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February 1, 2008

Honorable Robert Tierney
Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chairman Tierney,

I write to express my strong support for the proposal for a Prospect Heights Historic District, as submitted to the Commission by the Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council and the Municipal Art Society.

Prospect Heights is an area rich with the historic architecture that helps shape Brooklyn's special identity. The neighborhood contains blocks lined with beautiful Italianate and neo-Grec rowhouses, interspersed with churches, small commercial buildings and multi-family structures. Originally a quiet farm area crossed by the historic Flatbush Turnpike Road, Prospect Heights became a residential neighborhood in the second half of the nineteenth century after the completion of nearby Prospect Park. The area is widely recognized as an important historic neighborhood, and indeed, part of the neighborhood is listed on the National Register.

Prospect Heights has remained remarkably free from large-scale physical change, making it a perfect candidate for historic district designation. But without such designation soon, that may well change. As you know, the development of Atlantic Yards just adjacent to the proposed historic district will exert immense development pressures on the neighborhood, posing a threat to its historic character.

The district designation is an outgrowth of a community survey of the neighborhood's buildings and streetscapes. Over twenty members of the Prospect Heights community surveyed and photographed roughly 1,100 buildings in the area. More still undertook the task of assembling the data that was collected into a centralized database, which was submitted to the Commission in January, 2007. The database includes photographs, underlying land use information and some data on architects and dates of construction from the National Register nomination. In the end, the Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council and the Municipal Art Society developed a list of more than 900 buildings that contribute to the character of the district.

Community Board 8 has passed a resolution supporting the work of The Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council in advocating for historic district designation and I join them in support of designation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Joan L. Millman
Member of Assembly