Retain this part of the form and present it to the person at the speaker's table when you come forward to address the Commission.

BUILDING Immaculate Conception Church CALENDAR NO. 19

FOR DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK _____ AGAINST DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK X

REQUEST FOR CONTINUATION OF THE ITEM X

NAME STEPHEN FLATOW

REPRESENTING IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

BUILDING IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH CALENDAR NO. 19

FOR DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK ___ AGAINST DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK ✓

REQUEST FOR CONTINUATION OF THE ITEM ✓

NAME WILLIAM C. SHOPSIN AIA

ADDRESS 280 WEST 11th STREET

REPRESENTING IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

ADDRESS EAST 150th ST, MELROSE AVENUE, BRONX

The top of this form goes to the Chairman of the meeting

Retain this part of the form and present it to the person at the speaker's table when you come forward to address the Commission.

BUILDING IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH CALENDAR NO. 19

FOR DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK _____ AGAINST DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK ✓

REQUEST FOR CONTINUATION OF THE ITEM ✓

NAME WILLIAM C. SHOPSIN AIA

REPRESENTING IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

BUILDING Immaculate Conception Church CALENDAR NO. 19

FOR DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK ✓ AGAINST DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK X

REQUEST FOR CONTINUATION OF THE ITEM _____

NAME Sabeida Cruz District Manager C.B#1

ADDRESS 384 East 149 Street

REPRESENTING Community Board #1

ADDRESS 384 East 149 Street

The top of this form goes to the Chairman of the meeting

Retain this part of the form and present it to the person at the speaker's table when you come forward to address the Commission.

BUILDING _____ CALENDAR NO. 19

FOR DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK X AGAINST DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK ___

REQUEST FOR CONTINUATION OF THE ITEM _____

NAME Margot Gayle

REPRESENTING 232 E 87 St

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

BUILDING Immaculate Conception Church CALENDAR NO. 19

FOR DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK ___ AGAINST DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK X

REQUEST FOR CONTINUATION OF THE ITEM X

NAME STEPHEN FLATOW

ADDRESS CUSACK & STILES 61 BROADWAY, N.Y., N.Y.

REPRESENTING Immaculate Conception Church

ADDRESS 389 E. 150th Street, Bronx, N.Y.

The top of this form goes to the Chairman of the meeting

CITY OF NEW YORK
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - x

In the Matter of the Proposed Designation as New York City Landmarks of IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, CONVENT AND PRIESTS' RESIDENCE : No. LP-1192

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - x

MEMORANDUM IN OPPOSITION TO DESIGNATION

Preliminary Statement

This memorandum is submitted in opposition to the proposed designation as New York City landmarks of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Convent and Priests' Residence.

The Church is located at 389 East 150th Street, Bronx, New York. The Convent adjoins the Church on the west, and the Priests' Residence adjoins the Church on the east. The complex is part of lot 17, block 2397 as shown on the New York City Tax Map.

The cornerstone of the Church was laid on September 25, 1887. The Priests' Residence was completed in March, 1895. The Convent was completed in 1907.

The general condition of the complex is fair. Much work has to be done to repair and replace wooden window frames in the Priests' Residence. The Church's spire needs much repair.

POINT I

THE CHURCH, ITS CONVENT AND PRIESTS' RESIDENCE ARE NOT QUALIFIED FOR DESIGNATION AS LANDMARKS

The Administrative Code of the City of New York, Section 207-1.0(n) defines a landmark as:

> "Any improvement, any part of which is thirty years old or older, which 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 and which has been designated as a landmark pursuant to the provisions of this chapter."

As appears from the report of William C. Shopsin, AIA, separately submitted to the Commission, the Church complex is not possessed of any special character or aesthetic interest or value. Its architect, Henry Bruns, is regarded by architectural historians as being an architect of no special significance.

Mr. Shopsin's report clearly demonstrates that the Church complex is not "the finest Roman Catholic Church complex in the Bronx" as stated in the Commission's statement. Its construction is not atypical of other churches in New York City reflecting the Romanesque Revival style of architecture. The complex displays no new or innovative architectural interpretation of this style.

We submit that the height of a tower and spire is not a proper criterium for designation and that the Commission's description of the buildings as "the finest Roman Catholic Church complex in the Bronx" is disputable and, even if true, does not mean it is of special historical or aesthetic interest.

POINT II

LANDMARKS DESIGNATION WOULD IMPOSE A HARDSHIP OUTWEIGHING THE BENEFITS TO THE PUBLIC OF DESIGNATION

It is the stated purpose of the landmarks law that landmark designations are "required in the interest of the health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people". New York City Administrative Code, §205-1.0(b). If landmark designation is imposed upon this complex, the purposes of the statute would not be met and would, in fact, be undermined.

It is a matter of common knowledge that the South Bronx has changed over the years. Many of the changes have not been pleasant as entire neighborhoods have been laid waste by fire, vandalism and general neglect. The Melrose area served by Immaculate Conception, on the contrary, has stabilized, in large part, because of the efforts of the priests, sisters and brothers of Immaculate Conception. Yet, because of the changes still occurring in the Bronx, Immaculate Conception Church must be permitted to remain flexible in its use of the Church complex. Landmark designation would eliminate the Church's ability to use its complex flexibly in order to meet the needs of the community. For example, in the future the community may be best served by rehabilitating or recycling the complex into a mixed-use residential/social facility for senior citizens of the Melrose area.

Landmark designation would require the Church to shift

its meager financial resources from community service, where it is most needed, to preservation maintenance. Undoubtedly, as long as the Church complex is continued in its present form, the parish would see to the performance of at least the minimum exterior maintenance and repairs required to keep the complex viable for its present purposes. It does not follow, however, that such work should be done in a way to preserve the present exteriors of the structures, as required by the landmarks statute, since it might be more economical to modify the exteriors or remove certain of their features.

POINT III

DESIGNATION WOULD COMPOUND THE CHURCH'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND WEAKEN ITS ROLE IN THE MELROSE COMMUNITY

Immaculate Conception Church can seat 900 worshippers. Today, as a result of the changes in its parish, attendance averages 100-150 parishioners for each Mass offered on Sunday. The expense of heating a church of this size, not to mention the rest of the complex, during the winter months is enormous. If it was not for the tens of thousands of dollars in grants received annually from other parishes within the Archdiocese of New York, the Church would not meet its operating expenses.

While a tremendous effort is being made by the Church to remain open and in service to the community, it cannot be certain that the expenses incurred this year will be viewed as sensible in the future. The possibility of the present Church being physically replaced by a smaller, more economical structure

or by arranging accommodations in a mixed-use development of the property, if that was how the parish would be best served, would be foreclosed by designation.

Conclusion

The Church of the Immaculate Conception, Convent and Priests' Residence should not be designated as landmarks.

Respectfully submitted,

Cusack & Stiles
Attorneys for Proposed Designee
61 Broadway
New York, New York 10006
(212) 480-0400

1197

LP

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

October 22, 1980

Monsignor Joseph P. Murphy
Chancellor
Chancery Office
Archdiocese of New York
1011 First Avenue
New York, New York 10022

Dear Monsignor Murphy:

We are in receipt of your letter expressing the concern of the Archdiocese with respect to the proposed designation of the Church of the Immaculate Conception on East 150th Street in The Bronx. Your thoughtful comments have been included in the permanent file for that item and will be carefully considered by the Commission before they reach any decision on this item.

The Commission is very aware of the problems that most institutuions are having with respect to the escalating costs of maintenance and energy. As you know, consideration of any economic hardship is the subject of another procedure, one that follows designation. We will, however, evaluate very carefully the material submitted by your consultant indicating that the buildings are not architecturally or historically significant.

Sincerely:

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:ja

Chancery Office

Archdiocese of New York

1011 First Avenue • New York, N.Y. 10022
(212) 371-1000

September 11, 1980

Honorable Kent L. Barwick
Chairman
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
305 Broadway
New York, New York 10007

RE: Church of the Immaculate Conception
389 East 150th Street, Bronx, N.Y. 10455

Dear Mr. Barwick:

In a spirit of cooperation with the City, the Archdiocese of New York is deeply concerned with maintaining our ties to the past as we work for a better future for all our citizens.

The Archdiocese has worked in conjunction with the Landmarks Preservation Commission in the designation of Church property; such as St. Patrick's Cathedral, Old St. Patrick's Cathedral, the Villard Houses and more than twenty-five additional Church landmarks.

Simultaneously, the Archdiocese had manifested time and again its commitment to all areas of the City, maintaining a presence and a service to each of the City's communities.

In a particular way, this has been true of our service to the South Bronx. We have been able to serve because we have been flexible in our use of our Church buildings and related structures.

In the move to designate Immaculate Conception Church and its related buildings as a landmark, we find a problem. Our flexibility, our ability to serve, would be lessened. The buildings at present are costly to maintain. They lack the historic and civic importance that is normally attached to a landmark designation. Nor do they have the architectural merit of many of the other structures designated throughout the City by the Commission.

While we have every intention of continuing and expanding our commitment to the South Bronx, we do not feel we should be required to maintian the structures as they now stand, losing all flexibility for the future. We would feel that our service to the South Bronx would be hindered by a designation by the Landmarks Preservation Commission of these particular buildings, and would ask that they not be designated.

With every best wish, I am

Sincerely yours,

Monsignor Joseph P. Murphy
CHANCELLOR

JPM:pc

Roman Catholic complex in the Bronx?" In my judgment it simply is not!

Two more likely candidates for this distinction have already been designated by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

The Fordham University complex and the College of Mount Saint Vincent on Hudson complex (Riverdale) are both of far greater significance and distinction for historical, cultural and architectural reasons. I include descriptions of both complexes from the AIA Guide to New York City, Norval White and Elliot Willensky, Collier Books, Macmillan Publishers, 1978, Revised Edition.

Despite the fact that the finding of Landmarks significance is a highly subjective process, there are still some basic criteria which can be established. On a comparative basis there is nothing distinctive or exceptional about the stolid brick construction of the Immaculate Conception group. This ensemble is fairly typical of nineteenth century institutional buildings in the Bronx, New York, and the northeastern United States. Many extant asylums, orphanages, academies, workhouses, etc. are of similar character.

The crude borrowings from a vaguely Romanesque European precedent, which are solely evident in the church and tower are no equal to the picturesque and powerful imagery of the Gothic Revival manifest in the Mount St. Vincent and Fordham University complexes.

I submit that survival in the midst of the devastation of the South Bronx is a distinction but not necessarily an appropriate basis for Landmarks' designation.

