



April 20, 2021

STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF THE DORRANCE BROOKS SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT, MANHATTAN

Good morning Chair Carroll and Commissioners. I am Andrea Goldwyn, speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy is pleased to join residents and advocates to support designation of the Dorrance Brooks Square Historic District in Harlem.

The two areas that compose the District are notable for their architecture and history. One group, surrounding Dorrance Brooks Square, bridges City College and St. Nicholas Park to the Strivers' Row/St. Nicholas Historic District. The group to the south of Striver's Row extends the scale and composition of that District. Both feature low-scale row houses built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in the Queen Anne, Renaissance Revival, and Romanesque Revival styles. These masonry-clad houses are largely intact and feature elegant decorative details. Larger residential and institutional buildings on the Avenues complement these rows.

The special history of Harlem is manifested in these buildings. They were the homes and studios of individuals connected to the Harlem Renaissance, including W.E.B. DuBois and Ethel Waters. Two small hospitals were founded to allow African-American doctors to serve the Black community. Although the buildings have new uses, they, like many others, have a deep connection to Harlem history.

Harlem continues to face development pressure that threatens its significant architecture and cultural legacy. Both parts of the proposed Historic District were included in the LPC's 1984 study of Harlem, and the Community Board 10 Preservation report from 2012. We thank the Commission for bringing this District forward and urge a swift vote. We also hope that other districts from those reports will be heard and designated soon.

The Conservancy is happy to offer building owners assistance from our Technical Services and Historic Properties Fund programs. Thank you for the opportunity to express the Conservancy's views.