

# Public School 109 (now El Barrio's Artspace PS109)



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## LOCATION

Borough of Manhattan  
215 East 99th Street

## LANDMARK TYPE

Individual

## SIGNIFICANCE

Combining the Collegiate Gothic Style with an H-Plan building footprint, Public School 109 is architecturally and culturally significant as a Progressive-era elementary school designed by the Superintendent of School Buildings Charles B. J. Snyder and constructed in 1899.



**Public School 109**

New York Public Library, 1920 (above)

**Public School 109**

LPC, 2018 (left)

# **Public School 109 (now El Barrio's Artspace PS109)**

215 East 99th Street, Manhattan

## **Designation List 505 LP-2579**

**Built:** 1899-1901

**Architect:** Charles B. J. Snyder

**Landmark Site:** Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map  
Block 1649, Lot 9

On February 13, 2018, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of Public School 109 (now El Barrio's Artspace PS109) as a New York City Landmark and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 2). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. Six people testified in favor of the proposed designation, including representatives of Civitas, Friends of the Upper East Side Historic District, the Historic Districts Council, Landmark East Harlem, and the New York Landmarks Conservancy. No one spoke in opposition to the proposed designation. The Commission also received four written submissions in support of the proposed designation from Borough President Gale Brewer, Lott Community Development Corporation, and two individuals.



## Summary

Public School 109 (now El Barrio's Artspace PS109)

Public School 109 at 215 East 99th Street, constructed in 1899 and transformed in 2015 into an affordable housing complex for local artists, is architecturally and culturally significant as a Progressive-era school designed by the Superintendent of School Buildings Charles B. J. Snyder. Combining the eclectic historicism of the Collegiate Gothic style with modern construction methods and a forward-thinking site plan, P.S. 109 embodied the goals of urban educational and social reform at the turn of the 20th century.

Built during a time of burgeoning school enrollments and an increase in immigrant populations in East Harlem, P.S. 109's five stories could accommodate more than 2,000 students. The building is clad in limestone and brick, with a stylistic expression that joins elements of the late Gothic with French Renaissance motifs and the order of Beaux-Arts planning. Its decoration is relatively restrained on the lower levels, with terra-cotta stringcourses subdividing the spare facade, and rounded turrets placed at each interior corner. The former entrance on the eastern side of the building is topped with medievalizing terra-cotta ornament such as ribbons, crests of arms, foliage, projecting gargoyles, and a pointed Tudor arch enframingent, while elaborate dormer windows with decorative finials and a large copper-clad spire line the roof.

At P.S. 109 Snyder used an H-plan layout for only the second time, and it soon became his plan of choice for mid-block school sites. This form, characterized by a central block with parallel wings surrounding two street-facing courtyard spaces, was

intended to create large recreational areas while protecting students' access to light and air from future development of neighboring buildings. These courtyards were havens on a site sandwiched between tenement housing and two elevated subway stations at Second and Third avenues. The building's large multi-paned double-hung windows were made possible by the use of steel-frame construction. Other technological innovations included a forced-air cooling system, electric lighting, ventilated wardrobe closets, and tile-wainscoted playrooms that were easier to clean. Snyder embraced these advances as a means of improving environmental conditions within his buildings, emblematic of the Progressive-era social reforms to which he subscribed. With its ample opportunities for recreation and its light-filled classrooms, the design of P.S. 109 was intended to create an uplifting educational setting that could help overcome the congestion, contagion, and social inequalities of the city street.

By the 1960s, the blocks immediately surrounding P.S. 109 were radically transformed by urban renewal and the construction of a NYCHA public housing project, the George Washington Houses. The building functioned as a school until 1996, when due to its poor condition it was shuttered and threatened with demolition. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2000. A decade later, Artspace began redeveloping the former school, restoring its exterior and renovating its interior into artist housing and studio space that opened in 2015. P.S. 109 remains an important symbol of an early 20th-century moment in which school architecture called on cosmopolitan historical traditions to enrich the lives of an entire community.

## Building Description

Public School 109 (now El Barrio's Artspace PS109)

### Description

P.S. 109 is a five-story building that occupies a lot on East 99th Street between Second and Third avenues. Originally a block-through building with its rear facade facing East 100th Street, it is currently surrounded on three sides by the George Washington Houses. In plan, the building has an H shape, with two wings running north-south connected by a cross piece located near the center of the block, creating two open courtyards originally facing East 99th and East 100th streets. The street and courtyard-facing facades are clad in buff brick with a limestone base and limestone trim, and terra-cotta decoration; the east and west sides of the wings have plain brick walls and narrow air shafts providing additional ventilation.

The steep-pitched roof is lined with dormer windows topped with triangular pediments. On both sides of the building, a large molded cornice separates the ground story from those above it. Three additional terra-cotta bands subdivide the facades above, with the first and third ones acting as window sills and the second one running above the windows functioning like drip molding. Another cornice runs between the fourth and fifth stories on each side.