I believe that the determination of religious and cultural significance is best left to the Immaculate Conception Parish and its surrounding community, who are clearly not in accord with the Commission's view. The Community Board on which one of the parish priests is an active member, has, in fact, proposed and supported other neighborhood structures for designation which they feel are more significant and threatened.

Apparently their request was not heeded and the Bronx Opera House was demolished. If the Immaculate Conception complex does not meet the comparative standard of architectural, historic or cultural significance required by the Commission's statutes and is not endorsed by the community, I can see no justification for the Commission to designate the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic complex.

Respectfully submitted,

William C. Shopsin /chf

WCS/chf

William C. Shopsin
Historic Preservation Consultant

ohn F. Kennedy 1917–1963: While a youngster attending the nearby iverdale Country School on Fieldston Road, John F. Kennedy lived in the oxy stucco house on West 252nd Street at the southeast corner of Inde-endence Avenue (officially 5040 Independence). That was in the years 26 through 1928.

5.] Nicholas de B. Katzenbach Residence/originally **Robert Colgate esidence, "Stonehurst,"** 5225 Sycamore Ave. bet. W. 252nd and . 254th Sts. W side. 1861. ★

Hidden by newer homes built on Sycamore Avenue and by dense ees is another of the great stone mansions of Riverdale (such as reyston or Wave Hill) and the Bronx (Van Cortlandt, Bartow). Katzen-ch was **U.S. Attorney General** and Undersecretary of State; Colgate an **rly entrepreneur** in lead and paint.

5a.] Salanter Akiba Riverdale Academy, 655 W. 254th St. bet. Inde-ndence and Palisade Aves. 1974. Caudill Rowlett Scott Assocs. **[16b.] ministration Building**/originally **Henry W. Boettger Residence.** 1905.

Given a hill which slopes, slopes, slopes, and a need for a structure to n the educational activities of what were once three Hebrew day ools, what better solution than a stepped building? This one is primar-a series of classroom floors and skylighted roof tiers stepping down the pe (providing all with **cross-the-river views**), and unified by a roof icture paralleling the earth's slope. Shades of Harvard's Gund Hall—here a result of the topography, not whim. The adjacent, expensive, ltistory orange-brick **Tudor mansion** left over from the property's ginal owner was the last of conductor Arturo Toscanini's residences in erdale. Note the monogram on the wall: HWB for Henry W. Boettger.

Salanter Akiba Riverdale Academy: its classrooms follow the terrain

Ladd Road, off Palisade Ave. bet. W. 254th St. and Sigma Place. E **[17a.] James Strain Residence,** 731 Ladd Rd. E side. 1970. Keith ger Assocs.

A group of houses all built since 1957, clustered along a *cul de sac* d a private swimming pool. The site is the former estate of **illiam Sargent Ladd** (hence the name of the road), whose original gateposts guard the entrance. The Strain house embodies a geomet-larity which gives the enclave a center of focus.

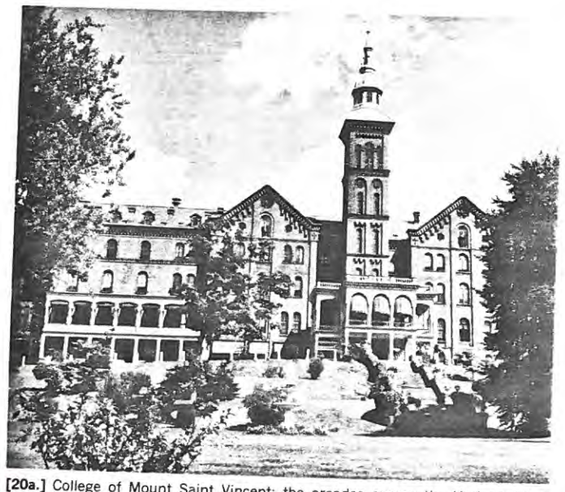
Gethsemane on Hudson Monastery and **Cardinal Spellman Retreat , Passionist Fathers and Brothers,** 5801 Palisade Ave. opp. Sigma W side. **[18a.] Riverdale Center of Religious Research**/formerly **esidence.** ca. 1895. **[18b.] New Residence and Chapel.** 1967. er Cajetan J.B. Baumann, O.F.M.

either the old residence, a 3-story shingled Victorian country house, e new, an undistinguished orange-brick dorm, are of special inter-is the new chapel almost hidden from the road that is a dramatic sionistic architectural/sculptural work.

estern Bronx [NW]

[19.] The Hebrew Home for the Aged at Riverdale, 5901 Palisade Ave. S of W. 261st St. W side. **Additions: [19a.] Goldfine Pavilion (south building).** 1968. Kelly & Gruzen. **[19b.] Palisade Nursing Home (north building).** 1975. Gruzen & Partners.

This institution awakened early to the benefits and satisfactions of high-**quality architecture for the elderly.** The early work combines exposed concrete and stacked red brick and seems to express in its windows response to the temptations of the spectacular 270° river views. The newer, 7-story all-brick building seems carved from a monumental cube almost as sculptor Gutzon Borglum attacked the Black Hills of South Dakota. Even the utility building off the road shows the architect's care and talent.



[20a.] College of Mount Saint Vincent: the arcades survey the Hudson below

[20.] College of Mount Saint Vincent on Hudson/originally **Convent and Academy of Mount Saint Vincent,** Riverdale Ave. and W. 263rd St. W side. **[20a.] Original College Building,** central section, 1857–1859. Henry Engelbert. Additions: 1865, 1885, 1908, 1952. **[20b.] Library/** formerly **Edwin Forrest Residence, "Fonthill."** 1846. ★ **[20c.] Louise LeGras Hall**/originally **St. Vincent's Free School,** W. 261st St. opp. Netherland Ave. N side. 1875.

The **Sisters of Charity,** who operate the college, purchased this site from actor **Edwin Forrest** (his feud with William Charles Macready in 1840 touched off the **Astor Place Riot**) when their original quarters were to be destroyed by the construction of Central Park. Forrest's house, Fonthill, is as eccentric a building for New York as the **"folly"** it was patterned after was for England, William Beckford's **Fonthill Abbey.** Though this is the best-known building on the campus, the old red brick college itself, four stories high and oh so long, is an unfamiliar and more spectacular sight in the campus. Its 180-foot tall tower rises some 400 feet above the level of the Hudson below. LeGras Hall was, between 1875 and 1910, the sparsely settled Riverdale's only elementary school. It is a charming building, accessible directly from the adjacent 261st Street.

[21.] Diplomatic Residence, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Mosholu Ave. NE cor. W 255th St. 1975. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill.

Nineteen stories of apartments built **from the top down** on two cast-in-place concrete masts which form the building's cores. Each floor was fabricated on the ground and **jacked up** to its position in the structure along the masts. The Russians pursued the **patented construction system** after an early conventional design was shelved to save a million dollars in construction.

WILLIAM C. SHOPSIN A.I.A.
480 West 11th Street
New York, N. Y. 10014

tombstones of soldiers from the War of 1812, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and World War I may be seen through the fence surrounding this two-thirds-acre site. After many years of neglect and desecration, the locally organized **Civil War Memorial Committee,** reconstituted about 1950, came to the rescue, restored the site and memorial statue, and achieved its recognition as an official landmark.

[3d.] Intermediate School 167 Bronx, The Lorraine Hansberry School, 1970 West Farms Rd. SE cor. E. Tremont Ave. 1973. Max O. Urbahn Assocs., Inc.

Defining part of the south edge of old West Farms Square [see 3a.] is this **crisply designed** city school, **a far cry** from most of its predecessors of the 1940s and 1950s. It uses a cast-concrete structural frame and dark, rough-ribbed concrete block infill to achieve its neat and dramatic geometry. The site it occupies was once that of the **Bronx Bleachery,** a well-remembered industry probably because of the **negative impact** it had upon the purity of the adjacent Bronx River.

[4.] Originally **New York Coliseum/**now **N.Y.C. Transit MaBSTOA Bus Repair Facility (Manhattan and Bronx Surface Transit Operating Authority),** E. 177th St. bet. Devoe and Bronx Park Aves. S side. 1927.

Built originally for the **Sesquicentennial Exposition** of 1926 in Philadelphia and subsequently dismantled and reerected here. Prior to World War II the bulky bowstring arched structure was the site of indoor **automobile races** and **boxing matches**—it seated 15,000 people. During the war it was commandeered as an army ordnance repair facility, which is not too different from its use today. To its west was once the **amusement park** and **swimming center** called **Starlight Park** on the east bank of the Bronx River.

[5.] Former **New York, Westchester & Boston Railway Company Administration Building/**now **Entrance to E. 180th Station of the IRT Dyre Avenue Subway,** 481 Morris Park Ave. NW cor. E. 180th St. 1912. Fellheimer & Long, Allen H. Stem, associated. ★

Twin towers capped with red tile roofs and walls of warm-hued, bush-hammered concrete identify this headquarters building in the **Italian Villa style** for a railroad **that never made it.** The NYW & B was to be a suburban line that would glamorously and swiftly transport commuters to the suburbs developing around White Plains and Port Chester prior to World War I. The architecture, **picturesque in appearance,** was to set the tone. The enterprise, having never made a profit, finally **failed in 1937.** The N.Y.C. Transit Authority's IRT Dyre Avenue line still uses some of the city route [see E Bronx 16.].

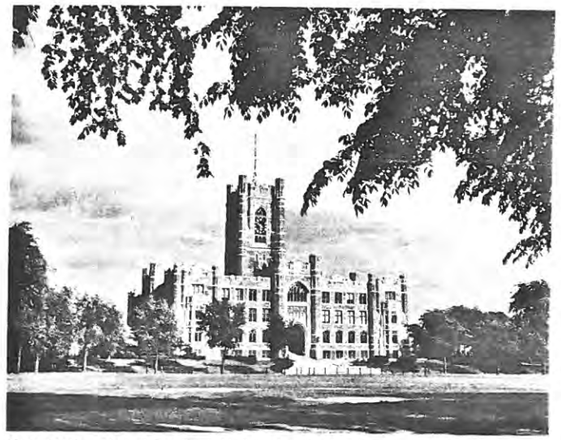
FORDHAM/BELMONT

[6.] Fordham University, Rose Hill Campus, generally E of Webster Ave., N of E. Fordham Rd., S and W of Southern Blvd. **[6a.] Administration Building/**central part formerly **Rose Hill Manor House.** 1838. ★ **[6b.] University Church/**officially **Our Lady, Mediatrix of All Graces,** 1845, William Rodrigue. Transept, chancel, crossing and lantern added, 1929. ★ **[6c.] St. John's Residence Hall,** 1845, William Rodrigue. ★ **[6d.] Thebaud Hall/**originally **Science Hall,** 1886, Eugene Kelly. **[6e.] Keating Hall,** 1936, Robert J. Reiley.

