



**CONGREGATION INDEPENDENT CHEVRA
OF TYFERS ISRAEL ANSHEI CORONA**

109-18 54th Ave
Corona, NY 11368
T /F (718) 592-6254

Sarah Carroll, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
David N. Dinkins Municipal Building
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

RE: Opposition to Hardship application of West Park Presbyterian Church

Dear Commissioner Carroll:

I'm writing today regarding the hardship application of the Upper West Side individual landmark West Park Presbyterian Church, based on my Queens landmark congregation's experience over the last two decades.

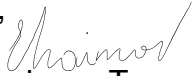
National Register listing, followed by New York City landmark designation, enabled Congregation Tifereth Israel, Queens' oldest synagogue, to accomplish an ambitious \$1.6 million exterior restoration, but this process took over a decade and proceeded in phases, not all at once. In 1999, the building was recognized for its historic merit by the Queens Historical Society. In 2000 we first sought listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places (accomplished in 2002), which enabled the NY Landmarks Conservancy to fund an initial conditions assessment. The Conservancy then helped us with grants and referrals for roof replacement, and architectural services to plan a major exterior restoration project identified in the assessment: removing 1930's stucco and restoring original wood siding and windows. Originally, costs were projected at \$400,000, though construction costs grew exponentially over the next decade. We were awarded a \$200,000 New York State grant in 2007, but it would take us several more years to raise the total amount needed to move forward with the project.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission designated Tifereth Israel an individual landmark in 2008. Without this designation, our Bukharan immigrant congregation would not have been able to secure \$1.3 million in NYC grant funding via the office of the Queens Borough President, with allocations over several years and capital budgets. The Conservancy connected us with three philanthropists who contributed \$300,000 to the project, augmented with an additional \$50,000 in Conservancy grant funding. The restoration took over a year, and in 2013, we were given a Victorian Society award for our beautiful exterior restoration. But we weren't done. We went on to replace the boiler and electrical system, and upgrade the lighting, with funds from one of the generous individual donors. Because we are a New York City

landmark, the NY Landmarks Conservancy has continued to help us with matching grants every few years: we waterproofed one side of our foundation in 2016 and the other side in 2019. Our work continues.

When we first discovered this synagogue, it was worn and tired, but beautiful. Our congregation recognized its potential, and historic value. We have put two decades of time and effort and fundraising into preserving Queens' oldest synagogue for future generations. Significant religious properties can be stabilized and ultimately restored, with repairs phased over a decade or more. New York's real estate market should not erase our history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Esther Khaimov", written in a light gray or blue ink.

Esther Khaimov, Treasurer
Congregation Tifereth Israel
Corona, Queens



June 6, 2022

Sarah Carroll, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
David N. Dinkins Municipal Building
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

Dear Sarah,

I'm writing to share the story of how our landmark church was saved.

Located at the corner of 76th Street and Central Park West and residing within the West 76th Street Historic District, the Fourth Universalist Society is a striking architectural gem. Built in 1898 and designed by William Appleton Potter, its prominence and beauty led to its designation as the "Cathedral of Universalism."

Soon after completion, however, the congregation struggled. By 1965, it had only 12 members. Arriving in 2016, I inherited years of neglect and deferred maintenance. Most pressing was the roof. Buckets sat in the sanctuary and plaster dropped from the walls during worship. Two years later, our architects informed us that we had one winter left before the roof failed completely.

Fortunately, we had been busy. Our membership had increased by 50% and giving had increased a similar amount. We looked outwards to better serve the community, leading to two feature articles in *The New York Times*, which raised our profile. We began actively engaging neighbors who approached with questions, concerns, and ideas.

In 2018, we officially began a campaign to raise \$1.6 million to save our building. We wanted to do it the right way, replacing the cheap, historically inappropriate asphalt tiles with high quality green slate. We knew that our younger, diverse membership would be unable to raise the funds alone, so we looked to our friends and allies.

