



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Zulmilena Then

Zulmilena Then is an architect, advocate and proud native Brooklynite who grew up in East New York.

She received her Bachelor of Architecture from Pratt Institute and joined Weeksville Heritage Center as their Preservation Manager of the Historic Hunter Fly Road Houses in 2020. While involved in the renovation of historic buildings throughout Brooklyn with the architectural firm Michael Ivanhoe McCaw Architect, P.C., she realized the power historic buildings have in anchoring our communities.

In 2015, her love for historic buildings and community inspired her to form Preserving East New York (PENY), an organization focused on celebrating and elevating the voices of people of color to make a real social and political change to protect their communities through preservation.

Ms. Then advocates for historic preservations all throughout the communities of East New York and Cypress Hills. Her main goal is to protect the vulnerable landmark buildings that are interspersed throughout the rezoning areas of the East New York Community Plan.

She garnered a team of dedicated volunteers to raise community awareness of the cultural and architectural significance of the buildings in the neighborhood. She has focused on collaboration with respect to the existing tenants with an understanding of government obligations.

Through PENY's educational programming and outreach, Ms. Then aims to demonstrate the potential of preservation as a tool that can benefit the East New York neighborhood socially, economically and culturally, and through this effort awaken the community's interest, support, and involvement in the process of preserving the neighborhood's historic resources.

In 2017, Ms. Then was honored to celebrate with her East New York community its fourth landmark since the last designation, which took place 36 years prior.

***Zulmilena Then was selected as a
2020 Woman of Distinction honoree by Senator Julia Salazar.***