A Jesuit institution since 1846, the university began as St. John's College in 1841, founded by the **Right Reverend John Hughes** (later New York's first Catholic archbishop) and guided initially by its first president, **John McCloskey** (later America's first cardinal). Hughes commissioned his brother-in-law, **John Rodrigue,** to design a residence hall and church for the fledgling institution to accompany the already existing Rose Hill Manor House—for which this campus is named. Later Rodrigue associated with **James Renwick, Jr.,** in the design of the new St. Patrick's Cathedral [see M Manhattan/Fifth Avenue 5a.] which upon completion was dedicated by then-**Cardinal McCloskey.** (Detect a closeness here?)

Fordham derived its present name in 1905 from that of the old manor, later village, of Fordham—**not the other way around,** as some well-meaning community people will have you believe. The campus's physical presence, along heavily traveled East Fordham Road, is very strong. Mature trees, dense shrubs, green lawns, and a group of harmonious gray stone **Collegiate Gothic** buildings (built mostly from designs by architect Emile G. Perrot between 1911 and 1930) offer a distinguished contrast to the tacky commercial architecture of the Bronx's automobile row adjacent to the campus. The best of Fordham's buildings, save the early **Manor House,** a rough-stone, country-style **Greek Revival masterpiece,** is the last in the Collegiate Gothic style, Keating Hall. A picturesque work carefully sited, it is diminished in quality only by the steel transmitting antenna of the university-FM station, WFUV.

Two literary tales relate to the campus. It is said that the 98-acre Fordham campus was the setting for James Fenimore Cooper's novel, *The Spy.* And it is also said that the bell in the University Church (appropriately dubbed "Old Edgar") was the inspiration for Poe's poem, *The Bells.* [He lived nearby—see W Bronx 43.].



[6e.] Keating Hall at Fordham University: most imposing building on campus

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The Bronx's Little Italy: The fork in the street grid where Crescent Avenue diverges from East 187th Street (just a few blocks southeast of Fordham University) provides a space which, straight out of the Mediterranean tradition, has fostered a great marketplace for the cohesive Italian-American community of Belmont. Along East 187th Street, past Belmont Avenue and the area's religious and social rallying point, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Roman Catholic Church, and into busy, colorful Arthur Avenue, you will find arranged a multitude of small retail shops which resemble those which were once the mainstay of New York's streets. Long may they prosper here! Freshly baked Italian breads, salami, and olive oil. *Latticini freschi,* fresh fish, and clams on the half shell from a common plate served on a wooden sidewalk stand (with unlimited lemons). Drop into the European-feeling New York City Retail Market, a Fiorello LaGuardia morality gesture of 1940 that removed Arthur Avenue's pushcast peddlers but, thankfully, not the street life. It's all worth an extra-special good weather visit . . . every day but Sunday, of course.

Dominick's Restaurant, 2335 Arthur Ave. bet. E. 186th St. and Crescent Ave. Telephone: 733-2807.

A restaurant without a menu. Small. Hearty. Delicious. Reasonably priced. Try it at lunchtime when the neighborhood regulars drop in.

White Castle (eatery), 552 E. Fordham Rd. SE cor. Lorillard Place.

This is not a recommendation for food (what can a 20¢ hamburger be made of?) nor for atmosphere—it's all rather utilitarian: stainless steel and aluminum, cramped, and dingy. Rather this purveying machine for fast food, open twenty-four hours a day, is a lesson in how unresponsive a 20th-century structure can be to basic human environmental requirements. Free parking.

[illegible] 11th Street
[illegible] York, N.Y. 10003

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

October 22, 1980

Stephen M. Flatow, Esq.
Cusack & Stiles
Attorneys At Law
61 Broadway
New York, New York 10006

Dear Mr. Flatow:

The material you submitted has been included in the permanent file for the Immaculate Conception Church, Convent and Priest's residence. It will be thoroughly reviewed by the Commissioners before any decision regarding the proposed designation will be made.

Thank you for clarifying some of the questions that were raised concerning title to the buildings.

Sincerely:

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:ja

CUSACK & STILES
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
61 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10006

LAWRENCE X. CUSACK
MEREDITH N. STILES, JR.
JAMES F. O'BRIEN
JOSEPH E. MOUKAD
GEORGE A. PHILLIPS
WILLIAM P. HURLEY
LEE HARRISON CORBIN

STEPHEN M. FLATOW
DENNIS J. DEMPSEY
THOMAS C. MACKASEK

JOHN F. BROSNAN
JOHN J. GRANDEFELD
JULIAN B. BEATY, JR.
COUNSEL

TELEPHONE
480-0400
AREA CODE 212

CABLE ADDRESS
CUSTILES

September 15, 1980

Re: Immaculate Conception Church of the
Blessed Virgin Mary, Convent and
Priests' Residence
Bronx, New York

Dear Mrs. Norman:

We enclose a Memorandum in opposition to the proposed designation of the above as New York City landmarks. We also enclose a report prepared by William C. Shopsin, A.I.A.

At the public hearing held on July 8, I noted that certain members of the Commission appeared to be confused over the identity of the parties involved in this matter. I wish to offer the following information for the Commission's reference.

The legal title of the Church corporation is the Roman Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception. The Church is a Religious Corporations Law corporation. The president of the corporation is His Eminence, Terence Cardinal Cooke, Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York. The Church is the owner of the church and convent.

The Priests' Residence is owned by the Redemptorist Fathers of New York. The Redemptorist Fathers of New York was established by a special act of legislature, Chapter 88 of the Laws of 1864, under the name of the Missionary Society of the Most Holy Redeemer in the State of New York. The president of the corporation is the Very Reverend Joseph T. Hurley, C.SS.R.

This firm is appearing in these proceedings as counsel to the Roman Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception and the Redemptorist Fathers of New York.

Would you please acknowledge receipt of the foregoing by signing and delivering the enclosed copy of this letter to our messenger.

Very truly yours,

Stephen M. Flatow

Mrs. Lenore Norman, Executive Director
New York City Landmarks Preservation
Commission
305 Broadway
New York, New York 10007

SMF:lmb
encls. BY HAND

cc: w/encls. Rev. Timothy A. McDonnell
w/encls. Rev. William Smith, C.SS.R.

William C Shopsin
Architect AIA
280 West 11 Street
New York, NY 10014
Tel 212 989-7009

TO: Chairman Barwick, Members of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

RE: Immaculate Conception Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Convent and Priests' Residence, East 150th Street between Courtland and Melrose Avenues, The Bronx

I would like to state for the written record, oral remarks made at the Public Hearing in City Hall on July 8, 1980 with regard to Calendar Item No. 19 (LP-1191).

The findings of your designation report state the following with regard to the significance of the subject property:

> The Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church complex consisting of a church building, convent, and priests' residence facing on East 150th Street between Courtland and Melrose Avenues is an example of Romanesque style ecclesiastical architecture and is considered the finest Roman Catholic Church complex in the Bronx. The church building, with its soaring 125-foot tall centrally placed tower and spire is looked on as a neighborhood landmark in the Melrose section of the Bronx. The red brick church ornamented with crockets and towerlettes was designed in 1887 by Henry Bruns. The facade is articulated by round-arched openings, stone beltcourses and window enframements, corbelled round-arched cornices and small blind arcades. The convent to the west of the church has projecting end sections with gables flanking an entrance bay that is topped by a pair of dormers. The priests' residence on the corner of Melrose Avenue is a similar Romanesque Revival style structure with projecting central and end pavilions and a detailed corbelled brick cornice.

I would certainly question the criteria and in whose judgment the Immaculate Conception Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Convent and Priests' Residence "is considered the finest

LP#1192

1980 Priority Letters

prior to notice

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

February 27, 1980

Father Gerard Alfes
389 East 150th Street
Bronx, New York

Re: Immaculate Conception Church
Convent & Rectory
389 East 150th Street
Block 2397 Lot 17

Dear Father Alfes:

The Landmarks Preservation Commission has voted to consider the above for possible landmark designation during calendar year 1980. You will be receiving official notification of the hearing date prior to the calendaring.

The Landmarks Commission was established in 1965 to designate and preserve buildings and areas of architectural, historic, cultural and aesthetic significance. In 1973, its mandate was extended to include scenic areas and interiors regularly accessible to the public. To date, the Commission has designated approximately 560 individual landmarks and 38 historic districts.

Enclosed for your information is a pamphlet describing the Commission and the designation process. Please contact me if you have any questions concerning the procedure.

Sincerely yours,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:PS
Enc.

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

February 27, 1980

Mnsgr. Joseph Murphy
Chancellor
Archdiocese of New York
1011 First Avenue
Chanery Office
New York, NY 10022

Re: Immaculate Conception Church
Convent and Rectory
389 East 150th Street
Block 2397 Lot 17

Right Reverend Monsignor Murphy:

The Landmarks Preservation Commission has voted to consider the above for possible landmark designation during calendar year 1980. You will be receiving official notification of the hearing date prior to the calendaring.

The Landmarks Commission was established in 1965 to designate and preserve buildings and areas of architectural, historic, cultural and aesthetic significance. In 1973, its mandate was extended to include scenic areas and interiors regularly accessible to the public. To date, the Commission has designated approximately 560 individual landmarks and 38 historic districts.

Enclosed for your information is a pamphlet describing the Commission and the designation process. Please contact me if you have any questions concerning the procedure.

Sincerely yours,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:PS
Enc.

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007 (566-7577)

June 11, 1980

Mr. Edward Logue
South Bronx Development Office
529 Courtlandt Avenue
Bronx, NY 10451

Re: See attached list.

Dear Mr. Logue:

On Tuesday, July 8, 1980, in the Board of Estimate Chambers at City Hall, the Landmarks Preservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing on proposed New York City Landmarks. That day the Commission will consider the designation of the above named sites in the Bronx.

If you would like to submit a statement about the proposed designations we would read your message into the record that day.

The Commission appreciates your interest in its work.

Sincerely yours,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

enc.
LN:ar

Re: First Presbyterian Church
of Williamsbridge and Rectory
730-736 East 225th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 4838, Lots 66 and 68

P.S. 91
1261-1291 Ogden Avenue
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2529, Lot 81

Union Reformed Church
1272 Ogden Avenue
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2518, Lot 14

Salvation Army Training College
Andrews Avenue at W. Tremont Avenue
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2879, Lot 101

Immaculate Conception Church, Convent
and Rectory
389 East 150th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2397, Lot 17

Bertine Block houses
414-432 East 136th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2280, Lots 15-24

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

May 27, 1980

Honorable Gilberto Gerena-Valentin
391 East 149th Street
Room 216
Bronx, New York 10455

Re: Immaculate Conception Church,
Convent and Rectory
389 East 150th Street, Bronx, NY
Tax Map Block 2397, Lot 17

Dear Councilman Gerena-Valentin:

On Tuesday, July 8, 1980, at 10:30 A.M. in the Board of Estimate Chambers at City Hall, the Landmarks Preservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing on proposed New York City Landmarks. That day the Commission will consider the designation of the above named site(s) in your district.

