



September 14, 2021

STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF THE CAMBRIA HEIGHTS – 222ND STREET AND CAMBRIA HEIGHTS – 227TH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICTS, QUEENS

Good morning Chair Carroll and Commissioners. I am Andrea Goldwyn, speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy is pleased to support designation of the Cambria Heights Historic Districts.

The two Districts are notable for their architecture and their role in the development of Queens in the 20th century.

The groups of 46 row houses on 222nd Street and 50 on 227th Street are excellent examples of the Tudor Revival style with fantastic “Storybook” elements. While low-scale, single-family houses are typical in Cambria Heights, these blocks feature special rows of attached houses with charming details. On 222nd St, there are Tudor-arched window openings, terra-cotta roofs, and brick facades with stone and stucco accents. On 227th St., the roofs are polychrome slate, and some facades are painted stucco with brick accents. Gables and diamond-pane windows are found on both blocks. These houses are largely intact, with their original height, massing, and ornament, which create a strong sense of place.

These houses also represent the history of Queens in the 20th century. They were built in 1931-32, by a single developer, on formerly rural land at the edge of the borough, close to Nassau County. Unlike other neighborhoods in Brooklyn or Queens that developed following the expansion of public transportation, this neighborhood was built in conjunction with new parkways across Long Island, and were geared toward owners with automobiles. The houses have rear driveways and garages. Demographically, Cambria Heights has mirrored larger trends in southeast Queens. Many of the original occupants were white, middle-class families, but in the 1950s, the neighborhood became home to a thriving African-American community. It continued to evolve in the 1980s with an influx of immigrants from Caribbean countries.

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.