#### *East 99th Street Facade:*

On East 99th Street, the two southern facades of the wings have matching Tudor-arch portals centered at the ground floor, each with steps leading up from the sidewalks. The western portal has one blind slit window placed symmetrically on either side. Upper floors feature arched openings with delicate terra-

cotta drip molding on the left side of the central windows, adding visual interest. The window openings here are original, but the original double-hung windows have been replaced with non-historic paired single-hung six-over-six windows with fixed transoms. On the fifth-story gable, there is a smaller nine-over-nine sash window which is also non-historic.

The eastern portal facing East 99th Street was originally the building's main entrance and is more elaborately decorated. This portal entry is carved into a large limestone block that at the time of construction in 1901 protruded a few feet further out towards the street, and was connected to a second metal gate that ran the length of the courtyard. The entry block was cut back to its current depth sometime before 1920, and the second gate was removed. The multi-layered Tudor arch here is filled in with delicate foliate decoration; above, gargoyles project out from the corners of the cornice, and the pediment contains an inset rectangular frame with attached terra-cotta carvings spelling out "Public School 109," as well as crests of arms, shields, and ribbons. On either side of the portal are two narrow slit windows. Centered on the second through fourth stories above are the same kinds of non-historic paired single-hung six-over-six windows with fixed transoms as on the western block. Like the western block, the fifth-story gable on the eastern side also has a smaller non-historic nine-over-nine sash window with a projecting sill. Above and to the left of the former entryway is a terra-cotta shield motif containing the "New York City Board of Education" seal; to the right of the window is another blind slit window.

Cylindrical turrets are placed at each interior corner of the East 99th Street courtyard. The western one consists of a slightly rounded projecting corner element that runs from the base to a pointed tower that projects above the fifth story, while the eastern

corner is chamfered with a thinner cylindrical tower emerging out of rectangular forms. The corner segments on this side have narrow non-historic six-over-six sash windows with fixed transoms similar to the others. The turrets each have small non-historic three-over-three slit windows. Five additional Gothic-style metal towers line the pitched roof across the entire building, one on each wing, and a taller and more ornate tower rising above the center section. The central tower has a narrow pointed top and is especially ornate, with blind foil arches and tracery-like ornamentation.

The building's primary decoration is visible on the fifth story of the East 99th Street facade. The dormer windows here are topped with triangular pediments with the original terra-cotta shields, ribbons, and floral motifs. On either side of the windows are tall vertical terra-cotta finials with pointed-arch tops. In 2001, this architectural terra cotta on the dormers, which originally decorated both facades of the building, was removed and placed in storage; it was only restored on front side facing East 99th Street, leaving the dormer windows on the rear facade stripped of ornament.

#### *Courtyard Facades:*

The current main entrance is located on the East 99th Street side, in the central doorway of the courtyard. Each of the three facades inside both the southern and northern courtyards consists of three bays with three large tripartite windows on the second through fourth floors. The window openings are the original size and shape, but the windows themselves are non-historic replacements for the original double-hung ones. These tripartite windows are single-hung eight-over-eight sash windows with fixed transoms. On the first floor, large round-cornered openings extend to ground level and consist of glass-paned doors that originally opened directly out into the courtyard, with eight-over-eight top-hung windows above. On

the fifth story, the three dormer windows on each façade are single bays of non-historic nine-over-nine sash windows. The skylights currently present on the steep-pitched roof are also non-historic replacements, as is the roof itself. Metal gutters that appear to be original run along each facade within the courtyard interiors between the fourth and fifth stories; drainage pipes that ran vertically from top to bottom perpendicular to the stringcourses appear to have been replaced in kind and moved from original locations on each façade during restoration in 2015.

#### *Northern Facade:*

On the north side that faced East 100th Street, one octagonal turret without a tower is positioned along the western corner, while the other corner is left empty. The octagonal turret has two non-historic single-hung windows with fixed transom on each story. The two portals on the northern facades are identically designed and much sparser than those on the southern facade. The portals each have one blind slit window placed symmetrically on either side of their openings. The western portal may have served as a secondary entrance and originally had steps leading to it, but now both portals are filled in with limestone blocks at ground level. Above the portals are non-historic windows that are identical to those on the south facades; however, the original ornamental details that characterize the front side of the building were never included on the rear end-block facades.

#### *Site:*

The courtyard facing East 99th Street is enclosed by a low wall topped with a metal fence, and a metal gate surrounded by square stone pillars topped with white globe-like light fixtures, all of which are non-historic replacements. A large “215” number plate is attached to the eastern pillar. An additional security gate is positioned about a foot east of the end of the

low wall. The north courtyard is enclosed by a shorter stone curb, a metal fence, and a gate surrounded by stone pillars with globe-like light fixtures on top identical to those on the front; all of these features are non-historic replacements.

