

Landmarks Lion Remarks November 29, 2022

Frampton Tolbert, HDC Executive Director

Good evening. On behalf of everyone at the Historic Districts Council, I welcome you to the 2022 Landmarks Lion where we are so pleased to honor Frank Sanchis.

Tonight, we celebrate an individual who has been a preservation champion at the local, state, national, and international level. We also come together to celebrate historic preservation in New York City, and to reflect on what the Historic Districts Council has achieved this year. We take inspiration from Frank's example of preservation leadership to accomplish our ambitious future goals.

First I would like to thank our honorary co-chairs and HDC's boards of directors and advisers for helping make this evening a success, including our board chair John Bacon, who you will hear from a little later this evening, our executive committee, our dedicated staff, and everyone in attendance this evening.

I've been HDC's Executive Director for a little over seven months and the board has been a welcome partner in undertaking our mission of grassroots preservation advocacy. Will all of HDC's directors and advisers please raise your hand and will everyone please join me in a round of applause for their continued hard work and dedication.

Tonight's Lion teaches us valuable lessons with his long career of partnering with organizations, individuals, funders, property owners, elected officials, advocates, agencies, and so many other stakeholders to create and implement visionary projects that benefit preservation.

Tonight you'll hear about Frank's illustrious career at the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, Municipal Art Society, World Monuments Fund, the Preservation League of New York State, and the National Trust for

Historic Preservation, among others. Frank is known for thinking big and thinking creatively, an example we can all use for inspiration.

At HDC we are working closely with our grassroots neighborhood partners on new ways to demonstrate that preservation is a valuable tool to New York City and one that benefits everyone.

One thing I've noticed in my time as Executive Director is that preservation is crucial to the future of New York, but we have to change the narrative so that the benefits of preservation become common knowledge.

Many of us in this room know of historic buildings that house rent regulated tenants. Or know of an example where preservation supported affordable housing—just one example being the Prince George Hotel on 28th Street, built in 1904 as a premier NYC hotel and where we held the 2007 Landmarks Lion to honor Lisa Ackerman. The hotel was rehabilitated by Breaking Ground in 1999 to provide 416 units of affordable housing for low-income and formerly homeless adults and persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Yet too often the narrative from developers and decision-makers is that preservation impedes affordable housing. But this is not true. The truth is that preservation is not against development and we are not against affordable housing, but there are ways to both preserve the city's irreplaceable neighborhoods and also provide housing for the future.

Preservation, unlike demolition, is very good for the environment. I believe Carl Elefante, the former president of the AIA, coined the phrase "The greenest building is one that already exists." HDC regularly supports proposals at the LPC, where they routinely approve environmental upgrades such as installation of solar panels.

And historic tax credits are being used to renovate and restore public housing complexes to make them more energy efficient. We need to continue to tell the success stories of how preservation is a shining example of environmental sustainability.

And finally we need to keep telling the stories of marginalized and underrepresented communities throughout the city and finding ways to partner with and join in preserving their significant architecture, history, and culture. Whether it's celebrating legacy businesses, doing cultural resource surveys of areas lacking in landmarks, or holding education programs about lesser known histories, we are working to integrate this effort into our core mission.

To continue to undertake meaningful initiatives in an ever-changing world, to support, educate, and advocate for historic neighborhoods throughout the city, the Historic Districts Council relies on you, your enthusiasm and generous financial support, for which we are grateful.

We rely on our dedicated staff and volunteer directors and advisers who put so much heart, expertise and wisdom into our cause. To strengthen our work, we ask that each of you spread the word about the positive impacts of preservation and how preservation benefits the City we love.

And now onto our presentation about an honoree who embodies these values so well.