



HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL



THE ADVOCATE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

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June 9, 2006

Hon. Robert Tierney, Chair  
Landmarks Preservation Commission  
The Municipal Building, 9th Floor  
One Centre Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioner Tierney,

The Historic Districts Council urges you to consider St. Savior's Church, located on Rust Street and 57<sup>th</sup> Drive in Maspeth, as an individual New York City landmark. This building was originally constructed in 1847 by the renowned church architect, Richard Upjohn, and still sits in its original setting on its original plot of land; a rarity in urban churches. The church was organized by James Maurice (whose family owned the land and hired Upjohn) and Judge David Jones, the son-in-law of DeWitt Clinton, former Mayor of the City of New York and Governor of the State of New York. Clinton also had a home on land adjacent to the church.

St. Savior's design is modeled after an English country church and, despite alterations stemming from a fire a few decades ago, still maintains the profile and overall appearance such a church as imagined by Upjohn. This observation is borne out by Upjohn's own sketches.

This church has been a significant part of the historic fabric of Maspeth for over 150 years. The chairperson of Board 5's Environmental Committee, Anthony Nunziato, told the *Times Newsweekly*, "For 150 years, it was supported and used by the community. For 150 years, the community played, prayed, got married, socialized, and were laid to rest in this church." Recently, the community successfully sought to uphold the deed restriction on the property that ensured that the land could only be used for a church. HDC believes strongly that deed restrictions are an incredibly important tool of preservation. They provide legal antecedents to legislation such as the National Historic Sites Act of 1935, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, to say nothing of New York City's own Landmarks Law of 1965. However, deed restrictions, in this case, would not be able to save a surviving Richard Upjohn design. To gain that protection, the building and land must be designated as an individual New York City landmark. Therefore, we urge the LPC to consider this site for designation.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Simeon Bankoff  
Executive Director

cc CM Dennis Gallagher  
CM Tony Avella  
All interested parties