## **Alterations**

### *Entire Building*

Terra-cotta decoration removed from dormer windows in 2001; all windows, doors, and masonry openings covered with water tight plywood sheathing, and all sheathings and masonry cracks and joints sealed in 2001; in 2015, all masonry and terra cotta was repaired and restored as part of a comprehensive rehabilitation of the vacant school into a residential/mixed-use building; the original slate roof was replaced with shingles before 1920, and replaced again as part of the 2015 restoration; all windows replaced in kind with historically-sensitive types in 2015

### *East 99th Street facade:*

Main entrance portal cut back in depth, second fence and gate removed, original primary gate and fence replaced, and original stone gate posts replaced before 1920; all historic curbs, fencing and posts replaced in 2015; white globe lighting fixtures added to gate posts

### *Northern facade:*

Historic curb, metal fence, and gate replaced in 2015; planting beds added along fence; white globe lighting fixtures added to gate posts; terra-cotta decorative elements on dormers and finials originally were identical to those on East 99th St, however they were left stripped off after the 2015 renovation



## Site History

Public School 109 (now El Barrio's Artspace PS109)

### History of East Harlem

East Harlem is broadly defined by the boundary of East 96th Street to East 142nd Street, between Park Avenue and the East River.<sup>1</sup> The neighborhood was rural for much of the 19th century until the 1860s, when a residential settlement developed north and east of 110th Street and Third Avenue. The southern portion of East Harlem in which P.S. 109 is located grew more slowly, remaining mainly a site for industrial facilities due to its topography of marshes and old creek beds near the East River until transportation infrastructure improved in the 1880s. Once the Second and Third Avenue elevated railway lines began service between South Ferry and 129th Street in 1879, developers began to build tenement apartment buildings on the blocks from East 96th Street to 110th Street to serve new waves of residents who began migrating northward from Yorkville and the Lower East Side.<sup>2</sup>

Since the late 19th century, East Harlem has attracted a diverse population of first and second-generation immigrants seeking work in the industrial city. While the early communities of East Harlem were Irish and German, a huge influx of immigration from Italy and Central Europe in the 1870s and 1880s began to change the demographics of the area. With the Lower East Side and the South Village already at capacity, new Jewish and Italian immigrants settled in East Harlem, with Italians remaining largely east of Second Avenue and north of 105th Street, while the Jewish population resided west of Lexington Avenue. The southern edge of East Harlem neighboring Yorkville welcomed

Italians as well as a broader mix of European immigrants by the turn of the 20th century. Formerly a German enclave, Yorkville had also diversified, and by 1885 was one-third Irish, with a growing population of Southern and Central European immigrants settling in the neighborhood's northern section in the East 90s.<sup>3</sup>

Sparsely populated in the 19th century, East Harlem was transformed by the arrival of the elevated railway lines. In 1900, the census districts encompassing the blocks from East 92nd to 110th Street were inhabited by a diverse population of approximately 80,000 people, 44% of whom were foreign-born. The population was primarily of European ancestry, and included significant groups of Irish, Italians, Germans, and Russians. Many of the Eastern Europeans in East Harlem were Jewish; by 1917 only Manhattan's Lower East Side exceeded East Harlem in the number of Jewish residents.<sup>4</sup> The Italian population formed a second "Little Italy" between East 106th and 116th streets between Third Avenue and the East River.<sup>5</sup> In both cases, the recent immigrants apparently saw East Harlem's somewhat cleaner streets and larger apartments, many with modern conveniences like electric buzzer systems and both hot and cold running water, as improvements over conditions on the Lower East Side.<sup>6</sup> Two percent of the population on these blocks (approximately 1,687 people) was African-American, largely segregated in just a few buildings. Puerto Ricans formed yet another group of residents in East Harlem, with a small contingent of migrants arriving around the turn of the 20th century, and their numbers climbing after the 1917 Jones Act, which granted Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship. By the 1940s and 1950s, Puerto Ricans replaced European immigrants in the housing stock of East Harlem, and became the dominant ethnic group, with 63,000 counted in the neighborhood in 1950.<sup>7</sup>

The residents of East Harlem at the end of

the 19th century found work in a wide variety of industries located east of Second Avenue, including: coal yards, stone yards, meat markets, gasworks, and laundries, to name just a few.<sup>8</sup> Conditions for lower-class workers were grim throughout Manhattan during this period. Most of the lower classes could not afford public transportation and had to live near their jobs, so communities of impoverished immigrants sprung up along the edges of the island. Tenement-lined streets stretched from the docks and foundries close to the Hudson or East Rivers into a putrid landscape of smaller factories, sweatshops and meat markets. Vacant lots were often used as garbage dumps, manure piles accumulated, and speculators put up poor-quality housing on low-lying waterfront streets.<sup>9</sup> Schools were extremely crowded in some neighborhoods and nonexistent in others, reflecting an overburdened education system that had not kept up with the rising number of school-age children. East Harlem suffered from many of these problems, yet with a smaller population and newer housing stock, it drew many residents from the Lower East Side, despite a shortage of schools in the newly developing neighborhood.

At the turn of the 20th century, East 99th and East 100th streets between Second and Third avenues were developed with Old Law tenement apartment buildings, commercial stores, and industrial manufacturers; these included two roofing companies, a printing firm, an ironworks, and several small cigar factories.<sup>10</sup> Except for P.S. 109, the buildings on East 99th and East 100th streets were characterized by relatively uniform massing and cornices, and a modest Italianate style typical of Manhattan's working class districts. All were built up to the lot lines. The deficit of open space was exaggerated by the presence of the elevated subway lines at Second and Third avenues, both of which had stations positioned at the intersection with East 99th Street that obstructed views even further.

