



## CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

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August 18, 2021 / Calendar No. 37

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CORRECTED

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**IN THE MATTER OF** a communication dated July 1, 2021, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Aakawaxung Munahanung Archaeological Site, 298-300 Satterlee Street (Block 7857<sup>1</sup>, Lot 1 in part) by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on June 22, 2021 (List No. 525/LP No. 2648).

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Pursuant to Section 3020.8(b) of the City Charter, the City Planning Commission shall submit to the City Council a report with respect to the relation of any designation by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, whether of a historic district or a landmark, to the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements, and any plans for the development, growth, improvement or renewal of the area involved.

On May 18, 2021, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site as a New York City Landmark. The landmark designation consists of a portion of Block 7857, Lot 1 within the City's Conference House Park on Staten Island and is bounded by Hylan Boulevard to the north, Satterlee Street to the east, a formerly mapped street just south of Clermont Avenue (McDonald Court, demapped February 4, 1969 [CP16941]) to the south, and the high-water mark on the shoreline to the west. The site is associated with over 8,000 years of occupation by Indigenous Peoples and contains important archaeological resources.

The Aakawaxung Munahanung Archaeological Site consists of approximately 20 acres of highly archaeologically sensitive land located within the City's Conference House Park at the southwestern end of Staten Island in Community District 3. The landmark site closely corresponds to the boundaries of the Ward's Point Archaeological Site National Historic Landmark and is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Ward's Point Conservation Area. The landmark site is set on a bluff that rises from a sandy beach and is comprised mostly of woodlands and dunes along the beach. It overlooks the confluence of Arthur Kill and the mouth of the Raritan

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<sup>1</sup> Block number corrected

River.

The presence of Indigenous Peoples at the site spans thousands of years and their descendants today includes the Delaware Nation, the Delaware Tribe of Indians, and the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohicans. At least 19 archaeological investigations have taken place within the park since the 19th century, and the oldest documented discoveries from the landmark site date to the Early Archaic period (9,500-7,000 years Before Present - BP). Projectile points used for hunting game and dating to the Middle Archaic (7,000-5,500 BP) and Late Archaic (5,500-4,000 BP) periods, as well as hundreds of artifacts created during the Woodland period, approximately 3,000 to 500 years ago, were also found at the landmark site. These collections indicate that the site was used over for 8,000 years and, at least in the later Woodland period, there was likely to have been a village. There is also significant evidence that the area was used during the period of contact between Indigenous Peoples and European colonists.

The British drafted a land deed in 1670 that was signed by representatives from a few Indigenous Peoples' groups. While Europeans viewed contracts such as this as a purchase agreement, scholars have noted that at this time Indigenous Peoples did not perceive them the same way, understanding them more as temporary tenancies. The 1670 contract largely succeeded in expelling the Indigenous Peoples' population from Staten Island. Soon after, Christopher Billopp received a British patent for land that included the landmark site, on which he built Conference House in 1676. In 1926, Conference House Park was donated to the City of New York and opened to the public in 1937.

The landmark site sits within Conference House Park. There are two designated NYC Landmarks located directly north of the site: Conference House, which gives the park its name, and the Henry Hogg Biddle House. The modern park includes paths, hiking and biking trails, and a visitor's center within a one-story 1920s bungalow at 298 Satterlee Street. The visitor's center, paths, parking lot, fences, curbs, streetlamps, dog park, and other fixtures were constructed and installed generations after the landmark site's significant occupation by Indigenous Peoples and are not considered contributing features to the landmark site. The area northeast of Conference House Park consists primarily of one- to two-family detached homes within R3A and R3X districts.

The subject landmark is owned by the Department of Parks and Recreation. Pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution, the unique regulations associated with the transfer of development rights from landmark sites are not applicable to the archaeological site, and no additional analysis has been conducted.

The subject landmark does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution. The Commission is not aware of any conflicts between the subject landmark designation and projected public improvements or any plans for development, growth, improvement, or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark.

**MARISA LAGO**, *Chair*

**KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, ESQ.**, *Vice Chairman*

**DAVID J. BURNEY, ALLEN P. CAPPELLI, ESQ., ALFRED C. CERULLO, III,**

**JOSEPH DOUEK, HOPE KNIGHT, ORLANDO MARÍN, RAJ RAMPERSHAD,**  
*Commissioners*