First, we turned to our neighbors. Many believed in the mission of the congregation and in preserving the historic integrity of the neighborhood. Others wanted to ensure a beautiful view or worried about their property value. Whatever the motivation, we were grateful to work together, especially with leaders from the Kenilworth and the San Remo buildings. Collectively, they raised more than \$550,000.

Second, we looked for grants and loans. We commissioned a grant writer and were awarded a state preservation grant of \$500,000. We accepted a generous low-interest loan from Landmarks Conservancy for \$350,000 and another loan from TD Bank for \$750,000. The success of these applications was due in large part to the generosity of

Connect / Welcome / Inspire

Rev. Schuyler Vogel, Senior Minister
Spencer Salzberg, Board President

160 Central Park West
New York, NY 10023

(212) 595.1658
www.4thu.org

the lending and granting organizations, as well as the many community groups and leaders who vouched in our application for our importance in the community.

Third, we ran a robust internal fundraising campaign, leaving no member unapproached. We surprised ourselves, raising more than \$500,000 from our congregation. People dug deep, knowing that their spiritual home was in crisis and depended on them.

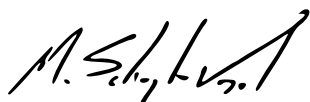
Together, these three sources of income were enough. We saved our roof, and by extension, our beloved home.

Our story speaks to the power that communities have in preserving landmarked buildings and neighborhoods. The generosity of our neighbors, the support of groups like Landmarks Conservancy, and the goodwill of the many community organizations helped nurture a collective response to what was a collective challenge. It required that we nurture these relationships and ensure that they were positive and mutual. It required seeing the community as partners, not adversaries, helping them share in the problem but also in the solution, and remembering that our congregation's mission was to serve not just ourselves but all those who cared for our sacred space.

We were fortunate and grateful for all the help and support we received. We are fortunate and grateful that others believed it was possible, even when it felt daunting and unlikely to succeed.

We are confident that other congregations can follow a similar multifaceted, community approach and find the same level of success. It is possible, if we are willing to work together, believing the world needs more beautiful places, not fewer.

Sincerely,



Rev. Schuyler Vogel
Senior Minister
Fourth Universalist Society in the City of New York

Connect / Welcome / Inspire

Old Broadway Synagogue

CHEVRA TALMUD TORAH ANSHEI MAROVI

חברה תלמוד תורה אנשי מערבי



June 9, 2002

Sarah Carroll, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
David N. Dinkins Municipal Building
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

JACOB KRET, זצ"ל
Rabbi, 1950-1997

DR. PAUL RADENSKY
President

AVI TERRY
Vice President

AVI FRIEDMAN
Financial Secretary

MOSHE JENNINGS
Treasurer

BINYAMIN MCINTOSH
Recording Secretary

DALE BROWN
Cemetery Committee

IGOR GANTZ
Shabbos Activities

Trustees
HERSHEL RUBINSTEIN
R. SASSON
ANDREW MANN

15 OLD BROADWAY
(Near 125th Street)

NEW YORK, N.Y. 10027
Telephone (212) 662-9767

Dear Ms. Carroll,

My name is Paul Radensky. I am the president of the Chevra Talmud Torah Anshei Marovi, a small congregation which is housed in the Old Broadway Synagogue, an historic synagogue which was built in 1923 and is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. I have been following the story of the West-Park Presbyterian Church, its invocation of the hardship provision of the landmark law in order to remove their landmark status, demolish the current structure and build a modern condominium tower with some space for the congregation. As the steward of an albeit much smaller historic house of worship, I am nevertheless aware of the endless efforts needed to maintain an old building. That said, these historic houses of worship are a gift of previous generations to us. They are gems in the fabric of the New York City streetscape. This is especially the case with the West-Park Presbyterian Church. It is a magnificent Romanesque Revival edifice, designed by the renowned architect, Leopold Eidlitz, on one of the most prominent corners of the Upper West Side. If it were to be demolished, it would be a grievous loss for the community and for all New Yorkers.

