



CONTEXT \ CONTRAST

**New Architecture
in Historic Districts
1967-2009**

An exhibition exploring the role and realization of new architecture in New York City's historic districts will open on Tuesday, October 6, 2009, at the AIANY Center for Architecture, 536 LaGuardia Place, New York City.

NEW YORK CITY, September 11, 2009 –*Context\Contrast: New Architecture in Historic Districts, 1967-2009* investigates how new buildings and historic districts have learned to coexist in the country's most culturally and architecturally diverse city. *Context\Contrast*, which will be on view from October 6, 2009 until January 23, 2010, was organized by the **American Institute of Architects New York Chapter**, the **NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission**, and the **Center for Architecture Foundation**, in partnership with the **New York Landmarks Preservation Foundation**.

The 1965 Landmarks Law laid the groundwork for preserving the city's architectural history. In that year, Brooklyn Heights became the city's first historic district; ninety-five more districts have since been designated as neighborhoods which should be preserved as cultural assets to the city. But the intent of designating neighborhoods has never been to freeze them. How can neighborhoods evolve while maintaining their historical and architectural character and integrity? Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney said that question "is what makes proposals for new buildings in historic districts so challenging, difficult and enthralling for the Commission."

Whether contrasting with the celebrated structures around them, cloning the features of their neighbors, or finding some intermediary between traditional modes and contemporary trends, new architecture in historic districts requires nuance and sensitivity. These design efforts must go through an extensive LPC review process and public hearings, then be deemed "appropriate" for the district. From the first new building to go into Brooklyn Heights after its landmark designation, to projects currently in development across the city, *Context\Contrast* considers the history of architectural "appropriateness," new architecture and historic neighborhoods. "The exhibition explores how particular neighborhoods challenge architects to respond in different ways," explained Rachel Carley, the exhibition's curator. "I hope and expect it will spark many conversations about the issues of preservation, contemporary design, and New York City."

This exhibition documents the cityscapes of five historic districts: Brooklyn Heights, the Upper East Side, SoHo, South Street Seaport, and the Queens suburban neighborhood of Douglaston. Original photographs show the many ways new buildings have woven themselves into the fabric of their districts through their character, scale and texture. "The Landmarks Preservation Foundation is pleased to support an exhibition that promotes its goal of educational outreach for all New Yorkers about preservation and architectural history," said Christina Davis, Chair of the LPF. "But *Context\Contrast* equally emphasizes new architecture" explained Sherida Paulsen, the 2009 President of AIANY. "As an organization committed to both historic preservation and architectural innovation in New York, it's an exciting opportunity to present an exhibition that explores how New York's architectural history and its future have learned to share the same city blocks."

PRESS PREVIEW

Media are invited to a press preview for *Context\Contrast* on Tuesday, October 6, from 4:30–6pm at the Center for Architecture. RSVP requested, please contact Emily Nemens at enemens@aiany.org or 212-358-6126. Exhibition images, press tours, and interviews for *Context\Contrast* will also be available for members of the press.

EXHIBITION OPENING RECEPTION

Context\Contrast will open on October 6, 2009, with a public reception from 6–8pm at the Center for Architecture.

EXHIBITION ON VIEW

Context\Contrast will be on view from October 6, 2009 to January 23, 2010. The Center for Architecture is located at 536 LaGuardia Place, between Bleecker and West 3rd Streets in Greenwich Village, New York City. ([Directions](#)) The Center for Architecture is open 9am–8pm, Monday-Friday and 11am–5pm, Saturday. Exhibitions are free and open to the public. A printed guide appropriate for children ages 7 and up will be available.

EXHIBITION CREDITS

Curator: Rachel Carley

Exhibition Design: Moorhead & Moorhead

Graphic Design: PS New York

Photography: Elizabeth Felicella

Exhibition and related programs are organized by the AIA New York Chapter, the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, and the Center for Architecture Foundation in Partnership with the New York Landmarks Preservation Foundation.

Underwritten by: New York Landmarks Preservation Foundation



About the AIA New York Chapter

AIA New York is oldest and largest chapter of the American Institute of Architects, with more than 4,300 practicing architects, allied professionals, students and community members. AIANY is dedicated to three goals: design excellence, public outreach and professional development, and towards these aims, AIANY runs the Center for Architecture, a storefront exhibition space in Greenwich Village, sponsors public programs, publishes a magazine, and works with its charitable affiliate, the Center for Architecture Foundation, to provide scholarship and educational opportunities. For more information on AIANY, please visit www.aiany.org.



About the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is responsible for identifying and preserving New York City's architecturally, historically and culturally significant buildings and sites. The agency consists of eleven Commissioners and a full-time staff of more than sixty. Since its founding in 1965 the agency has designated more than 25,000 buildings, including 1,235 individual landmarks, 110 interior landmarks, 10 scenic landmarks and 96 historic districts in all five boroughs. In the past five years the LPC has processed more than 46,000 applications for work on designated properties, including 78 applications for new buildings.



About the New York Landmarks Preservation Foundation

The New York Landmarks Preservation Foundation is a non-profit organization established in 1980. The Foundation's mission is to promote activities of the Landmarks Preservation Commission as well as to provide funds for educational outreach programs. In recent years, the Foundation has presented public forums and funded education programs in schools about historic preservation. In addition, the LPF sponsors the Bronze Plaque, Historic District Markers and Brown Street Sign program to denote historic districts. The Foundation's benefit, "Lunch at a Landmark" is held each year at a different city landmark. The LPF also funded the publication of the fourth edition of *Guide to New York City Landmarks*.

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RELATED EVENTS

Wednesday, October 21, 2009, 6-8pm

The Great Hall, The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art

Inaugural Forum

Introduction by Commissioner Robert B. Tierney; Moderator: Suzanne Stephens; Panelists: Hugh Hardy, Richard Meier, Peter Pennoyer and Annabelle Selldorf

Organized by the NY Landmarks Preservation Foundation

Wednesday, November 4, 2009, 6-8pm

Center for Architecture

Roundtable discussion on “Appropriateness”

Organized by the AIA Historic Buildings Committee

Saturday, November 14, 2009, 1-3:30pm

Center for Architecture

FamilyDay@theCenter

Organized by the Center for Architecture Foundation

Wednesday, November 18, 2009, 6-8pm

Center for Architecture

Preservation in Context: Communities and their Landmarked Districts

Moderated by Sherida Paulsen

Please check for updates on AIANY's calendar, aiany.org/calendar.



(L-R) 40 Mercer (465 Broadway) by Jean Nouvel, in Soho; 322 Hicks Street by Smith-Miller + Hawkinson, in Brooklyn Heights; Carhart renovation by Zivkovic Connelly, in the Upper East Side; 38-51 Douglaston Parkway by Gary D. Cannella Associates, in Douglaston. All photos by Elizabeth Fellicella.