



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, SEPT. 25, 2007
No. 07-24

CONTACT: Lisi de Bourbon
212-669-7938

DOMINO SUGAR REFINERY NAMED A NEW YORK CITY LANDMARK

Approval of Williamsburg Plant Underscores Commission's Commitment to Preserving New York City's Industrial Waterfront

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission today voted unanimously to grant landmark status to the former Domino Sugar Corporation Refinery, a cluster of three brick buildings completed in 1884 that has long dominated the Brooklyn waterfront and recalls New York City's history as a major manufacturing center during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Collectively known as the Pan, Filter and Finishing House, the refinery formed the nucleus of a sprawling factory along the East River that had at its peak the capacity to produce 3 million pounds of sugar each day.

"The Commissioners' vote today caps a process that began more than a year ago when LPC's staff identified the plant as one of its highest preservation priorities," said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. "The refinery is the oldest, intact structure on the site and the most iconic symbol of Brooklyn's industrial heritage on the waterfront. If sugar was king in Brooklyn, the former Domino complex for decades was its crown."

Located between South 2nd and South 3rd streets on Kent Avenue in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, the buildings were originally part of the Havemeyers & Elder Refinery, which was founded in 1807 in lower Manhattan by two German cousins, Frederick and William Havemeyer. The company opened its Williamsburg plant in the 1850s, and by the late 1870s was considered to be the largest sugar manufacturer the world.



It was one of five refineries along the waterfront, and helped establish sugar manufacturing as the most important industry in Brooklyn in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The refinery closed in 2004, and was acquired by CPC Resources, the development arm of the Community Preservation Corporation, which plans to convert the building and surrounding property into residences.

At its height, the Domino plant was an immense operation, covering 11 acres and employing thousands of workers. The 13-story Filter House is the tallest of the three buildings, at 155 feet, excluding the chimney. Inside, raw sugar was mixed with water and filtered through canvas and charcoal. From there, the substance moved to the nine-story Pan House and was reduced to syrup, and then pumped to the Finishing House, where it was dried and graded for sale.

More

Like many industrial buildings constructed in the last two decades of the 19th century, the three buildings, which have common walls, were designed in the round-arch style, an American interpretation of the Romanesque Revival style. Most of the windows are crowned by projecting brick segmental arches, and some are trimmed with bluestone. The brickwork along part of the top floor features keystones and other decorative elements. At the vote, Chairman Tierney said the refinery buildings are the most historically, architecturally and culturally distinctive structures on the site.

Elsewhere on the Brooklyn waterfront, the Commission currently is considering landmark status for approximately 50 industrial and commercial buildings in DUMBO and 12 structures that comprise the former Eberhard Faber Pencil Company complex in Greenpoint.

Since 2002, the Commission has granted landmark status to scores of buildings that recall the City's rich industrial past, from the Estey Piano Company Factory in the Bronx, to the Gansevoort Market Historic District in Manhattan.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is responsible for protecting and preserving New York City's architecturally, historically and culturally significant buildings and sites. Since its creation in 1965, LPC has granted landmark status to some 24,000 buildings, including 1,173 individual landmarks, 120 interior landmarks, nine scenic landmarks and 88 historic districts in all five boroughs. Under the law, the Commission must be comprised of at least three architects, a historian, a realtor, a planner or landscape architect, as well as a representative of each borough. There are 11 commissioners, all of whom are appointed by the Mayor for staggered three-year terms.

-30-