streetscapes for residents and visitors. We see that most homeowners have taken great care of their historic houses, contributing to a true sense of community and history.

Every year, however, it seems that a handful of two- and three-family homes are overhauled and irreparably altered with architecturally insensitive changes. If this is permitted to continue, we are very concerned that the neighborhood may lose its unique and historical character. At a time when Green-Wood's commitment to this neighborhood has never been stronger (we are ourselves engaged in a multi-million dollar restoration of the Victorian-era Weir greenhouse), we firmly believe that the preservation of the historic structures of Sunset Park is a critical to its future.

We urge the Commission to bestow landmark status upon Sunset Park. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Moylan  
President



**CHINESE-AMERICAN  
PLANNING COUNCIL, INC.**

A private, not-for-profit, social  
service, education and community  
development organization

**Executive Director  
David Chen**

**BROOKLYN BRANCH  
SUNSET PARK OFFICE**

4101 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Brooklyn, New York 11232  
Tel: (718) 492-0409  
Fax: (718) 567-0397

**Multi-Social Services**

Information and Referral Services

**Housing Services**

**OST @ PS 153**

**Beacon @ IS 220**

**After-School Programs  
and Summer Day Camp**

@ PS 97, PS 105, PS 310, PS 209, PS 199

**Youth Services**

**Senior Services**

Educational Program  
Recreational Activities  
Community Wellness  
GMHI

**Services to Asian  
Parents of the  
Developmentally Disabled**

**Child/Family Health  
Plus Enrollment and  
Recertification**

**Weekend Programs**

Saturday Kids Program

**Community Events**

January 23, 2014

Commissioners  
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Commissioners:

I understand that the Sunset Park Landmarks Committee has submitted a Request For Evaluation and we are writing to express our strong support for the creation of a historic district in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

As a community organization here in Sunset Park, we are aware of the historically insensitive changes to the turn of the century rowhouses and are gratified to know there is an opportunity for the historic homes in the neighborhood to be preserved so they can stand today, and in the future, as they have for more than 100 years.

Unlike many other areas in "Brownstone Brooklyn," Sunset Park was built primarily for members of the working class and remains a predominantly working class neighborhood. Though some sections of Sunset Park have been remodeled, many blocks are, for the most part, intact and visually cohesive, showcasing the architectural form and beauty crucial to the community's delightful, welcoming streetscapes..

Right now, however, there are very real concerns about these blocks losing their character and sense of place. A disturbing, rapidly escalating trend has emerged as every year more and more two- and three-family homes on these historic blocks are irreparably altered with historically insensitive changes. The rowhouses in Sunset Park deserve to be protected by landmark designation.

Thank you for considering a historic district in Sunset Park.

Sincerely,

Wai Yee Chan  
Branch Director

718-492-0409 ext. 305  
[Wchan2@cpc-nyc.org](mailto:Wchan2@cpc-nyc.org)

March 21, 2014

NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioners:

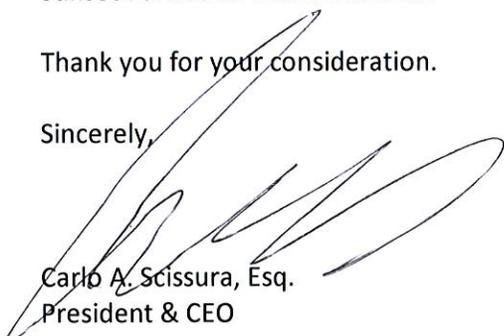
I am writing to express my support of the creation of a NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission historic district in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, requested by the Sunset Park Landmarks Committee.

The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce and its affiliate 501(c)3 the Brooklyn Alliance, is a 1,600 members strong full service business and economic development organization. We provide a suite of programming to both our members and the greater Brooklyn business community. The Neighborhood Entrepreneurship Project (NEP) is one of our main economic development initiatives which aims to assist local business communities across the borough access resources to help support and grow their business, one of which is the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor in Sunset Park.