The Commission has written to the Community Board(s) and the owner(s) of the property (properties). If you would like to submit a statement about the proposed designations, we would read the message into the record that day.

The Commission appreciates your interest in its work.

Sincerely yours,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:bs

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

May 27, 1980

Honorable Joseph Savino
1334 East Gun Hill Road
Bronx, NY 10469

Re: See attached list.

Dear Councilman Savino:

On Tuesday, July 8, 1980, in the Board of Estimate Chambers at City Hall, the Landmarks Preservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing on proposed New York City Landmarks. That day the Commission will consider the designation of the above named site(s) in your Borough.

The Commission has written to the Community Board(s) and the owner(s) of the site(s) under consideration. If you would like to submit a statement about the proposed designation, we would read your message into the record that day.

The Commission appreciates your interest in its work.

Sincerely yours,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:bs

Re: First Presbyterian Church
of Williamsbridge and Rectory
730 East 225th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 4838, Lot 68

P.S. 91
1261-1291 Ogden Avenue
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2529, Lot 81

Union Reformed Church
1272 Ogden Avenue
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2518, Lot 14

Salvation Army Training College
Andrews Avenue at W. Tremont Avenue
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2879, Lot 101

Immaculate Conception Church, Convent
and Rectory
389 East 150th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2397, Lot 17

Bertine Block
414-432 East 136th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2280, Lots 15-24

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

May 27, 1980

Honorable Aileen Ryan
2051 St. Raymond Avenue
Bronx, NY 10462

Re: See attached list.

Dear Councilwoman Ryan:

On Tuesday, July 8, 1980, in the Board of Estimate Chambers at City Hall, the Landmarks Preservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing on proposed New York City Landmarks. That day the Commission will consider the designation of the above named site(s) in your Borough.

The Commission has written to the Community Board(s) and the owner(s) of the site(s) under consideration. If you would like to submit a statement about the proposed designation, we would read your message into the record that day.

The Commission appreciates your interest in its work.

Sincerely yours,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:bs

Re: First Presbyterian Church
of Williamsbridge and Rectory
730 East 225th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 4838, Lot 68

P.S. 91
1261-1291 Ogden Avenue
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2529, Lot 81

Union Reformed Church
1272 Ogden Avenue
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2518, Lot 14

Salvation Army Training College
Andrews Avenue at W. Tremont Avenue
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2879, Lot 101

Immaculate Conception Church, Convent
and Rectory
389 East 150th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2397, Lot 17

Bertine Block
414-432 East 136th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2280, Lots 15-24

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

May 27, 1980

Honorable Stanley Simon
Borough President of the Bronx
851 Grand Concourse
Bronx, NY 10451

Re: See attached list.

Dear Borough President Simon:

On Tuesday, July 8, 1980, in the Board of Estimate Chambers at City Hall, the Landmarks Preservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing on proposed New York City Landmarks. That day the Commission will consider the designation of the above named site(s) in your Borough.

The Commission has written to the Community Board(s) and the owner(s) of the site(s) under consideration. If you would like to submit a statement about the proposed designation, we would read your message into the record that day.

The Commission appreciates your interest in its work.

Sincerely yours,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:bs

Re: First Presbyterian Church
of Williamsbridge and Rectory
730 East 225th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 4838, Lot 68

P.S. 91
1261-1291 Ogden Avenue
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2529, Lot 81

Union Reformed Church
1272 Ogden Avenue
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2518, Lot 14

Salvation Army Training College
Andrews Avenue at W. Tremont Avenue
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2879, Lot 101

Immaculate Conception Church, Convent
and Rectory
389 East 150th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2397, Lot 17

Bertine Block
414-432 East 136th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2280, Lots 15-24

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

May 27, 1980

Honorable Israel Ruiz Jr.
948 Anderson Avenue
Bronx, New York 10452

Re: See attached list.

Dear Senator Ruiz:

On Tuesday, July 8, 1980, at 10:30 A.M. in the Board of Estimate Chambers at City Hall, the Landmarks Preservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing on proposed New York City Landmarks. That day the Commission will consider the designation of the above named site(s) in your district.

The Commission has written to the Community Board(s) and the owner(s) of the property (properties). If you would like to submit a statement about the proposed designations, we would read the message into the record that day.

The Commission appreciates your interest in its work.

Sincerely yours,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:bs

Re: P.S. 91
1261-1291 Ogden Avenue
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2529, Lot 81

Union Reformed Church of Highbridge
1272 Odgen Avenue
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2518, Lot 14

Salvation Army Training College
Andrews Avenue at W. Tremont Avenue
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2879, Lot 101

Immaculate Conception Church, Convent
and Rectory
389 East 150th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2397, Lot 17

Bertine Block
414-432 East 136th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2280, Lots 15-24

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

May 27, 1980

Father Gerard Alfes
Immaculate Conception Church
of the Blessed Virgin Mary
389 East 150th Street
Bronx, New York

Re: Immaculate Conception Church
Convent and Rectory
389 East 150th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2397, Lot 17

Dear Father Alfes:

Your name appears as the representative of the owner of the above named property. Pursuant to the provisions of Section 207-12.0 of Chapter 8-A (Preservation of Landmarks and Historic Districts) of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, you are hereby notified that on July 8, 1980, at 10:30 o'clock in the morning of that day a public hearing will be held in the Board of Estimate Chambers at City Hall, with respect to the proposed designation of the above named property.

Public notice of said hearing identifying the proposed Landmark, and setting forth its location, will appear in the City Record of June 23, 1980, and on each day (other than Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays) thereafter until and including July 8, 1980.

You may appear at such public hearing and present any facts and express any views relating to the proposed designation.

Please contact me at 566-7577 if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:bs

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

May 27, 1980

Sister Alphonsine
Immaculate Conception Church
of the Blessed Virgin Mary
389 East 150th Street
Bronx, NY

Re: Immaculate Conception Church
Convent and Rectory
389 East 150th Street, Bronx, NY
Tax Map Block 2397, Lot 17

Dear Sister Alphonsine:

Your name appears as the representative of the owner of the above named properties. Pursuant to the provisions of Section 207-12.0 of Chapter 8-A (Preservation of Landmarks and Historic Districts) of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, you are hereby notified that on July 8, 1980, at 10:30 o'clock in the morning of that day a public hearing will be held in the Board of Estimate Chambers at City Hall, with respect to the proposed designation of the above named properties.

Public notice of said hearing identifying the proposed Landmarks, and setting forth their locations will appear in the City Record of June 23, 1980, and on each day (other than Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays) thereafter, until and including July 8, 1980.

You may appear at such public hearing and present any facts and express any views relating to the proposed designations.

Please contact me at 566-7577 if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:bs

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

May 27, 1980

Monsignor Joseph Murphy
Chancellor
Archdiocese of New York
1011 First Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Re: Immaculate Conception Church
Convent and Rectory
389 East 150th Street, Bronx, NY
Tax Map Block 2397, Lot 17

Dear Monsignor Murphy:

Your name appears as the representative of the owner of the above named properties. Pursuant to the provisions of Section 207-12.0 of Chapter 8-A (Preservation of Landmarks and Historic Districts) of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, you are hereby notified that on July 8, 1980, at 10:30 o'clock in the morning of that day a public hearing will be held in the Board of Estimate Chambers at City Hall, with respect to the proposed designation of the above named properties.

Public notice of said hearing identifying the proposed Landmarks, and setting forth their locations will appear in the City Record of June 23, 1980, and on each day (other than Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays) thereafter, until and including July 8, 1980.

You may appear at such public hearing and present any facts and express any views relating to the proposed designations.

Please contact me at 566-7577 if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

cc: Rev. Joseph T. Hurley

LN:bs

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

May 27, 1980

Honorable Robert Garcia
840 Grand Concourse
Bronx, New York 10451

Re: See attached list.

Dear Congressman Garcia:

On Tuesday, July 8, 1980, at 10:30 A.M. in the Board of Estimate Chambers at City Hall, the Landmarks Preservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing on proposed New York City Landmarks. That day the Commission will consider the designation of the above named site(s) in your district.

The Commission has written to the Community Board(s) and the owner(s) of the property (properties). If you would like to submit a statement about the proposed designations, we would read the message into the record that day.

The Commission appreciates your interest in its work.

Sincerely yours,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:bs

Re: Immaculate Conception Church, Convent
and Rectory
389 East 150th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2397, Lot 17

Bertine Block
414-432 East 136th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2280, Lots 15-24

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

May 27, 1980

Honorable Jose E. Serrano
322 East 149th Street
Bronx, New York 10451

Re: See attached list.

Dear Assemblyman Serrano:

On Tuesday, July 8, 1980, at 10:30 A.M. in the Board of Estimate Chambers at City Hall, the Landmarks Preservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing on proposed New York City Landmarks. That day the Commission will consider the designation of the above named site(s) in your district.

The Commission has written to the Community Board(s) and the owner(s) of the property (properties). If you would like to submit a statement about the proposed designations, we would read the message into the record that day.

The Commission appreciates your interest in its work.

Sincerely yours,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:bs

Re: Immaculate Conception Church, Convent
and Rectory
389 East 150th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2397, Lot 17

Bertine Block
414-432 East 136th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2280, Lots 15-24

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

May 27, 1980

Mr. Raymond Ortiz
Community Board #1
384 East 149th Street
Bronx, NY 10455

Re: See attached list.

Dear Mr. Ortiz:

The above named site(s) in your district will be considered at Public Hearings starting at 10:30 A.M. on Tuesday, July 8, 1980, in the Board of Estimate Chambers, City Hall.

The purpose of the Hearing is to ascertain whether the site(s) qualify (qualifies) for Landmark designation, and the Commission would appreciate receiving the views of the Board.

If you have any questions before the Hearing, we will be very glad to answer them. A representative of the Board may want to appear or you may want to send a statement to be read into the record on July 8, 1980.

