

From:

Derrick Hilbertz
Shirley Mondesir, President St. Marks Avenue Independent Block Association
Janice Jarrett
Vincent Miller
Colleen Carter-Neblett
Robyn Berland, Chair Friends of Brower Park, Inc.
Adrian Straker
Lynn Cave, Bergen-Kingston Block Association
Crown Heights North Association, Inc.

To: (newseditor)

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Dear ,



We are contacting you because we believe that the Crown Heights Community deserves to be informed of the Institute for Community Living's (ICL) plan to construct a residential building on the grounds of the Dean Sage Mansion at 839 St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11213. This project will destroy the Mansion's formal gardens and will architecturally overwhelm the Mansion and the historic streetscape of St. Marks Avenue between Kingston and Brooklyn Avenues and

Brooklyn Avenue between St. Marks Avenue and Bergen Street.

The Dean Sage property, designed by the renowned architect and scholar Russell Sturges is the second oldest (1870) mansion in Crown Heights North and the last Mansion surrounded by its original formal parterre garden. It is a rare example of Gilded Age landscaped homes built along Millionaire's Row during America's Industrial Revolution. Mark Twain was a close friend of the Sages and often visited their Brooklyn home (Mark Twain Project Letters, UC Berkeley). Candace Wheeler in her memoir, "Yesterdays In a Busy Life", 1918) describes meeting Mark Twain at the Sage's Brooklyn home with grounds. The Sage family, and their friends were Lincoln Republicans and supported America's first Civil Rights Movement, "Reconstruction," as described by Ron Chernow, in his "Grant" biography, (http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/books/2017/10/grant_by_ron_chernow_reviewed_by_david_p_lotz.html). The Sage family used their wealth, from their lumber business, to create a more equitable America through their financial support of Cornell University open to all (including women and immigrants) to their membership in the Henry Ward Beecher Plymouth Church.

The NYC Landmarks Commission has granted ICL a "Certificate of Appropriateness" (COFA) in spite of the objections from Brooklyn Community Board 8, the Crown Heights North Association,

Inc—one of the winners of the 2017 New York State Preservation Award, and long-time local residents. Our petition to the State Supreme Court states the following objections:

