



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

Testimony of State Senator Brad Hoylman and Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal Regarding Proposed Changes to the LPC Alteration Application Process

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL March 28, 2018



The following is testimony given by Senator Hoylman and Assemblymember Rosenthal before the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding proposed changes to the Alteration Application Process:

Thank you to Chair Srinivasan and the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for the opportunity to submit testimony on the proposed amendments to the LPC rules. Thank you as well to our city's great historic preservation groups including Greenwich Village Society

for Historical Preservation, Historic Districts Council, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, Landmark West!, and the Lower East Side Preservation Initiative for their efforts to celebrate and preserve our city's architecture and neighborhoods. We write to strongly oppose any changes that would eliminate transparency and cut the public out of the landmark alteration process, including the proposed "staff-level" approvals for alterations with no public notification or input.

The existing rules ensure a public review and approval process, including input from the local community board, public notification, and public comments. While some minor alteration applications already go through staff review, the public comment opportunities on proposed and existing landmarks provide the LPC important perspectives from residents, advocates, elected officials, and other stakeholders.

The public hearing and review process is a valuable source of on-the-ground information and discussion for the LPC, and we cannot fathom a fair or contextual landmarking process without it. Countless individual landmarks and historic districts would lack the protections they have today were it not for the impact of community input and testimony.

We appreciate your efforts to increase efficiency and eliminate burdensome processes. However, removing more applications from public review and designating them for "staff-level" approval puts our city's historic and cultural fabric at risk. With no public notice, communities would remain uninformed about upcoming changes and unable to provide valuable community context for the Commission's decision making process.

Please do not cut the public out of the process. At a minimum, we ask that the Commission continue to give public notice and accept written comment on alterations. Transparency and public engagement is paramount to the LPC's mission of protecting the integrity of our city's history and architecture. Please maintain an open and inclusive process that gives voice to

those who live and work amongst our city's historic buildings.

Thank you for your time and consideration.