With best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:bs

Re: Immaculate Conception Church, Convent
and Rectory
389 East 150th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2397, Lot 17

Bertine Block
414-432 East 136th Street
Bronx, New York
Tax Map Block 2280, Lots 15-24

RECEIVED
JUL 7 1980
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION
COMMISSION

City of New York

Office of the President
Stanley Simon

Borough of The Bronx
Bronx County Building
Grand Concourse and 161st Street
Bronx, New York 10451
Tel. 590– 3548

July 3, 1980

Hon. Kent L. Barwick
Chairman
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
305 Broadway
New York, New York 10007

Dear Chairman Barwick:

I am writing in opposition to the proposed designation of the Immaculate Conception Church complex in the Bronx as a landmark.

I have received a communication from the Rev. Thomas O'Connor, its pastor, indicating to me that he is opposed to this designation because it will impair the financial ability of this South Bronx parish to maintain adequately this structure as provided by law.

It seems to me that such strong objection from the Church and the surrounding community must weigh seriously in your Commission's deliberations in this matter.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

STANLEY SIMON

SS:cc

delivered by Hand

CB#1

New York City
Community Planning Board No. 1

384 E. 149th St., Suite 320, Bronx, N. Y. 10455 Tel: 585-7117

SOBEIDA CRUZ
District Manager

RAYMOND CRUZ
Ass't. District Manager

CARMEN ARROYO
Chairlady

July 7, 1980

Mr. Kent Barwick
Commissioner Of Landmarks
305 Broadway
New York, New York 10007

Dear Mr Barwick

Community Planning Board #1 in the Bronx, held an Executive meeting on July 3, 1980, It was resolved to oppose the designation of Immaculate Conception Church, Rectory and Convent as a Historical Landmarks in our Community.

The reasons that our Community Planning Board opposes the designation of Immaculate Conception Church, Rectory and Convent as Historical Landmarks are the Following:

We believe Historical Landmarks in our Community should be sites that we, the Community, feel have Historical significance to our Community.
We believe that the Community Planning Board should be consulted and that our Historical perspectives should be sought and appreciated.

In our Community Planning Board we have suggested two sites for Historical designation, Bronx opera house and The Foundary, both request have been denied. The Foundary was Demolished.

New York City
Community Planning Board No. 1

384 E. 149th St., Suite 320, Bronx, N. Y. 10455 Tel: 585-7117

SOBEIDA CRUZ
District Manager

RAYMOND CRUZ
Ass't. District Manager

CARMEN ARROYO
Chairlady

Immaculate Conception parish has been in our Community for over one hundred and twenty five years.
The Church and the school have provided extradoniary services to this Community.

The Church has a commitment to the Community and the archdioces has made, and will make every effort to continue theseservices. We feel that since the Church has been maintained and will be maintained, it is not necessary to burden the Church with legal requirments of the Landmarks laws.

Our suggestion to your Committee is to ask the Community Planning Board to recommend to your Committee sites that we believe are Historical Landmarks.

Sincerely
Community Planning Board #1

Carmen E. Arroyo

CA:er

a 8/4/80 [illegible]

CUSACK & STILES
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
61 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10006

LAWRENCE X. CUSACK
MEREDITH N. STILES, JR.
JAMES F. O'BRIEN
JOSEPH E. MOUKAD
GEORGE A. PHILLIPS
WILLIAM P. HURLEY
LEE HARRISON CORBIN

STEPHEN M. FLATOW
DENNIS J. DEMPSEY

JOHN F. BROSNAN
JULIAN B. BEATY, JR.
COUNSEL

TELEPHONE
480-0400
AREA CODE 212

CABLE ADDRESS
CUSTILES

August 4, 1980

Re: Immaculate Conception Church
Convent and Rectory
Bronx, New York

Dear Mrs. Norman:

Confirming our telephone conversation, we request on behalf of our clients that the record in the above matter be held open until September 15 for the reasons stated below.

First, as your office is aware, we have requested a typed transcript of the hearing with respect to this matter. I have spoken to Miss Glorisi who informs me that the transcript will not be available for another week or so. As I am sure you can appreciate, a review of the transcript is necessary to enable us to bring the relevant issues into focus and to permit us to answer some of the questions raised at the public hearing. Indeed, I believe that we cannot proceed without the transcript.

Second, several of the key Church and Archdiocesan officials involved in this matter will be out of the metropolitan area for several weeks while on their annual vacations. The input of these individuals is crucial to our presentation.

Third, our consultant, William Shopsin, is still in the process of completing his written report on the architectural merit of the buildings.

While we honestly believed that we would be able to complete the presentation by August 8, we find that not to be the case now. We do not believe that the extension would be prejudicial or detrimental to the designation process.

Therefore, we ask that you relay our request to the commissioners. If the request is not acceptable, would you please telephone me immediately so that we may prepare our case as best as possible under the circumstances.

Very truly yours,

Stephen M. Flatow

Mrs. Lenore Norman,
Executive Director
Landmarks Preservation Commission
305 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

SMF:lmb BY HAND

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

August 20, 1980

Hon. Stanley Simon, Borough President
Borough of the Bronx
Grand Concourse and 161st Street
Bronx, New York 10451

Dear Borough President Simon:

We are in receipt of your letter dated July 3, 1980, expressing your opposition to the proposed designation of the Immaculate Conception Church, Convent and Rectory. Your comments have been included in the official file for that item.

At a meeting on August 11, 1980, the Commissioners agreed to hold the record open until September 15, 1980, at the request of the attorney for the church. Therefore no decision will be made before that time.

Please be assured that all the factors will be considered before any action is taken.

Sincerely,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:bs

City of New York

Office of the President
Stanley Simon

Borough of The Bronx
Bronx County Building
Grand Concourse and 161st Street
Bronx, New York 10451
Tel. 590– 3548

JUL 7 1980

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION
COMMISSION

July 3, 1980

Hon. Kent L. Barwick
Chairman
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
305 Broadway
New York, New York 10007

Dear Chairman Barwick:

I am writing in opposition to the proposed designation of the Immaculate Conception Church complex in the Bronx as a landmark.

I have received a communication from the Rev. Thomas O'Connor, its pastor, indicating to me that he is opposed to this designation because it will impair the financial ability of this South Bronx parish to maintain adequately this structure as provided by law.

It seems to me that such strong objection from the Church and the surrounding community must weigh seriously in your Commission's deliberations in this matter.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

STANLEY SIMON

SS:cc

delivered by Hand

New York City
Community Planning Board No. 1

384 E. 149th St., Suite 320, Bronx, N. Y. 10455 Tel: 585-7117

July 7, 1980

Mr. Kent Barwick
Commissioner Of Landmarks
305 Broadway
New York, New York 10007

Dear Mr Barwick

Community Planning Board #1 in the Bronx, held an Executive meeting on July 3, 1980, It was resolved to oppose the designation of Immaculate Conception Church, Rectory and Convent as a Historical Landmarks in our Community.

The reasons that our Community Planning Board opposes the designation of Immaculate Conception Church, Rectory and Convent as Historical Landmarks are the Following:

We believe Historical Landmarks in our Community should be sites that we, the Community, feel have Historical significance to our Community.
We believe that the Community Planning Board should be consulted and that our Historical perspectives should be sought and appreciated.

In our Community Planning Board we have suggested two sites for Historical designation, Bronx opera house and The Foundary, both request have been denied. The Foundary was Demolished.

New York City
Community Planning Board No. 1

384 E. 149th St., Suite 320, Bronx, N. Y. 10455 Tel: 585-7117

SOBEIDA CRUZ
District Manager

RAYMOND CRUZ
1st District Manager

CARMEN ARROYO
Chairlady

Immaculate Conception parish has been in our Community for over one hundred and twenty five years.
The Church and the school have provided extradoniary services to this Community.

The Church has a commitment to the Community and the archdioces has made, and will make every effort to continue theseservices. We feel that since the Church has been maintained and will be maintained, it is not necessary to burden the Church with legal requirments of the Landmarks laws.

Our suggestion to your Committee is to ask the Community Planning Board to recommend to your Committee sites that we believe are Historical Landmarks.

Sincerely
Community Planning Board #1

Carmen E. Arroyo

CA:er

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

August 20, 1980

Carmen E. Arroyo, Chairwoman
Bronx Community Planning Board #1
384 East 149th Street
Bronx, New York 10455

Dear Chairwoman Arroyo:

We are in receipt of your letter of opposition to the proposed designation of the Immaculate Conception Church, Convent and Rectory. It has been included in the record for that item.

Please be advised that on August 11, 1980, at the Executive Session of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, it was agreed to leave the record open until September 15, 1980, at the request of the attorney for the church. Therefore, no decision will be made until after that time.

Sincerely,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:bs

RECEIVED
AUG 1 ? 1980
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION
COMMISSION

South Bronx Development Office

Edward J. Logue
Director

South Bronx Office
529 Courtlandt Avenue
Bronx, New York 10451
(212) 665-1320

Downtown Office
1250 Broadway
New York, New York 10001
(212) 868-6360

August 8, 1980

Hon. Kent Barwick
Chairman
Landmarks Preservation Commission
305 Broadway
New York, New York 10007

Dear Kent:

I would very much like to sit down and talk with you about landmark designation policies in the South Bronx. I'm taking a vacation in the end of August, but perhaps we can arrange lunch in early September.

In the mean time, I want to share with you our main concern--the question of the economic feasibility of landmark standards if they prove to be overly rigid or time consuming. If the costs of rehabilitating a building and keeping it in good repair are not in some balance with the availibility of funds that can be devoted to these purposes, landmarking could have a negative impact.

For this reason, we would like to request that the designation of The Immaculate Conception Church, Convent and Rectory be deferred until questions of economic feasibility have been thoroughly explored.

I look forward to talking with you in September.

My very best wishes.

Sincerely,

ED Logue

df

cc. Father Thomas G. O'Connor

The South Bronx Development Office has been established by Mayor Koch to formulate and coordinate South Bronx programs.
The Office is an administrative unit in the Department of City Planning.

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

August 18, 1980

Stephen M. Flatow, Esq.
Cusack & Stiles
Attorneys at Law
61 Broadway
New York, New York 10006

Re: Immaculate Conception
Church, Convent & Rectory
The Bronx

Dear Mr. Flatow:

We are in reciept of your letter dated August 4, 1980, requesting that the record be kept open on the Immaculate Conception Church, Convent and Rectory until September 15, 1980.

On August 11, 1980, at a meeting of the Landmarks Commission, it was agreed to keep the record open until September 15, 1980.

