

BRAD HOYLMAN
27TH SENATE DISTRICT



THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

DISTRICT OFFICE

322 EIGHTH AVENUE, SUITE 1700
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10001
PHONE: (212) 633-8052
FAX: (212) 633-8096

ALBANY OFFICE

ROOM 413
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BLDG.
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247
PHONE: (518) 455-2451
FAX (518) 426-6846

E-MAIL: HOYLMAN@NYSenate.GOV
WEBSITE: HOYLMAN.NYSenate.GOV

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER:

CONSUMER PROTECTION
INVESTIGATIONS &
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

COMMITTEES:

CODES
CRIME VICTIMS, CRIME &
CORRECTION
CULTURAL AFFAIRS, TOURISM,
PARKS & RECREATION
JUDICIARY

TESTIMONY BY NEW YORK STATE SENATOR BRAD HOYLMAN
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION
REGARDING THE GRANTING OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION
TO THE CHURCH OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE
AT 120 WEST 60TH STREET

June 11, 2013

My name is Brad Hoylman and I represent New York State's 27th Senate District, in which the Church of St. Paul the Apostle ("the Church") is located. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony before the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission ("LPC") today regarding this remarkable structure.

As you know, nearly 50 years ago, this 19th Century Medieval Revival-style church was identified by the Commission as a potential New York City landmark. Following this initial consideration, no further action was taken by the city—until now—to protect this extraordinary piece of our heritage. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1991, but in the absence of landmark designation, it remains unprotected from marring alteration or demolition. Now, in the context of rapid urban development on the Upper West Side, where a neighborhood characterized by low-rise rowhouses and brownstones is being transformed by luxury residential towers with heights that rival the nearby commercial center, it is time for LPC to act. I therefore echo Manhattan Community Board 7's June 4, 2013 resolution on this matter and respectfully request that LPC designate the Church as an Individual Landmark.

The profound historic significance of the Church cannot be overstated. Constructed in 1885, the building is believed to be the first church on the Upper West Side. Father Isaac Hecker of the Paulist Fathers tasked the architect Jeremiah O'Rourke with designing a church in the style of 4th and 5th century Italian basilicas for his fledgling parish. Father George Deshon eventually took over the project and brought the church to completion.

In addition to its role in the history of the Upper West Side, the building is an aesthetic marvel. Rusticated Tarrytown granite stones—rumored to have been repurposed from the old Croton Aqueduct that linked Manhattan and the Bronx—comprise the façade of the building. Adjoining the Columbus Avenue entrance of the Church are twin carillon-like towers featuring pointed arch openings and lancet windows. The towers are linked by a recessed arcade. A magnificent 60-



foot-wide horizontal bas-relief panel of white Travertine marble set in a blue glass mosaic was installed above the main entrance in 1959 and remains in good condition today.

Under the threat of bankruptcy in 1973, the Church was at risk of demolition to make way for a residential building. Sadly, while it was spared from demolition, the west wing of the building was eventually sold off. These events, in conjunction with an economic climate that has seen several historic churches razed for residential or commercial development across the city, underscore the imminent threat to the Church. It would be a travesty to leave this New York City architectural gem vulnerable to destruction. Again, I request that LPC finally bring to bear what was aptly initiated half a century earlier and confer the protections of landmark designation on the Church of St. Paul the Apostle.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments and your commitment to preserving New York City's heritage.