## **Public Schools in New York City**

For much of the 19th century, New York City public schools were operated by each borough independently, and each district had its own curricula, policies, and personnel standards. The consolidation of New York City in 1898 brought under its umbrella nearly 400 schools and made clear the need for a cohesive public school system. In March of 1898, William Maxwell was named Superintendent of City Schools, and after a year-long pause during the transition, he presided over an enormous expansion in school building with the help of the Superintendent of School Buildings, architect Charles B. J. Snyder (1860-1945).<sup>11</sup> Maxwell and Snyder were typical of education reformers of the period in their interest in developing standards and uniform practices, for example implementing a single curriculum for elementary schools, parity in teacher pay across the boroughs, and standard school designs.<sup>12</sup>

The complex process of consolidation eventually resulted in the establishment of a reorganized city-wide Board of Education in 1901, with a central Executive Committee and 46 Local School Board Districts.<sup>13</sup> These new bureaucratic systems were better able to serve New York City's burgeoning school-age population, an increase that can be attributed to several factors: a compulsory education law passed in 1894, mandating school attendance for all children up to the age of fourteen; an increased city population thanks to industrial and transportation developments; and a new influx of foreign immigrants arriving in the 1890s.<sup>14</sup>

These events resulted in a tremendous shortage of school buildings, compounded by a temporary halt in funding that slowed school construction during the 1898 transition to consolidation. In the following three years however, Snyder directed the Board of Education's new capital

resources to the building of schools throughout the city, and construction funding soared to \$14.8 million for 53 new schools plus additions. From 1902-04, the School Board authorized over \$26 million for 49 new schools and 30 additions.<sup>15</sup>

The school reform movement in New York City grew during the 1890s, as it became clear that the decentralized school system at that time could not keep pace with rising enrollments associated with the city's influx of immigrants. Progressive reformers such as John Dewey proposed that schools had a social responsibility to cultivate the individual as a service to the community, arguing that the mission of education was to advance society forward.<sup>16</sup> In order to help solve society's problems, reformers argued, schools should extend their reach by offering new modes of education like kindergartens and manual-training courses, and function as community centers, offering adult education and health care during the hours that classes were not in session. Snyder himself expressed his faith in the public school system as an equalizer for "the children of the rich and poor, who are taught in the same classroom."<sup>17</sup> In the early 20th century, schools were transformed into social-services agencies, expected to serve the community as a whole. It was understood that public schools should take the lead in assimilating and Americanizing immigrant populations.

In New York City, the reform movement propagated its ideas through lobbying groups like the Public Education Society, and individuals like Nicholas Murray Butler and Jacob Riis, whose photographs of dark, run-down schools and descriptions of overcrowding on the Lower East Side contributed greatly to the reformers' push for improved school facilities.<sup>18</sup> In his 1902 book *The Battle with the Slum*, Riis specifically mentioned C. B. J. Snyder, stating that the architect's innovations in bringing better light and air circulation to schools

were effective remedies for some of the city's urgent problems.<sup>19</sup> While Maxwell as Superintendent addressed the reformers' concerns about curriculum and the bureaucratic operations of the Board of Education, Snyder's building program embraced school architecture as the means of socially and aesthetically uplifting urban neighborhoods. P.S. 109 was thus a physical representation of the reformist impulse in public school design around the turn of the 20th century.

### **Charles B. J. Snyder**

Charles B. J. Snyder, Superintendent of School Buildings, was the architect responsible for the planning, design, and construction of all new and expanded schools in the five boroughs after consolidation.<sup>20</sup> Snyder was appointed to this position in 1891 at age 31 and served until 1923. Only a few details of his background before this are clear: Snyder was born in 1860 in Stillwater, N.Y., attended Cooper Union in Manhattan, and studied architecture with William E. Bishop. He was first listed as an architect in New York City directories in 1886 and remained in practice until around 1936. Snyder's designs and ideas were widely published, and he was a member of the Society of Municipal Engineers, a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, and president of the American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers. Snyder is credited with the design of over 140 elementary schools, ten junior high schools, and twenty high schools, as well as many additions and alterations through the course of his career.<sup>21</sup>

The improvements that Snyder introduced into school buildings were praised by progressives who had alerted the public to the functional problems of schools for years. The lightweight fireproof steel skeleton frames he instituted could be constructed quickly and allowed for larger windows that would bring in light and air to classrooms. Snyder also

embraced technologies like forced-air ventilation that improved air quality. In terms of school planning, Snyder developed new layouts such as the H-Plan that worked better on the sites available for school building in New York City. He called for flexible playrooms and assembly halls, and for classrooms with adjustable furniture.<sup>22</sup> Snyder also introduced changes in the stylistic details by placing more emphasis on ornament, thus lending a new dignity to the character of the schools during his tenure.<sup>23</sup> In a 1905 article in *American Architect & Building News*, the author writes that in comparison to school builders in other cities, Snyder “at the outset showed such distinct capacity for his task, [and] has proved himself a man able to grow as his opportunities opened before him,” despite the challenges of serving such an enormous student population within the constraints of New York City’s real estate market.<sup>24</sup>

