



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North New York NY 10007 TEL: 212-669-7700 FAX: 212-669-7960
www.nyc.gov/landmarks



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2007
No. 07-8

CONTACT: Lisi de Bourbon
212-669-7938

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION TO CONSIDER LANDMARKING PROPOSED SUNNYSIDE GARDENS HISTORIC DISTRICT IN WESTERN QUEENS

Collection of Brick, Low-Rise, Low-Density Homes Is One of the Most Significant Planned Residential Communities in the United States and the First to Adapt the Garden City Concept



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission today voted unanimously to schedule a public hearing about the proposed Sunnyside Gardens Historic District. If approved by the Commission, Sunnyside Gardens would be the largest historic district in Queens.

“Sunnyside Gardens is an extraordinary place that deserves to be protected for generations of New Yorkers to come,” said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. “Its rich history, the spirit in

which it was built, verdant setting and low scale make it eminently worthy of designation. Our action today also underscores the Commission’s commitment to preserving the historic treasures of all five boroughs.”

Sunnyside Gardens was developed between 1924 and 1928 in response to a growing need for quality housing for middle and low-income workers. The complex consists of a series of nine “courts” or rows of townhouses and nine small apartment buildings (four to six stories tall), built on all or part of 16 blocks. Spread among nearly 54 acres, Sunnyside Gardens has a total of approximately 610 buildings. The community is the first American adaptation of the prominent 19th-century British planner Ebenezer Howard’s “garden city” concept.

The complex was designed by architects Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, who distinguished themselves by trying new approaches to providing quality housing for middle and low-income workers. The concepts pioneered at Sunnyside Gardens were further expanded at Radburn, N.J. and Chatham Village in Pittsburgh.



More

Sunnyside Gardens was home to many important figures, including noted historian Lewis Mumford, Perry Como, jazz great Bix Biederbecke and Ethel Merman. Mumford once called the complex “an exceptional community laid out by people who were deeply human and who gave the place a permanent expression of that humanness.”

There are currently 85 historic districts throughout the City’s five boroughs. The Commission is responsible for protecting these collections of historically, culturally and architecturally significant buildings that are characterized by a distinct sense of place and a coherent streetscape.

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission is the largest municipal preservation agency in the United States. Created in 1965, the Commission is dedicated to preserving New York City’s architectural, historical and cultural treasures and protects more than 23,000 buildings in all five boroughs, including 1,155 individual landmarks, 107 interior landmarks, nine scenic landmarks and 85 historic districts.