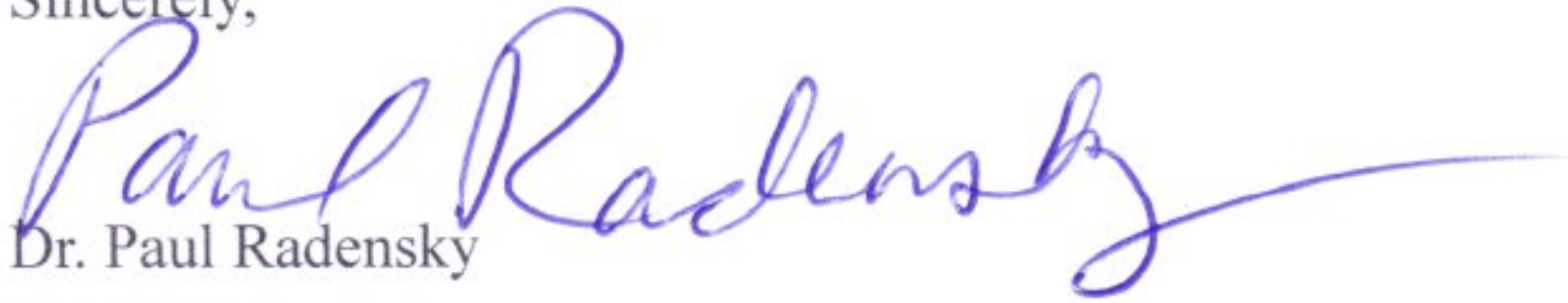
If there is interest within the congregation to restore the building, then the congregation should fund-raise and apply for grants and then gradually but with determination, begin to restore the building. This is what we have done at the Old Broadway Synagogue. Between fundraising, grants and a loan, we have restored and renewed our structure's exterior and we are now working on the interior. If the West-Park congregation is not able to do this, it should sell the building to another congregation or non-profit that is willing to do so. We have plenty of modern

"...and what doth the Lord require of thee; only to do justice, and love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" – Micah VI:8

apartment towers in Manhattan. We have very few houses of worship like the West-Park Presbyterian Church. It was given to us by previous generations. We, in our generation, should restore it and hand it over to future New Yorkers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Radensky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr. Paul Radensky

President

Chevra Talmud Torah Anshei Marovi

Old Broadway Synagogue



St. Ann
& the Holy Trinity
Episcopal Church

June 9, 2022

To the Members of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission:

I am the rector of St. Ann & the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Brooklyn Heights. The doors of our church building were opened in 1847 and construction was completed in 1856. A spire was added in 1869 and removed early in the 20th century. St. Ann's Church moved into what had been the Church of the Holy Trinity in the late 1960s and the building was designated a landmark and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1987.

The congregation and the leadership with whom I serve recognize that we have been entrusted with the stewardship of a building that is a veritable treasure. Our church stands nobly at the gateway of Brooklyn Heights, the first historic district in New York City, and establishes a dignified entry point to the neighborhood. Despite the construction of several high-rise towers very nearby in the last decade or so, our church building has retained its grandeur and unique role in our neighborhood. It is an historic structure and beloved community institution that compels neighbors and visitors as much as it does parishioners. Our church with an active congregation has served as host to arts, cultural and civic groups and other space users over generations and continues to be recognized as a “commons” that is valued by a diverse range of people.

The members of St. Ann & the Holy Trinity deeply value our landmark status. We feel privileged to call the building our church home and gratefully accept our responsibilities as caretakers. Exterior maintenance of a significant portion of our historic property has been deferred for some years and the brownstone façade is in various stages of deterioration. Our preservation needs are substantial and the work to restore the building has preoccupied several generations of parish leaders. Yet, with the unique character and role of our church in mind, we persist in the knowledge that our landmark status does not stand as a barrier but instead provides the wind at our backs for achieving our goal of fully restoring our treasured edifice. Concrete evidence of this is that our church was recently awarded a grant for historic restoration from the National Fund for Sacred Places that is only available to churches on the national register, and we know of other grants our church can pursue because we are a landmark.