For Snyder, school building was inextricably tied to the social conditions of turn-of-the-century New York City, particularly the influx of immigrants with school-age children. In 1904, more than 500,000 students attended elementary and secondary schools, with yearly increases of 35,000 students for the previous few years.<sup>25</sup> Like many other education reformers of the period, Snyder believed that public education played an important role in acculturating these new arrivals, describing the “amalgamative or welding effect of our free school system in making successful citizens of the almost incredible horde of immigrants which has poured into this country.”<sup>26</sup> Snyder’s interest in school building went beyond the purely practical question of how to accommodate so many students; he wanted to use his building program to improve the mental, physical, and emotional lives of school-age children.<sup>27</sup>

## The City Beautiful and School Architecture

Snyder’s schools formed architectural and

community centerpieces for the neighborhoods in which they were built, and the surviving buildings constitute a series of monuments to New York’s tradition of investment in public education. For most architects, the dominant ideas of the first decade of the 20th century were represented by the City Beautiful movement, concerned with issues of urban planning and designing buildings of a grand scale, created with classical detailing. Sanctioned by the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition and the progressive-era social reform movements of the period, the City Beautiful movement attempted to re-orient American cities around broad avenues, public spaces and classical-style civic monuments, to literally “beautify” urban environments in order to improve the social and ethical lives of those who resided within them.<sup>28</sup> In New York City, McKim Mead & White’s Brooklyn Museum (1893-1915) and Carrere & Hastings’ New York Public Library (1898-1911) (both designated New York City Landmarks) are emblematic of these impulses.

It was a widely held belief among social reformers and architects that a beautiful school in New York’s crowded neighborhoods would build moral character among its students. As a writer in *Scribner’s* magazine in 1901 suggested, school buildings that are designed with “symmetry, order, restraint, and dignity” give children “that unconscious aesthetic education that comes from spending years, early in life, face to face for many hours each day, with the fruits of art, with work of man that is rightly, honestly, and beautifully done.”<sup>29</sup> Observing these buildings, Jacob Riis commented, “Snyder did for schools that which no other architect before his time ever did or tried. He ‘builds them beautiful.’ In him New York has one of those rare men who open windows for the soul of their time.”<sup>30</sup> Another contemporary critic, John Beverly Robinson, writing in *The Architectural Record*, commended Snyder’s design sensitivity, noting,

“With all this [construction] the architecture of the buildings has not been neglected, for as education ceases to be conducted by factory methods it is well that the walls where education dwells should signalize the change by forsaking their factory appearance.”<sup>31</sup> At P.S. 109, Snyder was responding to these ideals in creating a grand public structure.

### **The Collegiate Gothic Style**

Snyder embraced the idea of using architectural style as a means of expressing educational and social values within the communities in which each school he designed was located. Snyder’s earliest schools continued the Romanesque Revival style of his predecessor, George W. Debevoise, using round-arched openings set in masonry facades. These early buildings tended to be built up to the lot lines and were often sited on corner lots to take advantage of available natural light. By the later 1890s, perhaps influenced by the cultural shift towards the City Beautiful movement and historicism in large public buildings, Snyder began experimenting with a broader range of styles and undertook a more rigorous approach to building than had been common in earlier decades.<sup>32</sup> In search of a style that would appropriately convey his vision of urban public education, Snyder adopted the Collegiate Gothic around 1897, such as at P.S. 31 in the Bronx and P.S. 166 in Manhattan, built from 1897-1899 (both designated New York City Landmarks).<sup>33</sup> In 1898, he would use this style in P.S. 109. The Collegiate Gothic was a late-19th century American style meant to evoke the scholarly sophistication of Cambridge or Oxford in England. The Collegiate Gothic was a revival style characterized by English Gothic and Tudor motifs like arches, crenellations, dormers, parapets, finials, and similar details, and it became popular on campuses like the University of Pennsylvania and Princeton University.<sup>34</sup> For Snyder in New York City, the Gothic Revival structures

closer at hand, such as James Renwick, Jr.’s Free Academy on East 23rd St. and Lexington Ave., may have provided an additional model.<sup>35</sup> Snyder is often credited with bringing the Collegiate Gothic style off the university campus and into public school architecture. Far from being homogenous, Snyder’s version of the Collegiate Gothic drew ornamental details from a wide range of cosmopolitan styles, including Jacobean, Dutch Renaissance, French Renaissance, Colonial, Beaux-Arts, and Secessionist styles, and he tried to make his designs responsive to each individual neighborhood.<sup>36</sup>

### **The H-Plan**

In the early 1890s most of Snyder’s school designs were based on a fairly traditional symmetrical layout configured so that outdoor recreational areas were located at the sides or rear yards of the schools. As the city’s population density increased, the lots adjacent to the city’s schools, especially in Manhattan, were built up such that natural light in classrooms became much more limited, and real estate pressures made attractive corner or avenue-facing sites prohibitively expensive. Snyder found solutions for these problems during a Board of Education-sponsored trip to observe modern school facilities in London and Paris in 1896, a trip on which Snyder was apparently influenced both by recent innovations in hygiene and ventilation of these schools, and by much older precedents of European architecture he saw, such as the courtyard-and-gate plan of the Early French Renaissance Hotel de Cluny (1485-1510) in Paris. Snyder believed the airy quality of these examples offered a useful model for an overbuilt modern city like New York; he decided to adapt these ideas into a regularized H-Plan layout to meet the needs of his school building program.

