



Meenakshi Srinivasan
Chair

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LANDMARKS COMMISSION RELEASES PLAN TO ADDRESS BACKLOG OF CALENDARED SITES

After Public Comment Period, Agency to Hold Special Hearings for 95 Sites

(New York, NY)- The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission has released a plan to address the agency's backlog of buildings and sites that were under consideration for designation and were not acted upon, many of which have been on the Commission's calendar since the 1960s. The backlog includes 95 properties that were placed on the Commission's calendar prior to 2010, of which 85 percent were calendared 20 or more years ago. The plan allows public review and comment on the backlog properties and an efficient public hearing process that will ensure timely Commission decisions regarding the backlog items.

In response to the Commission's request for input regarding the backlog properties with a comment period ending on May 1, 2015, the agency received over 200 responses on how the backlog of calendared sites should be addressed. The Commission has considered feedback from a wide cross-section of stakeholders— including preservationists, architects, developers, community boards, property owners and elected officials, including Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer— to establish a plan that addresses the backlog efficiently with input from the public on the 95 sites.

The plan includes three phases: (1) a Public Review Period; (2) Special Hearings dedicated to Backlog Items; and (3) Public Meetings for Commission Decisions. The Commission projects that the backlog of calendared items, most of which date to the 1960s and 70s, will be resolved by the end of 2016. Details of the Backlog Initiative can be accessed on the [LPC website](#).

"Last fiscal year, the Commission designated over 2,000 buildings and sites throughout the city in record timeframes, and I hope to extend this level of efficiency to every aspect of the agency," said Chair Meenakshi Srinivasan. "In that spirit, we are focused on addressing this backlog of properties that, for decades, have been languishing on the Commission's calendar, creating uncertainty for both property owners and the preservation community. We have received considerable feedback, and have formulated a plan that will ensure fairness and transparency, while allowing significant public input."

Public Review Period

In order to encourage informed testimony, beginning July 8, 2015, there will be a minimum three-month review period, during which interested parties can review background materials, available for download on the LPC website, on the backlog items. Background materials include fact sheets with maps and summaries of each property, and 15,000 pages of publicly accessible portions of LPC research files, which provide available information on the history of each property. Throughout this period (and through to one week after the special hearings), the public is welcome to submit written statements to backlog95@lpc.nyc.gov, which will be entered into the record and distributed to LPC Commissioners.

Special Public Hearings Dedicated to Backlog Items

The Commission will hold four special hearings on October 8, October 22, November 5, and November 12, 2015. The hearings will be organized by borough and grouped by Community Districts, with roughly 5 to 12 items per group.

Subsequent Decisions

At public meetings, to take place in early 2016, staff will present summaries of the testimony and written submissions for each item. At that time, Commissioners will consider:

1. Prioritizing designation for some items (by December 2016); or
2. Removing from the calendar by voting not to designate; or
3. Removing from the calendar by issuing a no action letter.

A no-action letter is an administrative process that allows items to be taken off the calendar without prejudice, and with no judgment on the merits for designation. Such items could be brought forward at a later time for designation. Denying designation is based on the merits of the property – for example, a property may be heavily altered or found to lack the significance to merit landmark designation.