

## MEDIA ADVISORY

### CONTACT(S):

Bushwick Historic Preservation Association  
Dina Alfano, Co-Founder/BushwickHistoricPreservation@gmail.com

Historic Districts Council  
Frampton Tolbert, Executive Director/212-614-9107/framptont@hdc.org

**Who:** The Bushwick Historic Preservation Association (BHPA), Bushwick Stakeholders and Advocates, the Historic Districts Council, and Local Elected Officials

**What:** Calling on the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) to Acknowledge Bushwick's Unique History and Circumstances

**Where:** Lipsius-Cook Mansion, 670 Bushwick Avenue, Brooklyn

**When:** Wednesday, July 19, 2023, 10am-11am

---

### **Bushwick Preservation Advocates and Local Elected Officials Call on the NYC Landmarks to Acknowledge Bushwick's Unique History, Culture, and Circumstances**

*"Bushwick has a right to its history." - Dina Alfano, Founding Member, BHPA*

Bushwick, Brooklyn—On July 19th at 10am, local and citywide preservation organizations, and elected officials, will hold a press conference to raise awareness of demolition by neglect in Bushwick and to demand action from the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) to preserve Bushwick's irreplaceable historical, cultural and architectural neighborhood and buildings.

**The Bushwick community is deeply concerned about rapidly deteriorating conditions at the Lipsius-Cook Mansion, 670 Bushwick Avenue,** landmarked in 2013. Since that time, the building has suffered demolition by neglect that has led to cracks in the facade, buckled bricks, deteriorating details, and a porch so precarious it collapsed in 2016. The property has multiple open violations dating back to February 2022, for which the owners are in default.

This building's priceless history belongs to Bushwick. It's clear that the owners have no regard for that historical and communal value, but are no doubt well aware of the dollar value of the oversized lot upon which it sits. We call upon the LPC to do all it legally can, as expeditiously as possible to hold this property owner fully accountable and protect this priceless building.

Bushwick has made many concerted attempts to preserve its history over the last 40 years. The first districts in Bushwick listed on the National Register of Historic Places were recognized in 1983, but LPC did not designate the first historic district in Bushwick until 2023, and much of the neighborhood lacks any sort of formal designation, whether as an NYC landmark or on the National Register.

Our exhaustive neighborhood efforts include the 2011 historic resource survey done in conjunction with Columbia University, the 2014 Bushwick Community Plan (BCP), which was hashed out over four long years, only to be scrapped by the Mayor's office, and the establishment of the Bushwick Historic Preservation Association (BHPA), which formally coalesced around the effort to save the Lindemann Mansion at 1001 Bushwick Avenue. After LPC refused to designate the beloved 130-year-old structure, it was demolished in 2020.

LPC has known of our preservation goals since at least 2018 when they were articulated in the BCP. Community Board 4 also shared with LPC a slate of priority designations that BHPA had assembled with the help of preservation advocates (a full list of BHPA's priorities will be available at the press conference).

Our continuing efforts finally led to Bushwick's first historic district, a collection of late 19th-century brick and brownstone row houses on Linden Street between Bushwick Avenue and Broadway, designated May 9, 2023.

**But, this hard-won, half-block historic district 40 years in the making isn't enough.**

In the last two months, Bushwick has received three refusal letters from LPC for three of the community's most cherished properties on Bushwick Avenue:

- **The Ulmer Townhouses ('Doctor's Row'), 683 – 691 Bushwick Avenue**
- **Mayor's Row, 945 - 965 Bushwick Avenue**
- **Mansion at 751 Bushwick Avenue**

While we well understand the need for some consistent framework by which properties are deemed meritorious, **we are troubled by and highly skeptical of LPC's stringent assessment of which buildings "contribute" to Bushwick's streetscapes and sense of place, reflecting the agency's repeated refusals to factor in Bushwick's well-documented history of trauma and citywide neglect (from which it is still recovering) when assessing "architectural integrity"**.

One need only compare Bushwick's 1940s and 1980s tax photos to understand just how much of our historically rich community was absolutely devastated by fires. In that context, to deny designation due to a missing cornice or door which can easily be replaced - and given that LPC oversees replacements in historic districts all over the city - is adding grievous insult to Bushwick's injuries.

**Frampton Tolbert of HDC states, "HDC is concerned that LPC's Equity Framework is not being equitably applied to Bushwick, one of HDC's Six to Celebrate priorities. The LPC's strict interpretation of which buildings "contribute" architecturally to Bushwick's streetscape, and the Commission's insistence that there are other "better" examples of Bushwick's historic building stock in other neighborhoods, continues to disregard its rich, but difficult past and devalue its cultural, architectural, and historical layers."**

**As Bushwick's Council Member, Jennifer Gutiérrez, [has noted](#) "Bushwick's rich history is unfortunately often overlooked...With so few landmarks remaining in Bushwick, lost to fires, gentrification, and speculation, it is all the more important that we protect and celebrate the ones that remain."**

Given Bushwick's notorious history of municipal disinvestment - a reflection of racist housing policy and ongoing discrimination against communities of color - which led to the losses the Council Member noted, and the current pace of gentrification and speculation in the neighborhood which results in continuing loss of historic resources, **LPC must acknowledge that true equity for Bushwick requires more contextual assessment.**

**Therefore, the Bushwick community is calling upon all their elected representatives and the LPC to:**

- Treat the Lipsius-Cook Mansion with a sense of urgency and take every measure in its power to ensure Bushwick's history receives the care it deserves and the protection it's legally entitled to.
- Meet with Bushwick stakeholders and make good on its 2021 Equity Framework, by **employing more contextual assessment and nuanced consideration in Bushwick which includes reassessment of the above named properties, as well as all of the priorities identified in the Bushwick Community Plan**

**Time is running out and LPC must do better for Bushwick.**

###

*The Bushwick Historic Preservation Association (BHPA) is a grassroots organization committed to preserving and promoting the architectural heritage and the cultural history of Bushwick.*

*The Historic Districts Council (HDC) is the advocate for all of New York City's historic neighborhoods. Their mission is to ensure the preservation of significant historic neighborhoods, buildings and public spaces in New York City, uphold the integrity of New York City's Landmarks Law, and further the preservation ethic.*