Snyder’s first H-plan school was P.S. 165, a Collegiate Gothic style building at 234 West 109th Street designed early in 1898. P.S. 109, designed the



same year, was Snyder's second H-plan. Snyder's H-plan schools consisted of a through-block building with street-facing courtyards located at the front and back rather than on the sides. The parallel arms of the building enclosed these interior yards, so the buildings could be positioned on more affordable mid-block sites while retaining a high degree of natural light.<sup>37</sup> In an effort to protect students' access to light and air from future development of neighboring buildings, the H-Plan school's lot-line walls were typically left blank, with oversized windows dominating the courtyard side. While Snyder was always careful to create a unique design for each school that took into account specific programmatic needs and site requirements, in the early 20th century the H-plan was a distinctive building form that was strongly associated with school architecture. The open space provided by the courtyards, the large groups of windows and the elegant decorative ornament made these schools stand out in neighborhoods filled with overcrowded tenements, elevated subway lines, and industrial manufacturing.

Over time, Snyder also developed a generally consistent interior layout for the H-plan buildings that included four stories of classrooms with larger spaces dedicated to manual and physical training in the fifth story, usually under a high roof. In order to provide the most natural light for students, classrooms were arranged flanking a central hallway that ran through the middle of the central block of the "H," with stairways located at the juncture of the wings; classrooms on the wings faced out towards the courtyards, while windowless side walls faced the neighboring properties. The first floor was often used for indoor play areas that alternatively could be put in service as an assembly room. Classrooms on the second story could also be joined together by the use of moveable partitions to create an additional large assembly space. These

larger assembly spaces were often used for public events, such as the School Board's popular evening lecture series, which attracted nearly a million attendees around across the city in 1902.<sup>38</sup> Collegiate Gothic H-Plan schools like P.S. 109 symbolized the benevolent role of government to help its citizens and provided a visual reminder of the opportunities available through public education.

### **Design and Construction of P.S. 109**

Prior to the construction of Snyder's P.S. 109, the school had operated in a temporary facility in an old tobacco factory on the corner of East 99th Street and Second Avenue.<sup>39</sup> In 1898, Snyder released the plans and specifications for several schools to be built with the H-Plan layout, including P.S. 109. A building contract for \$293,000 was awarded to P. J. Brennan in the spring of 1899, although construction was delayed until the end of 1900 due to a scarcity of steel. At its opening in 1901, the school could accommodate 2,250 students.<sup>40</sup>

At P.S. 109, Snyder integrated his school design conventions into the new H-plan that he had recently used for the first time at P.S. 165.<sup>41</sup> P.S. 109 would consist of a steel frame, mechanical ventilation, flexible play areas, four floors of light-filled classrooms facing out to two broad courtyards, and a fifth-floor gym, library, and manual training classrooms. An assembly room would be located in the center of the "H," with the parallel wings built on the lot lines and extending through the entire block from East 99th to East 100th streets. The blank exterior walls would block out all noise from adjacent property, while the street-facing facades and the interior courtyards lined with large windows would bring light and air into classrooms.

In its original design, P.S. 109's five stories were constructed of granite, limestone, buff brick, gray terra cotta and a pitched roof made of green slate, set on a fireproof steel skeleton. The first story

was divided into boys' and girls' playrooms, which had asphalt floors and tile wainscoting up to five feet high. Two kindergarten classrooms, with direct access to the courtyard play areas, were also included in the first story of the building. The main entrance lobby was adjoined by offices for a janitor and medical staff. The second through fourth stories contained a total of 48 classrooms, each with ventilated wardrobes located outside the rooms in the corridors to circulate air and dry damp clothing. Bathrooms were originally placed in the first and fifth stories.<sup>42</sup>

The building's decoration is relatively restrained on the lower levels, with terra-cotta stringcourses subdividing the spare limestone and brick façade, and rounded turrets with conical roofs placed at each interior corner. The former main entrance on the eastern side of the building is topped with medievalizing terra-cotta details like ribbons, crests of arms, foliage, projecting gargoyles, and a pointed Tudor arch enframement. Other Gothic details abound along the fifth story pitched slate roof, including a large copper-clad spire at the center, smaller copper towers on the roofline, and elaborate dormer windows with decorative finials.<sup>43</sup> These features are typical of the Collegiate Gothic.