Sunset Park is at a pivotal point of transition, with new residential development encroaching on the historic working class row houses that define the character of the neighborhood. The creation of a Sunset Park historic district would preserve the rich character of the community and would help small businesses thrive as part of a vibrant and unique working class Brooklyn neighborhood. I support the Sunset Park Landmarks Committee and their efforts to designate Sunset Park as an historic district.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Carlo A. Scissura, Esq.  
President & CEO

CAS/qo

March 7, 2014

Commissioners  
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Commissioners:

I understand that the Sunset Park Landmarks Committee has submitted a Request For Evaluation and I am writing to express my strong support for the creation of a historic district in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

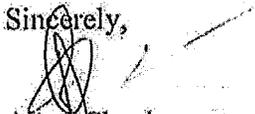
As an institution here in Brooklyn, we have seen historically insensitive changes to the beautiful rowhouses and are gratified to know there is an opportunity for the historic homes in the Sunset Park neighborhood to be preserved so they can stand today, and in the future, as they have for more than 100 years.

Unlike many other areas in "Brownstone Brooklyn," Sunset Park was built primarily for members of the working class and remains a predominantly working class neighborhood. Though some sections of Sunset Park have been remodeled, many blocks are, for the most part, intact and visually cohesive, showcasing the architectural form and beauty crucial to the community's delightful, welcoming streetscapes. These streetscapes show the care that individual homeowners have taken with their historic homes.

Right now, however, there are very real concerns about the neighborhood losing its character and sense of place. A disturbing, rapidly escalating trend has emerged as every year more and more two- and three-family homes are irreparably altered with historically insensitive changes. The rowhouses in Sunset Park deserve to be protected by landmark designation.

Thank you for considering a historic district in Sunset Park.

Sincerely,

  
Amul Chauhan  
Trustee Chairperson  
Bethelship Norwegian United Methodist Church  
413-56<sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn, NY 11220



HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL

THE ADVOCATE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

232 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street New York NY 10003  
tel 212-614-9107 fax 212-614-9127 e-mail hdc@hdc.org

March 13, 2014

Commissioner Robert Tierney, Chair  
Landmarks Preservation Commission  
One Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Tierney:

The Historic Districts Council strongly supports the proposed Sunset Park Historic District. The neighborhood contains one of the city's earliest and most extensive concentrations of two-family masonry rowhouses, mostly built between 1885 and 1912. The proposed district encompasses representative blocks that best showcase Sunset Park's architectural contributions to the city. This historic and elegant section of Brooklyn deserves the protection and honor that landmark designation brings.

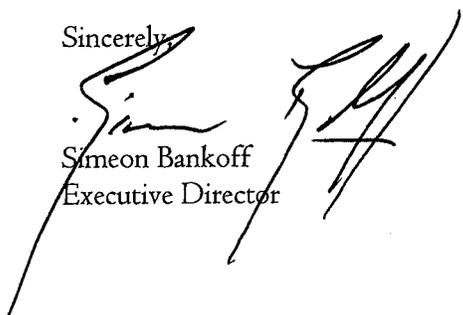
In 1988, an area encompassing 3,237 buildings in Sunset Park – nearly the entire neighborhood – was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, making it one of the state's largest National Register Historic Districts. However, without protection by the City, this area has witnessed inappropriate alterations and demolitions, which have inspired local residents to take action to protect their beautiful streetscapes.

The proposed study area outlined in the Request for Evaluation is the result of a careful research, survey and outreach effort on the part of the community. These blocks were chosen for their outstanding beauty, intact original fabric and resident support. Over roughly 15 months, the Sunset Park Landmarks Committee held and attended numerous meetings; hosted a dozen well-attended walking tours; recruited block captains to manage and help with the survey effort; rallied broad community support and input at several very successful tabling sessions; and engaged with other community organizations and local elected officials.

The proposal before you represents the desires of the Sunset Park community to safeguard and enhance the beauty of this historic neighborhood, not only for the well-being of the many individuals who live and work here and for the stability that a designation will bring, but to encourage citywide appreciation for the area's significance. Landmark status will also help preserve the quality housing that draws people of many backgrounds to the neighborhood, making for a characteristically diverse New York City community.

We respectfully request that the Landmarks Preservation Commission move forward with haste in making this worthy community the next New York City historic district.

Sincerely,



Simeon Bankoff  
Executive Director