

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

April 6, 2016

Mr. Jonathan B. Jarvis  
Director  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Jarvis,

We write in support of the nomination of the Crown Heights North Historic District for a boundary increase of its current listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The first phase of the Crown Heights Historic District was listed on the Register in 2014, and included 1,019 historic properties. A local designation completed by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) has revealed an additional 636 intact buildings, as well as documentation that added significant cultural history to the recognition of this distinctive Brooklyn neighborhood, all of which has led to the request for a boundary increase for the existing Register designation.

This nomination adds an additional area of architectural and culturally historical significance to the Crown Heights North Historic District. An important piece of the area's history includes the emergence of civil rights leaders and pioneers of social change. In particular, the area is associated with our nation's first African American Congresswoman, Shirley Chisholm, who lived in four locations within the historic district. The neighborhood was her home during the most prominent years of her career, which included her time in Congress and during her candidacy for the United States Presidency. Her career working on issues of social and political change was recognized in 2015 when she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. The expanded Crown Heights North Historic District would be one of the most important resources associated with her life and work.

Another important figure and well-known African-American author, Richard Wright, also once resided in the Crown Heights Northern Historic District. Wright published multiple seminal works that are widely-considered to be among the greatest contributions to African American literature, including *Native Son*, *Black Boy* and *Uncle Tom's Children*.

Architecturally, the historic district is composed primarily of row houses from the turn of the 20th century, and includes New York City's most extensive and stylistically diverse collection of "Kinko" houses. These two-family duplex houses enjoyed a brief period of popularity in Brooklyn from 1905 to about 1913. Other styles that flourished during this time include Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, Arts and Crafts, and Art Deco. The district also includes one of Brooklyn's great houses of worship, the former Shaari Zedek Synagogue. The nominated area of Crown Heights covers dozens of architectural gems from this era, also featuring Colonial and Gothic

inspired century-old townhouses and residential apartment buildings which remain remarkably intact and well-preserved.

After the major architectural development of the Crown Heights North Historic District ended in the early 1930s the area subsequently underwent significant demographic changes; namely, its evolution into one of the city's major African American and Caribbean-American neighborhoods. Following a period of decline, and a revival which began in the 1970s, the character and composition of the area has grown to be highly diverse as many young professional seeking affordable housing moved into the many beautiful and distinct residential buildings which Crown Heights had to offer. We believe that the approval of this nomination of the Crown Heights Historic District (Phase III) will help to preserve the integrity of this culturally significant and architecturally unique district.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Yvette D. Clarke  
United States Representative