



## Landmarks Preservation Commission

Meenakshi Srinivasan  
Chair

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### **RIDGEWOOD MASONIC TEMPLE BECOMES A NEW YORK CITY LANDMARK**

*Commission Approves Landmark Status for Ridgewood Lodge No. 710, Free and Accepted Masons*



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission today voted unanimously to designate the Ridgewood Lodge No. 710, Free and Accepted Masons at 1054 Bushwick Avenue in Brooklyn as a New York City Landmark. Also known as the Ridgewood Masonic Temple, the building was constructed in 1919-20 and is an excellent example of early-20<sup>th</sup> century neighborhood club architecture.

Located on the corner of Bushwick Avenue and Gates Avenue, the Ridgewood Masonic Temple is one of Bushwick's most prominent civic buildings. The freestanding brick building with an ornate main façade was designed by the architectural firm of Koch & Wagner, which designed numerous residential, commercial and institutional buildings over a span of 40 years, mostly in Brooklyn and Queens. The classically inspired structure follows a formula common in the design of fraternal buildings, whereby monumentally-scaled buildings are placed on prominent sites— in this instance a large corner lot on what was a prestigious neighborhood street at the time of its construction.

"The Ridgewood Masonic Temple maintains a commanding presence along Bushwick Avenue, and is representative of the many civic and institutional buildings that were constructed in Bushwick in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to serve its increasing population." said Commission Chair Meenakshi Srinivasan. "The Commission is proud to recognize it as a New York City Landmark and to grant it the protection a building of its notable history deserves." This is the Commission's first landmark designation under Chair Srinivasan's leadership.

The Free and Accepted Masons, one of the oldest fraternal and benevolent organizations in the world, was founded during the middle ages. Beginning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Freemasonry grew in the United States, and by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, almost every city and town in the nation, and many neighborhoods in New York City, had at least one Masonic Lodge.

The Ridgewood Lodge No, 710, Free and Accepted Masons was issued a charter from the Grand Lodge of New York State on September 28, 1870, following the submission of petitions by local members from existing chapters to establish a lodge in the Bushwick area. The section of present-day Bushwick located south of Myrtle Avenue was then known as Ridgewood, and the new lodge was appropriately named for its location.

The ethnic makeup of the neighborhood at the time of the opening of the Ridgewood Lodge was largely German, as were most of its members. Bushwick Avenue was a major thoroughfare and prestigious area, containing several impressive freestanding houses built for prosperous German and German-American owners of nearby breweries, doctors, and politicians. There were also other social clubs, churches, and a Carnegie library along Bushwick Avenue.

The Bushwick Avenue building continued to serve as the lodge's headquarters and meeting rooms for several decades until the Ridgewood Lodge disbanded and joined the Astoria Lodge in College Point, Queens in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. For a time, the building was used as an event space for musical performances and other activities, and it is currently vacant.

Significant features of the building include a rusticated stone base, terra-cotta details (including Masonic symbols), two-story arched bays containing a multi-pane sash, Ionic columns at the entry portico, a terra-cotta cornice decorated with an egg and dart molding and dentils, and a brick parapet with terra-cotta coping blocks.

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The Landmarks Preservation Commission is the mayoral agency responsible for protecting and preserving New York City's architecturally, historically and culturally significant buildings and sites. Since its creation in 1965, LPC has granted landmark status to approximately 31,729 buildings and sites, including 1338 individual landmarks, 117 interior landmarks, 10 scenic landmarks, 111 historic districts and 20 historic district extensions in all five boroughs. Under the City's landmarks law, considered among the most powerful in the nation, the Commission must be comprised of at least three architects, a historian, a realtor, a planner or landscape architect, as well as a representative of each borough.

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