



## Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

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Shahabuddeen A. Ally, Esq., Chairperson  
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

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November 20, 2018

**Sarah Carroll**  
**Chairperson**  
**New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission**  
**David N. Dinkins Municipal Building**  
**1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor North**  
**New York, New York 10007**

**RESOLUTION:      SUPPORTING THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF THE PARK TERRACE WEST –  
WEST 217<sup>TH</sup> STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT**

**Whereas:** On November 7, 2018 Community Board 12-Manhattan (“CB12M”) received notice of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (“LPC”) intent to hold a public hearing on November 20, 2018 regarding its proposal to designate the Park Terrace West – West 217<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District (the “Proposed Historic District”) located in Inwood. The notice was received on the same date as CB12M’s regularly scheduled Land Use Committee meeting. The public hearing will be held prior to CB12M’s November 27<sup>th</sup> General Meeting. To accommodate LPC’s schedule, the matter was referred to CB12M’s Executive Committee (the “Executive Committee”) for consideration at its November 19<sup>th</sup> meeting; and

**Whereas:** The Proposed Historic District is an enclave of fifteen (15) early 20<sup>th</sup> century two-story, free-standing and semi-detached houses designed in the Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival architectural styles. All the houses feature detached or basement garages, many feature front yards. The houses were designed by architects Moore & Landsiedel, Benjamin Driesler, Louis Kurtz, C.G. de Neergarrd, and A.H. Zacharius between 1920 and 1935; and

**Whereas:** Inwood, known as Tubby Hook until 1864, is the northern-most region of Manhattan and once included vast areas of farmland and private estates. The Proposed Historic District is located on land that was once part of the Isaac and Michael Dyckman Farm. In 1851 the farm was divided and a 26-acre parcel sold to John Ferris Seaman and his wife Ann Drake-Seaman. In 1878, upon Ann Drake-Seaman’s death the property was left to a nephew, Lawrence Drake, who divided and sold the bulk of it to developers. In 1906 the northward extension of the IRT subway line and later the

1920's construction of the IND subway line spurred the development of apartment houses for middle-income families; and

**Whereas:** Development in the area of the Proposed Historic District occurred much later than other parts of Inwood and is of an architectural character more typically found in suburban developments and boroughs of New York City other than Manhattan. The Proposed Historic District is characteristic of the pattern of urbanization in Inwood created in relation to nature and topography - the front yards of the houses connect the greenery of neighborhood parks with the residential development. The suburban and small-scale quality of the buildings in the Proposed Historic District is rare for Manhattan; although built convenient to the city's rapid transportation system they anticipate and embrace a car-culture lifestyle; and

**Whereas:** The urbanization of Washington Heights and Inwood represent an important era in the development of the island of Manhattan and are linked to the earliest period in our national history. The place of Washington Heights and Inwood in the history of this city and nation deserves more attention, respect and acknowledgement; and

**Whereas:** CB12M in collaboration with City College undertook a district-wide land use planning study (the "Study") for Washington Heights and Inwood that included a chapter on buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest that merited further study and evaluation for historic designation. A copy of the Executive Summary of the Study was provided to LPC in 2007. Since 2009 CB12M passed 10 resolutions that evidence its support for historic preservation; and

**Whereas:** In April 2012 CB12M passed a resolution (the "2012 Resolution") requesting that LPC further study Inwood for the potential of individual landmarks as well as historic districts and also requesting that LPC give special attention to the Request for Evaluation submitted by the Volunteers for Isham Park for the William A. Hurst House. Designation of the Proposed Historic District is the first action LPC has taken since the 2012 Resolution to advance consideration of historic designation in Inwood; and

**Whereas:** On November 19, 2018 the Executive Committee hosted a public hearing to receive comment on the designation of the Proposed Historic District. David Thom, representing the Park Terrace North Block Association ("PTNA"), provided an overview on the history of development in the area of the Proposed Historic District and the rationale for designation. He advised that PTNA has outreached extensively to the 15 property owners, received letters in support of designation from 10 of the owners and was unable to contact the remaining five owners. The Historic Districts Council ("HDC") submitted a copy of its written testimony to LPC supporting designation of the Proposed Historic District in which HDC states "While this small collection of buildings is lovely and definitely meritorious of preservation, HDC is disappointed in the commission's limited actions in Inwood. Inwood's distinct and special character derives in large part from the predominance of handsome Art Deco buildings...It's befuddling that in an area typified by Art Deco apartment buildings, the Landmarks Commission is only choosing to recognize single-family Arts & Crafts houses". Written testimony supporting the proposed designation was also submitted by Inwood Preservation, Moving Forward Unidos, Park Terrace Gardens,

Inc., 100 Park Terrace West Owners Corporation, Inwood Owners Coalition, Inwood residents Pat Courtney and Rachel McCoy, and by Andrea Goldsmith – granddaughter of Jack and Mary Kessler, who purchased the land to create the development now proposed for designation, developed its first few homes, and occupied one of the homes – 545 West 217<sup>th</sup> Street – as its first occupant. CB12M Board members and community residents questioned the limited size of the proposed historic district, noting its failure to capture and include a wide range of built and natural features that contribute significantly to Inwood’s character and sense of place, and concurring LPC must actively pursue, consistent with the 2012 Resolution, the designation of additional historic districts in Inwood. Now, therefore be it;

**Resolved:** Community Board 12-Manhattan supports the proposed designation of the Park Terrace West - West 217<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District and urges the Landmarks Preservation Commission to work proactively and in collaboration with Community Board 12-Manhattan, local elected officials and community stakeholders to advance the designation of additional individual landmarks, including the William A. Hurst Home, and historic districts in Washington Heights and Inwood.

Sincerely,



Shahabuddeen A. Ally, Esq.  
Chairman

cc: Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Letitia James, Public Advocate  
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller  
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman  
Hon. Brian Benjamin, State Senator  
Hon. Alfred Taylor, Assembly Member  
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Assembly Member  
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council member  
Hon. Mark Levine, Council member

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