



**THE NEW YORK
LANDMARKS
CONSERVANCY**

June 11, 2024

STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF THE WILLOUGHBY-HART HISTORIC DISTRICT, BROOKLYN

Good morning Chair Carroll and Commissioners. I am Andrea Goldwyn, speaking for the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy is pleased to join local advocates and elected officials to support designation of the Willoughby-Hart Historic District.

The two blocks of the District also comprise most of the Cripplebush Historic District, which is eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places. The Conservancy submitted documentation for the district to the State Historic Preservation Office in 2008, based on an earlier map of LPC study areas and additional research. The SHPO determined it eligible that year.

Research from that time noted that these two blocks sit just below where the 18th-century Cripplebush Road once ran northeast from the hamlet of Bedford to the hamlet of Cripplebush. Lying below and between industrial sections, well away from noise and congestion, the district was built as a middle-class residential development between 1865 and 1891.

Both Willoughby Avenue and Hart Street form consistent streetscapes of masonry rowhouses in the neo-Grec, Second Empire, and Romanesque Revival styles, with attractive decorative details and strong cornice and roof lines. The majority of the homes were designed by J.W. Parkin, William Josiah, Thomas E. Greenland, and Isaac D. Reynolds. All four architects also owned homes in this district. Greenland and Reynolds built and designed the more luxurious rows (three-story-and-basement brownstones), while Parkin and Josiah built and designed mostly the rows which are two-story and basement with attic windows.

Conservancy staff visited the district last year to document any significant changes, and found that the buildings still form a cohesive district with a distinct sense of place. The Willoughby-Hart Historic District also well represents Brooklyn and Bedford Stuyvesant history.

With designation, owners and residents will receive the protection of the Landmarks Law. They will also receive guidance on any future proposed changes to the historic fabric, which helps ensure that they are making a good investment in the property. The LPC's research and documentation should prove to be a good stepping stone to National Register listing, which would unlock the benefits of New York State's Historic Homeownership Rehabilitation Tax Credit. We've seen New Yorkers from all across the City take advantage of this generous credit.



We thank the Commission for bringing this designation forward and urge you to hold a vote quickly. We would be happy to discuss the Conservancy's technical and financial assistance programs with building owners.

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