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Committee Commemorates Landmarks Preservation

New York City's iconic skyline and distinctive neighborhoods have that special ability to summon feelings of civic identity and pride. Many of these buildings and their interiors, parks and boulevards, as well as a large number of historic and architecturally-significant neighborhoods, have been preserved thanks to the NYC Landmarks Preservation Law, enacted by then Mayor Robert Wagner on Apr. 19, 1965, to protect the city's architecturally, historically and culturally significant buildings and sites.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the law on Apr. 19, 2015, Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel announced on April 10, the launch of the NYC Landmarks50 Advisory Committee. Over the next two years, this distinguished committee will work to broaden the public's appreciation of and commitment to New York City's landmarks through a series of events held throughout the five boroughs. "There is hardly a neighborhood, or a New Yorker, not touched by New York City's preservation movement, which so reflects the great diversity of our city. We are committed to developing future preservationists who will take responsibility for protecting our history, and the continuity of the New York Cityscape," said Committee Chair Diamonstein-Spielvogel. "The Landmarks50 Advisory Committee is an all-voluntary effort that brings together committed individuals and institutions from the public and private sectors to inform and engage the public about the importance of historic preservation, which has ensured that the iconic landmarks of New York continue to be maintained and celebrated throughout the world."

Through the work of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the Landmarks Law has protected over 30,000 historic buildings and sites across the five boroughs. Grand Central Station, the Wonder Wheel at Coney Island, Ladies' Mile, Central Park, Jackson Heights and the Ed Sullivan Theater are just some of the well-known and loved places that have been preserved because of this important NYC legislation.

One of the best manifestations of the New York City landscape and the impact of landmarks is the Panorama of the City of New York at the Queens Museum of Art. Built by Robert Moses for the 1964 World's Fair in part as a celebration of the city's municipal infrastructure, the 9,335-square-foot architectural model includes every building constructed before 1992 in all five boroughs for a total of 895,000 individual structures. The new exhibition, "Marking Spaces: New York City's Landmark Historic Districts," will have yellow flags placed on the model to identify the 109 historic districts throughout the five boroughs.

"The Panorama has always been intended as a vehicle to educate and celebrate the built environment that is New York City," said Tom Finkelpearl, executive director of the Queens Museum of Art. "What better way to commemorate 50 years of the Landmarks Preservation Law than to gaze upon the five boroughs and think of what our evolving city would be today were it not for those with the foresight to preserve our city's past while also looking to its future."

This simple and visual project was initiated through the NYC Landmarks50 Advisory Committee, and funded in part by Queens Borough President Helen M. Marshall. The exhibition includes photographic images of these districts courtesy of the Historic Districts Council, as well as maps of the districts provided by the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission. It just opened on April 14 and will be on view through Jun. 2, 2013. "The Historic Districts Council is very pleased to help shine a light on New York City's designated historic districts for the public in such a visual way. We hope that this exhibit increases the public's awareness of exactly what and where New York's historic districts are located," said Simeon Bankoff, executive director, Historic Districts Council.

"I am happy to support the new exhibition, Marking Spaces: New York City's Landmark Historic Districts, at the Queens Museum of Art. The world-famous Panorama of the City of New York is an appropriate and fitting place to focus attention on the history and preservation of sites and districts throughout our great metropolis. The 109 historic districts in the new exhibit on landmarks show in a

very practical way our respect and admiration for past accomplishments as we continue to build for the future,” said Marshall. “I thank Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel, the Landmarks50 Advisory Committee, the Queens Museum of Art and all the public/private partnerships that have come together to make events like this one possible, as we lay the foundation for the 50th Anniversary of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Law.”

The NYC Landmarks50 Advisory Committee members include Douglas Blonsky, president and CEO of the Central Park Conservancy; Vin Cipolla, president, Municipal Art Society; Peg Breen, president of the NYC Landmarks Conservancy; Bankoff; Emily Rafferty, president, the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Jonelle Procope, president and CEO, the Apollo Theater; Caroline Baumann, acting director, Cooper Hewitt, National Design Museum; Jordan Roth, president, Jujamcyn Theatres; David Rockwell, founder and president, Rockwell Group; Shelly Rubin, co-founder, Rubin Museum of Art; Lisa Dennison, chairwoman, Sotheby’s North and South America; Tony Bechara, chair, El Museo del Barrio and many more. To get involved, share ideas and volunteer your time, e-mail

landmarks50@nyclandmarks50.org.

The Historic Districts Council is the citywide advocate for New York’s historic neighborhoods, representing over 100 designated historic districts and serving over 500 community organizations throughout all five boroughs. For over 40 years, HDC has helped New Yorkers protect and preserve the character of their neighborhoods.

The Queens Museum of Art is a local international art space in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park with contemporary art, events and educational programs reflecting the diversity of Queens and New York City. The museum presents the work of emerging and established artists, changing exhibitions that speak to contemporary urban issues, and projects that focus on the rich history of its site. In addition to being the home of the Panorama of the City of New York, QMA also houses the Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass; and a collection of more than 10,000 artifacts from both New York World’s Fairs. The museum seeks to exact positive change in surrounding communities through engagement initiatives ranging from the multilingual outreach and educational opportunities for adult immigrants, to their new, year-long residency program, Corona Studio, which embeds artists in the local community. The museum also conducts educational outreach tailored toward schoolchildren, teens, families, seniors as well as those individuals with physical and mental disabilities. For general visitor information, visit the museum’s Web site www.queensmuseum.org or call 718-592-9700.

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