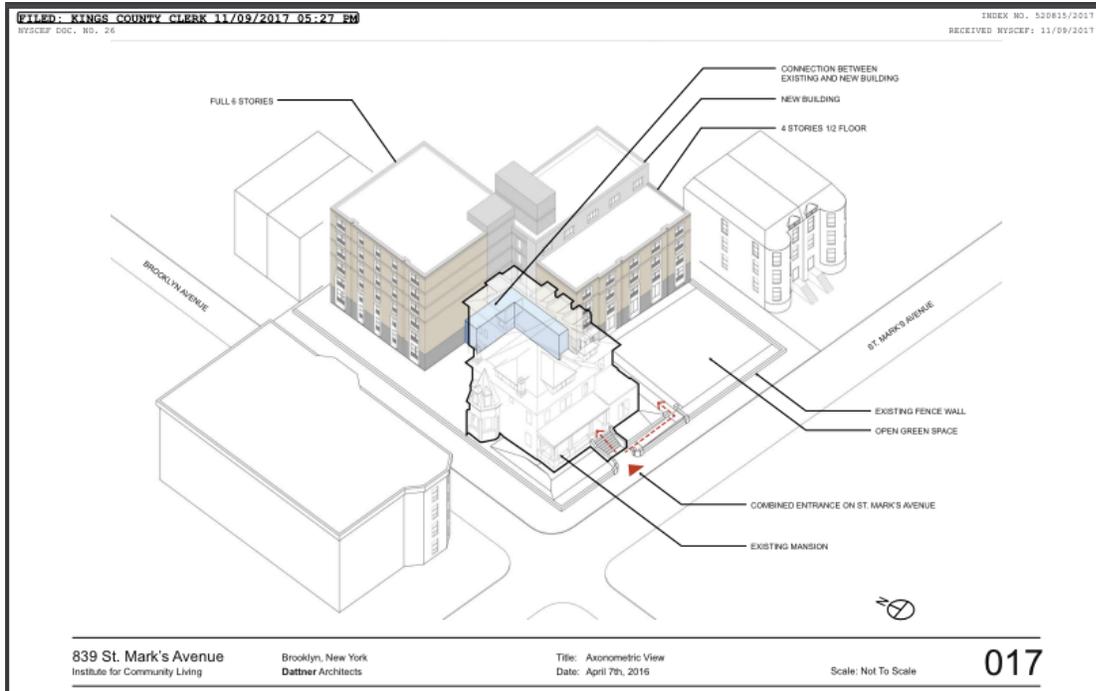
1. The NYC LPC's decision is "arbitrary and capricious" and should be annulled;
2. The COFA ignores the Adverse Impacts, recognized by both NYC Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development and the NYS Historic Preservation Office, that will result from the planned alterations to the Dean Sage Mansion;
3. The COFA permits the alteration of the Mansion's facades, the demolition of a historically and architecturally unique addition to one of the oldest and most important nineteenth-century Mansion's remaining and the destruction of the Mansion's parterre garden;
4. That the L-shaped building is out of scale and overwhelms the architectural and historical context of the streetscape as established by the New York City Landmarks Preservation designation in 2007;
5. The Mansion is located in the Crown Heights North Historic District which is listed on both the State and National Registers of Historic Places;
6. Based on the manner in which the LPC heard, deliberated upon, and ultimately granted the COFA for this unprecedented expansion the LPC abused its discretion and acted arbitrarily and capriciously in violation of lawful procedure of both the text and spirit of applicable State and City laws and rules;
7. That the granting of the COFA was affected by other consideration i.e. affordable housing shortage, rather than on the architectural and historic character of the Crown Heights North Historic District.

We are a group of Crown Heights North neighbors who are standing up to the City of New York, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, New York City Housing Preservation, & Development, Institute for Community Living, Institute for Community Living Real Property Holding Corp., and ICL St. Marks Avenue Apartments, L.P. (a new for-profit entity that has been awarded a newly issued deed). The Dean Sage Mansion must be preserved with its parterre gardens. If we are successful we would like to purchase the property to create an historic community and education center that would give residents a real sense of Brooklyn when Brooklyn homes had grounds and give access to the natural world of a garden.

If this project is allowed to go forward the very concept of Historic Preservation Districting will be undermined in Crown Heights and throughout New York City. We cannot afford to lose another link to our cultural past, core values and history's lessons to a developer's greed and our City government's negligence in managing housing development to maintain the City's diversity.. The Institute for Community Living, Inc., a not-for-profit, ran a supportive housing service for 48 residents, at the Dean Sage Mansion. ICL has now been granted by the City, a new Deed to ICL St. Marks Avenue Apartment, L.P. a for-profit company that can manage residential housing. The original Deed allowed for supportive housing only.

On November 28, 2017 Judge Levine of the State Supreme Court issued a stop order for any work on the formal garden but has allowed demolition of the 1930's extension to the mansion facing Brooklyn Avenue. Court documents can be accessed online at this link:

<https://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/nyscef/DocumentList?docketId=K3WZmERvYhTYQKEEE4nfA==&display=all&courtType=Kings%20County%20Supreme%20Court&resultsPageNum=1>



From the ICL Proposal showing scale of the new buildings to the mansion.



From the ICL Proposal the new building viewed from St. Marks Avenue.



From the ICL Proposal: the new building viewed from Brooklyn Avenue.



From the ICL Proposal Artist rendering of the new buildings flat facade in comparison to the existing historic facades of neighboring townhouses on St. Marks Avenue.



Recent Photographs of the Dean Sage Mansion and the townhouses along St. Marks Avenue.