

November 29, 2021

The Honorable Sarah Carroll, Chair  
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission  
David N. Dinkins Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor North  
New York, NY 10007  
Via e-mail to: chair@lpc.nyc.gov

Re: Parkchester - Proposed Historic District

Dear Chair Carroll:

I am writing on behalf of DOCOMOMO US/New York-Tristate, the local chapter of an international organization dedicated to the documentation and conservation of buildings, sites and neighborhoods of the Modern Movement.

Our board of directors has voted to support the proposed designation of Parkchester in the Bronx as a New York City Historic District.

Parkchester is a pioneering social housing development for middle class residents, undertaken by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company prior to their better-known Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village developments.

Parkchester exemplifies classic Modern planning principles such as spacing buildings to maximize light, air and open space, and positioning them for optimal solar orientation.

Further, the complex was designed with some features that mitigate the sometimes offputting aspects of similar developments. The buildings vary in height, with shorter structures at the perimeter to better fit into the surrounding lower-rise neighborhood.

The incorporation of on-site retail space, including the first satellite branch of Macy's, which is still in operation, further enhances the livability of the complex.

The buildings also incorporate figurative decorative elements, which ameliorate the starkness of the abstract architectural forms. Unfortunately, some of these decorative elements have been lost or damaged as a result of insensitive maintenance efforts.

We understand that Parkchester was one of five areas in the Bronx recommended for Historic District designation in an internal LPC survey conducted back in 1978, and the only one currently left undesignated

We believe the time has come to do so and protect this highly significant housing complex from further damage and degradation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kyle Johnson, AIA  
Board member, DOCOMOMO US/New York-Tristate

cc: Andrew Dolkart, Columbia University  
Susan Tunick, Friends of Terracotta