Even as the Gothic towers and handsome rooftop ornamentation at P.S. 109 project a refined gracefulness, the building's massing stretching from East 99th to 100th streets carries the forcefulness of a Baroque palace. The monumentality of the building is enhanced further by the alignment of the large rectangular windows on the first four floors to create three vertical bays set along each side of the courtyards, drawing the eye upwards to the corner turrets and ornate dormers lining the fifth story. The windows are segmented by delicate terra-cotta mullions and are notably large, a feature made possible through the use of steel frame construction. The downward edge of the steep roof was originally

lined with skylights intended to bring additional light and air circulation to the fifth story.

At P.S. 109 as in many of Snyder's H-plan buildings, the steep slate roof accommodated numerous activities on the top floors. Snyder's elaborate dormer windows further emphasize the French origins of this style. The profusion of fruit and foliage in the dormers of the central and end bays give added emphasis to these bays and suggest the abundance to be gained from the education available within. Other elements of the ornamental scheme, such as keystones, volutes, molded spandrel panels, and pedimented dormers also place this building firmly in the classical tradition of the French Renaissance.

### Later History of P.S. 109

P.S. 109 served a large and diverse population of students drawn from the working-class communities of East Harlem for decades, but physical changes to the neighborhood that occurred after World War II resulted in considerable demographic shifts. Public housing construction accelerated, with tenements razed and tenants displaced to other communities. High-rise apartment buildings replaced the tenement housing, and although these buildings were at first praised for their cleanliness and modern amenities, many also decried the loss of an intimate neighborhood. In East Harlem, over 1,000 businesses were removed to make way for public housing units and other urban renewal projects, and by the early 1960s, one third of East Harlem residents lived in public housing as the neighborhood's population dropped to 50,000 from 200,000.<sup>44</sup>

In 1951, the blocks immediately surrounding P.S. 109 were radically transformed by the construction of a NYCHA public housing project, the George Washington Houses, which would create a set of 14 modern brick apartment buildings placed within landscaped parkland on superblocs running

from East 97th Street to East 104th Street between Second and Third avenues. In a fundamental alteration of the historic street grid, the creation of these blocks required the removal of East 98th, East 100th, East 101st, and East 103rd streets.<sup>45</sup> The George Washington Houses themselves occupied only 14% of the total site area, fulfilling the tower-in-the-park aesthetic popular among public housing advocates of the period, which allowed for shady green spaces and playgrounds at the ground level.<sup>46</sup> The buildings on either side of P.S. 109 were demolished to make way for the housing project, which now entirely surrounded the rear and side facades of P.S. 109, leaving only its front and blank sides visible to the public from East 99th Street. The project was completed in 1957, leaving P.S. 109 the sole reminder of the block's early historical development.

As these changes were underway after World War II, the ethnic make-up of East Harlem, and the school population of P.S. 109, also shifted as Puerto Ricans, African-Americans, and other groups began to replace those of European ancestry. By the late 1950s, African-Americans from Central Harlem began to move into East Harlem's public housing projects and made up approximately 35% of the neighborhood's population. At the same time, Puerto Rican migration to the mainland was encouraged by the federal government to provide a labor force for urban industries like the garment trade and small manufacturing, and they made up approximately 40% of the population.<sup>47</sup> The Puerto Rican community named its home in East Harlem "El Barrio," or "The Neighborhood."<sup>48</sup> In the 1960s and 1970s, Puerto Rican activists helped create a culture of community pride as they fought against discriminatory housing practices and the city's neglect of the neighborhood's poor physical and social conditions.<sup>49</sup>

In the late 20th century, new residents

arrived in East Harlem from places like Mexico, Senegal, and China. Yet there was a reduction in school-age children, and P.S. 109 gradually deteriorated and was shut down by the Board of Education in 1996.<sup>50</sup> Due to the poor condition of the school, the Board of Education at that time decided to demolish rather than renovate it. However, through preservation advocacy efforts demolition was avoided, and the building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2000.<sup>51</sup> In 2011, Artspace acquired the building, restoring its exterior façade and terra-cotta ornamentation while renovating its interior into artist housing and studios that opened in 2015. The project was led by Hamilton Houston Lownie Architects and Victor Morales Architects, and won awards and accolades from organizations such as the Preservation League of New York State, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, and the National Housing and Rehabilitation Association, among others.<sup>52</sup>

## Conclusion

Even as the building's function and interior spaces have adapted over time to meet contemporary needs, P.S. 109 remains an important symbol of an early 20th-century moment in which school architecture called on cosmopolitan historical traditions to enrich the lives of an entire community. Snyder's striking Collegiate Gothic design and innovative H-Plan made P.S. 109 a singular monument within the crowded tenement housing and elevated railway lines of the surrounding blocks, a monument all the more important for the way it has reflected the constantly shifting streetscape and cultural demographics of the East Harlem neighborhood.

## Report researched and written by

Margaret Herman

Research Department

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Michael Lapp, “East Harlem,” in *Encyclopedia of New York City*, ed. Kenneth T. Jackson, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 391.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Gronowicz, “Yorkville,” in *Encyclopedia of New York City*, 1428; New York Public Library (NYPL), “Topographical atlas of the City of New York, including the annexed territory showing original water courses and made land,” New York Public Library Digital Collections.