Finally, while the church's preservation and conservation needs are great, we approach the future with confidence having in hand an architect's plan for a phased approach to the work ahead that will make the project more financially manageable.

Respectfully yours,

The Rev. Canon John E. Denaro

157 Montague Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201 • (718) 875-6960 • stannholytrinity.org

Faith Looking *Forward*



SAINT JEAN BAPTISTE CATHOLIC CHURCH
Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament & Congregation of Notre Dame

June 9, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

As a member of the New York Landmarks Conservancy Advisory Board, and the Pastor of a landmarked church for twenty-four years, I was asked to share my thoughts regarding West Park Presbyterian's hardship appeal.

I have first-hand experience of the crippling malaise leadership feels while witnessing a shrinking congregation. I know the helpless, hopeless feelings that choke the spirit while watching aging buildings slowly wither from the effects of deferred maintenance. The future can seem so bleak and hopeless. I'm going to share a bit of my story.

In 1987 I was appointed pastor of the Parish of St. Jean Baptiste at 76th Street and Lexington Avenue. The plant consisted of a monumental Italian Renaissance Revival church with a crypt church equal in size to the 22,000 square foot sanctuary, a 6-story rectory that originally housed 35, a convent that housed 30, a small 4-story office building, a girls High School with an enrollment of 400 and a middle school with an enrollment 80.

After a 50-pound piece of limestone fell off the façade of the Church, we borrowed money to put up a scaffold to assess the situation. The church at the time had only \$100,000 in savings! We discovered that the church building was in desperate need of repair. The 7 copper roofs needed to be replaced as did 3 paved roofs on the church and another on the rectory. There were signs of water damage throughout the ornate interior. The 99 stained glass windows needed extensive restoration.

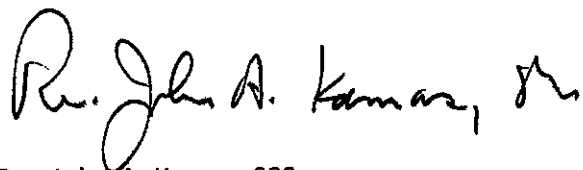
The congregation had been shrinking since the 1960s. The weekly collection was low. An occasional bequest keep the church going. It took twelve years to stabilize the church at a cost of over \$10,000,000. No one person came to the rescue with a 7-digit check. We had to slowly win over the hearts and minds of the congregants to accept the challenge of saving this church. We spoke of our past as a parish, of our mission and the mission of the school. We got people interested in our story. We had to get the general community to care about the future of St. Jean Baptiste. Over time we had Catholics, Jews and Protestants engaging in the work of restoration.

None of this was easy. Every day the parish had to function, the school had to run and fundraising had to go on. For twelve years there was no rest. But the results were wonderful. New people attached themselves to the church, Catholic and non-Catholic. We were so lucky to connect with contractors who cared, who even took a chance on us. The contractor who

eventually replaced the 7 cooper roofs purchased enough cooper to complete the job when we were starting to fundraise the \$600,000 needed to replace the cooper just on the main dome. He believed in us. He took a chance with us as did the neighborhood vendors who continually donated to the endless church fund-raisers. We began to expand our circle of friends.

In the middle of this long process we got an idea. A member of our senior citizen center bequeathed half of her fortune to the church, \$700,000. Looking beyond the immediate problems and challenges we took a chance. The crypt church had become redundant. We invested her bequest in the building of a theater and community center. Today, the rental of the space represents 60% of the church's income.

These are my thoughts. A landmarked church is important because it holds a revered place in a community. A landmarked church is an anchor in our history. A landmarked church is part of our communal memory. I would never say that being the custodian of a landmarked church is an easy job. Sometimes it can feel like a tremendous hardship. It takes fortitude and tremendous commitment and dedication. When a landmarked church triumphs over its challenges and crises it become a landmark of hope. It is my hope that West Park Presbyterian Church may become such a landmark.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. John A. Kamas, SSS". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small flourish at the end.

Rev John A. Kamas, SSS
Pastor
St. Jean Baptiste Church