



**THE NEW YORK
LANDMARKS
CONSERVANCY**

October 20, 2020

STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR 929 STERLING PLACE IN THE CROWN HEIGHTS NORTH II HISTORIC DISTRICT

Good day Chair Carroll and Commissioners. I am Andrea Goldwyn, speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy.

We cannot support this application for a new building, which is out of scale for the Crown Heights North Historic District in its height and massing, and discordant in its design.

This District is renowned for its cohesive blocks of low-scale, mostly residential buildings from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In our 2009 testimony we called it “an extraordinary collection of architectural treasures that form attractive streetscapes and creates a vivid sense of place.... (with) a dazzling array of the styles of that era, which featured elaborate stonework, a mosaic of materials, and artful decorative elements.” This site under consideration today includes one of the District’s few institutional buildings, the Hebron School, another extraordinary building of the same era.

Unfortunately, the proposed building would detract from the District. It looms over the neighboring row houses on Sterling Place, at almost twice their height. It blocks views of the Hebron School, which was constructed to be seen from all sides. While some elements, such the brick cladding and the gabled section, are clearly intended to relate to the School and the District, they are not successful. Others, such as repetitive rows of unadorned windows, are jarring. Overall, this building draws attention away from the historic block and overwhelms it.

We recognize the need for funding to restore and reactivate the Hebron School. In 2006, Conservancy staff tried to work with the owners to devise a plan to reuse part of the School for senior housing and fund essential repairs to the façade, roof, and interior. We’ve heard the concerns of the Council member and Community Board. We hope that the Commission can guide the applicants towards an approach that will address these challenges, and is appropriate for the Crown Heights North Historic District.

Thank you for the opportunity to express the Conservancy’s views.