Sincerely,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:bs

a 8/4/80 / 6 [illegible]

CUSACK & STILES
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
61 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10006

LAWRENCE X. CUSACK
MEREDITH N. STILES, JR.
JAMES F. O'BRIEN
JOSEPH E. MOUKAD
GEORGE A. PHILLIPS
WILLIAM P. HURLEY
LEE HARRISON CORBIN

STEPHEN M. FLATOW
DENNIS J. DEMPSEY

JOHN F. BROSNAN
JULIAN B. BEATY, JR.
COUNSEL

TELEPHONE
480-0400
AREA CODE 212

CABLE ADDRESS
CUSTILES

August 4, 1980

Re: Immaculate Conception Church
Convent and Rectory
Bronx, New York

Dear Mrs. Norman:

Confirming our telephone conversation, we request on behalf of our clients that the record in the above matter be held open until September 15 for the reasons stated below.

First, as your office is aware, we have requested a typed transcript of the hearing with respect to this matter. I have spoken to Miss Glorisi who informs me that the transcript will not be available for another week or so. As I am sure you can appreciate, a review of the transcript is necessary to enable us to bring the relevant issues into focus and to permit us to answer some of the questions raised at the public hearing. Indeed, I believe that we cannot proceed without the transcript.

Second, several of the key Church and Archdiocesan officials involved in this matter will be out of the metropolitan area for several weeks while on their annual vacations. The input of these individuals is crucial to our presentation.

Third, our consultant, William Shopsin, is still in the process of completing his written report on the architectural merit of the buildings.

While we honestly believed that we would be able to complete the presentation by August 8, we find that not to be the case now. We do not believe that the extension would be prejudicial or detriment to the designation process.

Therefore, we ask that you relay our request to the commissi If the request is not acceptable, would you please telephone me immediately so that we may prepare our case as best as possible under the circumstances.

Very truly yours,

Stephen M. Flatow

Mrs. Lenore Norman,
Executive Director
Landmarks Preservation Commission
305 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

SMF:lmb BY HAND

LN.

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

August 14, 1980

Ms. Margot Gayle
Victorian Society in America
44 West Ninth Street
New York, New York 10011

Dear Margot:

This is to let you know that we have received letters from you in support of the designation of the following:

St. Augustine's R.C. Church and Rectory LP1200
St. Barbara's R.C. Church LP1201
Church of the Annunciation, Rectory, School and Convent LP1198
New York Avenue Methodist Church LP 1199
Immaculate Conception Church, Convent and Priest' Residence LP1192

Your letters will be made part of the Commission's official record on these items.

Thank you for your interest in these properties and the work of the Commission.

Yours sincerely,

Kent Barwick
Chairman

RECEIVED
AUG 6 1980
COMMISSION

METROPOLITAN CHAPTER
The Victorian Society IN AMERICA
44 West Ninth Street, New York, N. Y. 10011 • 212/982-7272

August 4, 1980

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JOHN YOUNG

Hon. Kent Barwick
Landmark PreservationCommission
305 Broadway
New York, New York 10007

Re: LP- 1192
Immaculate Conception Church
(of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Convent and Priests' Residence
389 East 150th Street
Bronx, New York

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The impressive Immaculate Conception Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Convent and Priests' Residence on East 150th Street between Cortlandt and Melrose Avenues in the Bronx constitute a natural landmark assemblage of an architecturally significant and historically important buildings. The group should be so designated.

Seen from any vantage point these structures command attention and in a neighborhood that is more than a little run down and economically depressed they constitute a major architectural statement of strength and serenity. As the AIA Guide to N.Y.C. points out on page 315: "The austere yet handsome brick Romanesque Revival Church boasts the highest steeple in the borough... the facades of the rectory on the west, the church in the center, and the Redemptorist Fathers' home on the east make a handsome composition of brick detail and arched windows. A later auditorium on the southwest corner of 151st St. and Melrose is a reserved Beaux Arts composition."

A visit to the 1887 church disclosed a trmendously tall interior topped by a barrel arched ceiling. There are tall slender columns and richly colored stained glass windows which a Father explained had been brought from Germany when the parish was predominantly German in character.

Brief inquiries of parishioners on surrounding streets and in the church itself revealed how historic they consider it to be and also how imposing architecturally. It is certainly appreciated locally if not by the high administrative personnel of the Diocese, the spokesman for which at the Landmarks Commission public hearing on July 8th spoke disparagingly of the Immaculate Conception Church and its companion structures.

Immaculate Conception is an important anchor in its community, architecturally, historically and socially.

Sincerely yours,

Margot Gayle, Chairman
Preservation Committee

CUSACK & STILES
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
61 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10006

LAWRENCE X. CUSACK
MEREDITH N. STILES, JR
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JULIAN B. BEATY, JR
COUNSEL

TELEPHONE
480-0400
AREA CODE 212

CABLE ADDRESS
CUSTILES

July 8, 1980

Re: Roman Catholic Church of the
Immaculate Conception
389 East 150th Street
Bronx, New York

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This firm has been retained to represent the above Church in connection with the Landmark Preservation Commission's proposed designation of the Church, Convent and Priests' Residence as a landmark. For the reasons hereinafter stated, the Church is opposed to such designation.

As appears from the presentation of William C. Shopsin, an architect with whom the Commission is quite familiar, the Church complex is not possessed of any special architectural, historic or aesthetic significance. While it may be possessed of a 125-foot tall tower with spire, such a tower alone does not qualify the Church as a landmark. However, in addition to lack of architectural merit, we believe that there are other, possibly more meaningful arguments, to be made against landmark designation in this case.

You and the other members of the Commission are familiar with the changing face of the South Bronx. Many of the changes have not been pleasant as entire neighborhoods have been laid waste by fire, vandalism and general neglect. The parish served by Immaculate Conception, on the contrary, has for all intents and purposes stablized. Yet, because of the changes being wrought in other areas of the Bronx, Immaculate Conception Church must be permitted to remain flexible in its use of the Church complex, including, as only one possibility, the creation of a mixed-use development which could require extensive renovations, remodeling or even demolition. Designation would effectively eliminate the Church's ability to be flexible in meeting the needs of the community.

. . . Honorable Kent L. Barwick

Designation would also create other problems of which the following are examples:

(1) The present financial burdens of the Church would be multiplied in the event of designation. As mentioned above, the Bronx is changing. It has changed so much that the Church, which can seat 900 worshippers, now averages 100-150 parishioners for each Mass offered on Sunday. The expense of heating a church of this size, not to mention the school and other facilities, during the winter months is enormous. Currently, the Church is able to meet its operating expenses only because of tens of thousands of dollars of grants received from other parishes within the Archdiocese of New York. Thus, it is evident that while a great effort is being made by the Church to remain open, it cannot be certain that the expenses incurred this year will be sensible in the future. Designation would foreclose the possibility of the present Church being replaced by a smaller structure or by arranging accomodations in a mixed-use development.

(2) Landmark status would gravely impair the ability of Immaculate Conception to serve the community. As long as the Church complex is continued in its present form, the parish would see to the performance of at least the minimum exterior maintenance and repairs required to keep the complex viable for its present purposes. It does not follow, however, that such work will be done in a way to preserve the present exteriors of the structures since it might be more economical to modify the exteriors or remove certain of their features. Designation would require the Church to shift its meager financial resources from community service, where it is most needed, to comply with the vigorous maintenance requirements that would result from a landmark designation.

For the reasons stated above, landmark status should not be imposed on the Immaculate Conception Church complex.

Very truly yours,

Stephen M. Flatow

Honorable Kent L. Barwick, Chairman
Landmarks Preservation Commission
305 Broadway
New York, New York 10007

SMF:lr

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

August 4, 1980

Stephen Flatow
Cusack & Stiles
61 Broadway
New York 10006

Dear Mr. Flatow:

In accordance with our telephone conversation, I am informing you that the Commission is considering for designation the Immaculate Conception Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Convent and Priest's residence, and the sites upon which these buildings are situated, namely Block 2397 Lot 17 in part.

Not under consideration are the school and St. Mary's Hall and their sites which also are located on Block 2397 Lot 17.

If you have any further questions, please call us at 566-7577.

Sincerely,

Lenore Norman

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

LN:ja

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

CITY OF NEW YORK

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Transcript of the stenographic record :

of the discussion on Calendar Item :

Number 19, held at the Meeting of the :

Landmarks Preservation Commission on :

Tuesday July 8, 1980. :

----------x

KENT BARWICK,

CHAIRMAN

ACME REPORTING SERVICE
SHORTHAND AND STENOTYPE REPORTERS
NOTARIES PUBLIC
132 NASSAU STREET
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10038
TELEPHONES: BEEKMAN 3-0664-0665-0666

P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. NORMAN: Item number 19, LP number 1192, Immaculate Conception Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, convent and priests' residence, East 150th Street, between Courtlandt and Melrose Avenue, the Bronx. Lanmarks Site: tax map block 2397, lot 17. This hearing has been duly advertised.

THE CHAIRMAN: Silvina Cruz, district manager.

MR. FRATOW: Mr. Chairman, Miss Cruz is from the local community planning board. She had to leave. She was here earlier this morning. My name is Steven Fratow. I'm the attorney for the Immaculate Conception Church. If I may, I was going to ask for a continuation of this item until a later meeting of this Commission. However, in view of some of the remarks made by the gentlemen from the South Bronx Development Corporation, I would ask that we be permitted now to make some brief remarks and that the record be held open for an additional period of time for submission of other information.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, for

the reasons hereinafter stated the Church is opposed to the proposed landmark designation, for as it will appear from Mr. Shopsin's presentation, the Church complex is not possessed of any special architectural, historic, or esthetic significance. While it may be possessed of a 125-foot-tall tower, or spire, we do not believe that a tower alone qualifies the Church as a landmark.

However, in addition to the lack of architectural merit, we believe that there are other possibly more meaningful arguments to be made against landmark designation in this case.

The members of the Commission are familiar with the changing face of the South Bronx. Many of the changes have not been pleasant, and entire neighborhoods have been laid waste by fire, vandalism, general neglect. The parish surrounding the Immaculate Conception for all intents and purposes has been stabalized. However, with the changes brought about in other areas of the Bronx, the Immaculate Conception Church must be permitted to remain flexible in its use of the Church complex, including recreation applications, use, development,

which would require extensive renovation, remodeling, or demolition. Designation would affect the Church's ability to be flexible in meeting the needs of the community.

Designation, we believe, would also create other problems of which the following are two examples. First, the present financial burden in the event of designation. As I stated before, about the Church, the Bronx is changing. It has changed so much that the Church which once had 100 worshippers, now averages 100 to 150 parishioners for each Mass offered on Sunday. The expense of heating a church that size, not to mention its affiliated school, and during the winter months, is enormous.

Currently the Church is able to meet its operating expenses because of tens of thousands of dollars in grants received from other parishioners within the Archdiocese of New York. Thus at the time, while a great effort is being made by the Church to remain open, it cannot be certain that the expenses incurred this year will be available in the future. Designation would foreclose it being replaced by a smaller structure

or by breaking it up to accommodate mixed use.

Second, landmark designation would greatly impair the ability of Immaculate Conception to serve the community. As long as the Church complex is operated in its present form the parish would have to comply with at least the minimum exterior maintenance required to keep the complex viable for its present purposes. It does not follow, however, that such work will be done in a way to preserve the present exteriors of the structure, since it might be more economical to modify the exteriors or remove certain of their features. Designation would require the Church to shift its meager financial resources from community service to comply to the rigorous maintenance requirements that would result from a landmark designation.

Now, I do have a letter.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Cusak, would you assist us in understanding who your client is?

MR. FRATOW: The client is the Roman Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception. That's a corporation organized in the Bronx, under the Religious Corporations Law, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: And the trustees of the

corporation are?

MR. FRATOW: The Archbishop of the Archdiocese of New York, the Vicar General of the of the Archdiocese of New York, and the pastor and laity.

THE CHAIRMAN: And the position as expressed today, that's the position expressed by the board at a meeting, or what were the circumstances of your engagement, and how did this view which you are representing come to be expressed?

MR. FRATOW: Our firm is, if I can use the term, general counsel to the Archdiocese of the City of New York.

THE CHAIRMAN: Including this corporation?

MS. SPATT: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. Could I ask a question? I just want to clarify a point. I think that what he's saying is that the Archbishop, that he's representing --

THE CHAIRMAN: I didn't ask him that. I asked him how the views that he was expressing, how they were formulated.

Is this an expression of the board of directors at a meeting on such a date? Is there a director or archdiocese?

MR. FRATOW: The authority is a combination of acting under the authority of the Archbishop of the City of New York, Cardinal Cooke. We're acting under the authority of the pastor, of Father Smith who could not be here this afternoon. We're acting on the authority of the Vicar General of the Archdiocese, and the two lay trustees. I do not know the lay trustees. And the pastor has held a meeting. I know that the pastor has expressed his sentiments to me as pastor, and two trustees have expressed a desire not to be designated a landmark.

THE CHAIRMAN: So far, no meeting has taken place?

MR. FRATOW: So far as I know.

There is one problem. The designation notice identifies the property as "Immaculate Conception Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, convent church and priests' residence." However, it refers on the tax map, block map, I note that the parcel would include other facilities used now by the Church. And we would like the record held open so we can meet with the staff of the Landmarks Commission to determine whether other buildings are

to be included or excluded, so we can develop our position further.

I have a letter from the New York City Community Planning Board No. 1. It's addressed to you, Mr. Barwick.

"Community Planning Board No. 1 in the Bronx held an executive meeting on July 3rd, 1980.

It was resolved to oppose the designation of the Immaculate Conception Church rectory and convent as a historical landmark for the community.

The reasons why the Community Planning Board is opposed to the designation of the Immaculate Conception Church rectory and convent as a historical landmark are the following: we believe historical landmarks for the community should be sites that we the community feel have historical significance to our community.

We believe the Community Planning Board should be consulted ... the Immaculate Conception parish has been in the forefront for 125 years. The church and the school

have provided extraordinary service to this community.

The church has a commitment to the community and the Archdiocese has played and will make every effort to continue these services. We feel that since the church has been maintained and will be maintained it is not necessary to burden the church with the legal requirements of the landmark law."

If I may, I can have copies of this made and sent to you under separate cover. I don't even have a copy.

THE CHAIRMAN: If it's a letter to me, I'd appreciate receiving it. Was the letter from the Community Board?

MR. FRATOW: Yes, it was. That was the young lady who was not here at this time.

THE CHAIRMAN: She brought the letter, left it with you?

MR. FRATOW: Yes, she did.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MS. SPATT: Could I ask, are you an individual practitioner or do you represent a firm

today?

MR. FRATOW: I'm with the firm of Cusak & Stiles, yes. The firm represents the Archdiocese, correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Fratow.

You have indicated a desire to speak. William C. Shopsin, AIA.

MR. SHOPSIN: Hello. My name is William C. Shopsin, AIA. I'm a historic preservation consultant. I would prefer to summarize this. Eventually I will make a written document. But since we're discussing it, I don't think, and I think it's a subjective view, in the Commission, it states on this, it is seen as the finest Roman Catholic church complex in the Bronx. I really question that seriously since there are many Catholic buildings serving the Catholic community in the Bronx; to mind comes Fordham University, comes Mount St. Vincent which you've already designated, and several other structures come to mind. How somebody decided this was the most significant, I don't know. And I would determine significance, as far as the Church's

point of view, it's a religious landmark, which is a different kind of significance from a landmark for architectural significance. And I think they are separable.

I think as far as the Church is concerned, unlike St. Patrick's Cathedral, and St. Patrick's Cathedral is at 50th Street and Park, which is a major religious landmark which also happens to be architecturally distinct, I think in this case, I don't think it fits either of the classifications. I don't think it's significant.

In terms of other properties of a large nature, I'm also concerned greatly with their selectiveness in this area not to put down the value of simpler buildings that are pretty large, elaborate, or high style, one. Not only on that basis, but the fact that the whole subject of redundant churches and surplus large properties is a very political one. And the designation of these properties, both in very prominent neighborhoods where the values are very high, as we've seen in the one in Brooklyn Heights known as Spencer Memorial Presbyterian Church, that even the guarantee of designation on the development doesn't

do you very much good in the adaptive reuse of the structure. And in many cases -- also the Velard houses, there has been a very long and prolonged period, which these processes take, to find an adaptive reuse for them.

And it's burdened even more in the neighborhood where there is no market for the building now, let alone where it goes for designation.

I'm concerned in the sense that every responsible property owner, as an institutional owner, that your own statute demands that the building be maintained in a certain condition. And under the circumstances of the arbitrary destruction due to fire right across the street, these things are very great. And to have to put this things back is a questionable thing.

Architecturally, I must say that I cannot in my own mind -- that is not the great church houses -- frankly, I cannot see if the thing were damaged by fire through no fault of the church or neglect on their part, that it would be worth the investment and the resources to put this thing back together again, either the Church on the outside or the convent building.

The residence for their period are not prominent at all. They probably look better in comparison to the devastation of the boarded up surroundings. But I don't think that's a significant reason for designating the buildings. And I think to dilute the meaning of the statute by going around and finding neighborhood monuments which are of questionable architectural significance is a disservice. I must say, I don't find this building -- certainly, if anything, possibly its inside, was not a question of its designation and cannot be designated under the circumstances.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you testifying?

MR. SHOPSIN: Against the designation on several grounds.

THE CHAIRMAN: On your own behalf?

MR. SHOPSIN: No, for the Archdiocese of New York and for this church corporation.

THE CHAIRMAN: You are representing the AIA?

MR. SHOPSIN: No, not at all. It's a professional assignment. It's not as a public service pro bono.

THE CHAIRMAN: You seem to have to merge in your testimony two issues, one of which is

whether or not the building has any architectural significance. Is the second one is what seemed to be the stated assumption that were the building to be damaged by fire, that the Commission would insist that it be restored to its present condition.

Did I hear you right on that?

MR. SHOPSIN: Not in its present condition, but in a manner appropriate to the building. It might be more practical for it to be partially or totally demolished.

THE CHAIRMAN: So if it's your understanding in such circumstances that it was more practical and really appropriate for a portion of the structure to be demolished and rebuilt as some other structure, do you see that as a barrier to designation?

MR. SHOPSIN: I've seen it as a practical difficulty. For instance, on the 11th Street St John's Church in the West Village, in that particular case I was very upset that it was demolished. Because I thought it was a more significant building than that. And I don't think the replacement was so successful.

THE CHAIRMAN: But you wouldn't have suggested

that St John's not be designated because it might be burned by fire?

MR. SHOPSIN: No. But I thought it was a better building. But I'm saying in this case I really think it's a lesser building.

THE CHAIRMAN: Your opposition to this building is based on your lack of appreciation for whatever architectural merit it might have and no other issue, is that right? You have raised a lot of issues.

MR. SHOPSIN: No. I'm very concerned in the larger sense professionally apart from this particular assignment about the institutional ownership of landmark buildings, in particular churches and tax-exempt organizations, whether they are in high-value districts or in low, and about the continuing -- this is a continuing thing

THE CHAIRMAN: Does your concern suggest to you that while the landmarks law doesn't specifically address that question that the Commission really should not be designating properties owned by large institutions?

MR. SHOPSIN: No, that's not what I'm saying. My concern is that there isn't a grading

system, and that you must, I believe, consider equally the most modest building and the most elaborate one because of your system of designating them equally. And, therefore, I must say I don't understand if they are to accept all of these buildings as equal.

Is the best use of the charitable funds that they have -- I'm not suggesting you should, you shouldn't preserve anything, the Convent of the Sacred Heart and many other landmarks that are both religious and architecturally significant I certainly would say that it's worth ever effort to try. But I think to extend that or dilute it to the point where it becomes a practical problem for them is something I would consider twice.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will you permit me to ask you another question, if I may, because you are an experienced fellow upon this world, and enjoy some office, I think, in the State AIA where you are responsible, in fact, for historic preservation in New York State. Your testimony here has to be taken very seriously. You seem to be dealing with this building in the context of other properties owned by the same owner, the Convent

of the Sacred Heart, St. Patrick's Cathedral. And that's certainly a way of looking at it. And I'm sure that's the way perhaps your client looks at it. From the point of view in the Bronx, from the point of view of any locality or any subdivision, locality, do you think it's important, would you advise the Commission to pay some attention to the significance of this building in the landscape in which it resides?

MR. SHOPSIN: Well, I was born in the Bronx. And I'm quite familiar with many of the landmarks of the Bronx. I went to school there. It's not I'm unaware of the Bronx as it was and as it is now.

THE CHAIRMAN: I chose the Bronx arbitrarily.

MR. SHOPSIN: I happen to, and I certainly think that the City would be well served to pick buildings of distinction all over and in all the boroughs, and not just the high-style buildings in Manhattan. And I happen to think that among the Catholic landmarks in the Bronx, including Fordham University, and other churches which I can think of, this is not the one I would put all of my effort into, frankly.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions?

MR. CONKLIN: You still haven't addressed the question. It seems to me he has asked you to evaluate this building really within its community, its physical context, not whether its the best property owned, you know, by the Archdiocese or not, but rather to address yourself as an architectural evaluator of the role that this building plays within its community and its context immediately.

MR. SHOPSIN: Well, I would find that if this church of the same design were in the East 70's or East 60's, as there are many not designated, as at the same time I can't place the issue of architectural quality, and I believe the statute is buildings of architectural, cultural, historical distinction, but that you have lesser degrees based on the surrounding is a hard thing to accept. And because you don't have a grading system I can't really say that this is as good as St. Patrick's this is as good as the group next to it, or the other churches in its own community.

MR. CONKLIN: I don't think this Commission

states that buildings are equal. We have a written statement concerning each building which designates the qualities, its attributes that permit it to be in the category of buildings which are landmarks.

MR. SHOPSIN: I don't believe that this is sufficient, that this one has the sufficient qualifications. And if one wants to come to the details, they have their rather heavy columns, and is uninspiring. And the building on the right has as much, as much grace as, you know, the factory we've seen in Queens, only it happens to be a rectory, and a good solid stocky building as inelegant ecclesiastical structure. It just is not there as far as I'm concerned.

MS. SPATT: I think I do understand what you are saying, Mr. Shopsin. I'd like to ask you a question extending this a bit further. I know you are speaking about a non-profit, tax exempt and religious, or educational such institution, and you talk about the architectural factors. Do you feel the same way about non-institutional education religious tax-exempt properties?

In other words, how do you feel about the

designation?

MR. SHOPSIN: Well, in some cases, for instance, on the City College, I believe I came here pro bono under considerable fire from the chancellor of the university for saying that I thought the old buildings were better than the new ones, you mean?

MS. SPATT: My question is a little different. In other words, I believe you inferred, you were saying that if an institution is not of high quality it should not be designated?

MR. SHOPSIN: The building or institution?

MS. SPATT: The property, if it's not of high architectural quality that it should not be designated?

MR. SHOPSIN: That's right.

MS. SPATT: In other words, we shouldn't just go from building to building and designate just because it's part of the community? Do you feel the same way about non-intitutional properties?

MR. SHOPSIN: Yes, privately owned properties. Yes, I myself, and I can remember, you know, other commissioners before your term, the question of what is the function of the City Planning Commission

in these roles, and what is the Landmarks Commission. And I don't see neighborhood preservation in the abstract sense as enough justifying designation if it doesn't meet the architectural standards which I hold for designation.

THE CHAIRMAN: The question is, what are the architectural standards on a Citywide basis, on a civilization basis by which we measure St. Patrick's Cathedral? By the cathedrals of Europe or against the cathedrals of New York City? And do we measure the Immaculate Conception Church that way?

MR. SHOPSIN: I'm willing to take the Bronx. I'd settle for the Bronx's distinction right now alone. And on the boroughwide basis I wouldn't afford the appelation of the finest Catholic complex in the Bronx.

THE CHAIRMAN: But on a boroughwide basis you do not -- if we were the landmarks commission of the Bronx -- recommend that we should designate this building?

MR. SHOPSIN: That's right.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Margo Gale.

MS. GALE: Mr. Chairman, I hope this church and its adjoining building will be designated on the grounds that I spoke of before, where I feel that in a borough with such problems and such paucity of resources, this is a resource and this is a strength. And I think that it would be very interesting to know what the people in that community -- and to hear from them directly, not their supposed men who are employed to come in and speak in behalf of the Archdiocese, but the people who come there to church and who have been coming there for many decades and where it is a familiar element in their lives.

I do feel that in the case of the Bronx particularly we should preserve and strengthen anything as interesting, and as strong, and fine as I think this is. And I hope it will be designated.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Miss Gale.

Mr. Fratow, are you also representing the Reverand Joseph T. Hurly, 7509 Shore Road?

MR. FRATOW: No, Mr. Chairman, we represent the Archdiocese of New York. That's the Archdiocese of Brooklyn. We're not here on their behalf.

THE CHAIRMAN: Which properties in the complex are you speaking to?

MR. FRATOW: I'm speaking to the properties which we received notice on, and that's the convent which is beyond the Church in this picture, the Church itself, and the priests' residence, the rectory which is on this side of the Church.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you representing the Archdiocese on the priests' residence?

MR. FRATOW: Yes, we are.

THE CHAIRMAN: Have you ever heard of the Reverand Joseph T. Hurly?

MR. FRATOW: No, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: We have a communication that he is responsible.

MR. FRATOW: Yes, Father Hurly, excuse me. That's the reason why we only -- one of the reasons I have got to ask for a continuance. I think the Commission should be aware of this, that when we received it from Mrs. Norman and Monsignor Murphy in the Archdiocese of New York, we received it the last week of June 21. All prior communications were had with apparently Father Hurly up at the parish. You sent other communication to

Monsignor Murphy.

MS. NORMAN: We sent communications to everyone, to Father Smith. And he was the one who brought up Father Hurly's name to me.

MR. FRATOW: From what I understand Father Smith was out of town when the first notice came. Father Hurly designated himself as a representative for the Church. And that correspondence was mislaid. They found them up at the parish house. Until we received the June 22 letter, I mean, until we received your letter to Monsignor Murphy we were unaware actually in the chancellery office in Manhattan that there was a proposed designation. In the past we've received numerous notices in advance directed to Monsignor Murphy that buildings were being designated.

MS. NORMAN: A letter was sent May 27th.

MR. FRATOW: That's the letter we're referring to.

THE CHAIRMAN: You didn't receive it. It was passed through a few hands to you?

MR. FRATOW: That's correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: As attorney for the Archdiocese, it took a month apparently to get through

the machine to you?

MR. FRATOW: Right, because the people in the chancellery office are used to receiving a preliminary notice from Mrs. Norman. And then they take their sweet time, unfortunately, in passing it down to us. And then we decide what position will be taken. In this case a first notice, which we received, was not the preliminary notice, but this notice of hearing today which was our original reason for asking for a continuance.

THE CHAIRMAN: Now, do you decide what position to take on these architectural questions?

MR. FRATOW: Architectural review, you know, we've bent over backwards in the past.

THE CHAIRMAN: In this case did you seek the advice of a consultant to advise you as to whether or not the building is worthy of designation?

MR. FRATOW: Yes, we did. I toured the property with Mr. Shopsin.

May I ask that the record be held over for submission of further socumentation and evidence?

THE CHAIRMAN: If we close the hearing, yes. Thank you.

Is there any further testimony on this item?

The Borough President of the Bronx, the Honorable Stanley Simon, has written in to say he's received a communication from the Reverand Thomas O'Connor, indicating that he's opposed to this designation because it will impair the financial ability of the South Bronx parish to maintain adequately the structure as provided by law.

"It seems to me that such a strong objection from the Church and the surrounding community must weigh seriously in your deliberations. Thank you. The Honorable Stanley Simon."

If there is no further testimony the Chairman will entertain a motion to close the hearing.

MR. WILLENSKY: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: All in favor? Any opposed? Any abstention.

The hearing is closed.

Counsel has asked for some time to hold the record open. There is no objection to that. We will hold the record over for 30 days. If that provides any inconvenience, then come back to us for a further continuance.

* * *

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, CONVENT AND PRIESTS' RESIDENCE, East 150th Street between Courtlandt and Melrose Avenues, the Bronx.

The Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church complex consisting of a church building, convent, and priests' residence facing on East 150th Street between Courtlandt and Melrose Avenues is an example of Romanesque Revival style ecclesiastical architecture and is considered the finest Roman Catholic Church complex in the Bronx. The church building, with its soaring 125-foot tall centrally placed tower and spire is looked on as a neighborhood landmark in the Melrose section of the Bronx. The red brick church ornamented with crockets and towerlettes was designed in 1887 by Henry Bruns. The facade is articulated by round-arched openings, stone beltcourses and window enframements, corbelled round-arched cornices and small blind arcades. The convent to the west of the church has projecting end sections with gables flanking an entrance bay that is topped by a pair of dormers. The priests' residence on the corner of Melrose Avenue is a similar Romanesque Revival style structure with projecting central and end pavilions and a detailed corbelled brick cornice.

L.P. - 1192

Heard:

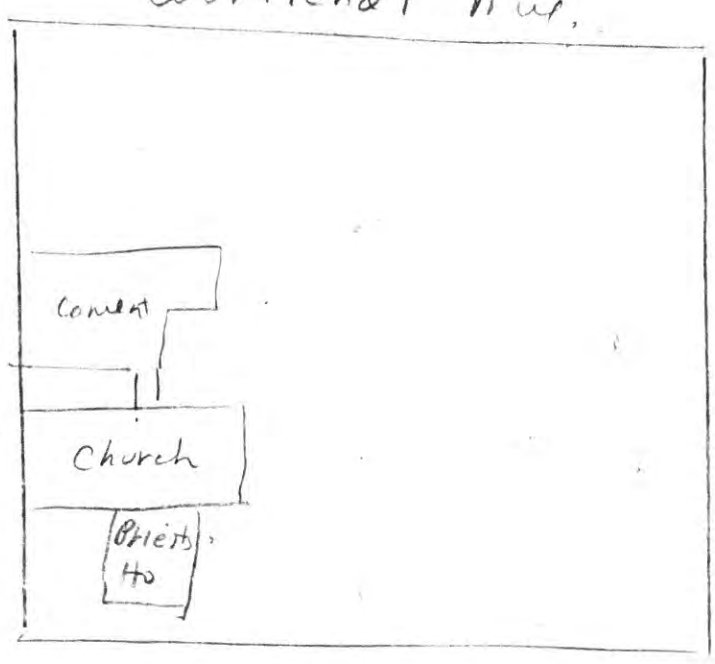
ITEM NAME : Immaculate Conception Church, Convent & Rectory
ADDRESS : 371 E. 150th.

Dept. of Collection/Bureau of City Coll.
OWNER/OCCUPANT: Father Gerard Alfre
ADDRESS : Immaculate Conception Church &
389 East 150th St
Bronx

REGION :
BOROUGH :
OWNER OF RECORD:
DATE OF VERIFICATION:

BLOCK: LOT:

SANDBORN MAPS
VOLUME: 9N
PLATE : 77
BLOCK : 2397
LOT : 17
~~277~~



CITY SURVEYORS OFFICE
SECTION :
VOLUME :
PLATE :
BLOCK :
LOT :

REAL ESTATE DIRECTORY:

NOMINATION :

LP#1192

7/8/80 Public Hearing

No. 19 Immaculate Conception Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Convent and Priests' Residence

Speakers

1. Stephen Flatow
   - Attorney for Church
   - Opposes designation

2. Letter from Community Board #1 was read by Stephen Flatow.

3. William Shopsin
   - Opposes designation
   - Requests continuation
   - Represents Catholic Church (owner).

4. Margot Gayle
   - Represents Victorian Society
   - Favors designation

Kent Barwick read letter from Bronx Borough President Simon.

Hearing Closed.
Record will be held open for 30 days