<sup>3</sup> Anthony Gronowicz, “Yorkville,” 1428.

<sup>4</sup> “Census Reports, Volume 1: Twelfth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1900; Population Part I” (Washington: United States Census Office, 1901). Lapp, 391.

<sup>5</sup> For more on Italian East Harlem, see Burrows, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1124. As Burrows states, the Italians segregated themselves within their enclave according to the areas of Italy from which they had arrived, even as a broader Italian identity arose that retained the language, food traditions, and culture of their homeland.

<sup>6</sup> Annie Pollard, Daniel Soyer, et. al., *Emerging Metropolis: New York Jews in the Age of Immigration, 1840-1920* (New York: NYU Press, 2012), 131. As the sociologist Kate Holladay Claghorn wrote in 1901, “The removal of a Hebrew family up here is usually a token of advancement – in assimilation, at any rate.” See Claghorn, “The Foreign Immigrant in New York City,” in US Industrial Commission, *Reports* 15 (Washington, DC, 1901): 477.

<sup>7</sup> Lapp, 391, and Frederick Binder and David Reimers, *All the Nations Under Heaven: An Ethnic and Racial History of New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press), 169.

<sup>8</sup> Burrows, 1119. See NYPL maps of the neighborhood from 1891 and 1901.

<sup>9</sup> Burrows, 991.

<sup>10</sup> *The Trow Directory, Borough of Manhattan and the Bronx*, 1909

<sup>11</sup> Gary Hermalyn, *Morris High School and the Creation of the New York City Public High School* (Bronx, NY: Bronx County Historical Society, 1995), 22-27; from 1899-1901, funding soared to \$14.8 million, with 53 new schools plus additions to existing facilities built,

comprising 1440 new classrooms with a total of 65,788 new seats. Despite the expansion, demand still could not be met and schools began to be used by children on part time schedules; i.e., morning and afternoon class shifts.

<sup>12</sup> Selma C. Berrol, “William Henry Maxwell and a New Educational New York,” *History of Education Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 220. See also: *Fourth Annual Report of the City Superintendent of Schools* (New York City Municipal Archives, 1902), 70.

<sup>13</sup> See Hermalyn, 24-27.

<sup>14</sup> Christopher Bell, *Images of America: East Harlem* (Portsmouth, NH: Arcadia Publishing, 2003); United States Census 1890, 1900.

<sup>15</sup> New York City Board of Education, *The First Fifty Years: A Brief Review of Progress, 1898-1948* (New York: 1948), 2-20; LPC Research Files; Beyer, Blinder, Belle, “Guide to the Preservation of New York City Historic Schools,” prepared for the School Construction Authority, 2002, Part II, 2-3; New York City Board of Education, *New York City School Buildings 1806-1956* (New York: Bd. of Ed., 1956), 32-34.

<sup>16</sup> David Ment, “Public Schools,” in *Encyclopedia of New York City*, 1056-1057; Michele Cohen, “C. B. J. Snyder, Superintendent of School Buildings, Sets the Stage for Public Art,” *The Municipal Engineers Journal* 85 (1998): 23.

<sup>17</sup> Charles B. J. Snyder, “The Construction of Public School Buildings in the City of New York,” *Municipal Engineer*, (April 26, 1904): 46. See also: Ment, “Public Schools,” 1056-1057.

<sup>18</sup> David C. Hammack, *Power and Society in Greater New York* (New York: The Russell Sage Foundation, 1982), 259-271.

<sup>19</sup> For more on education theory in relation to school building, see William W. Cutler, “Cathedral of Culture: The Schoolhouse in American Educational Thought and Practice since 1820,” *History of Education Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (1989): 1-40; and Amy Weissner, “‘Little Red School House, What Now?’ Two Centuries of American Public School Architecture,” *Journal of Planning History* 5, no. 3 (August 2006): 196-217.

<sup>20</sup> “Charles B.J. Snyder,” *Who Was Who in America* 4 (Chicago: A.N. Marquis Co, 1968), 883; Snyder obituary, *National Architect* 2 (Jan., 1946), 13; Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *Stuyvesant High School Designation Report* (LP-1958) (New York: City of New



York, 1997), prepared by Jay Shockley; LPC, *Public School 31 Designation Report* (LP-1435) (New York: City of New York, 1986) prepared by Virginia Kurshan; LPC, *Public School 27 Designation Report* (LP-1895) (New York: City of New York, 1995), prepared by Virginia Kurshan; Dennis S. Francis, *Architects in Practice, New York City 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1979), 71; James Ward, *Architects in Practice, New York City 1900-1940* (N.Y.: COPAR, 1989), 73; Robert A. M. Stern, et. al, *New York 1900* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983), 78-87.

<sup>21</sup> Cohen, 21-23. The following schools designed by Snyder are designated New York City Landmarks: Public School 67 (High School of the Performing Arts) (1893-94), 120 West 46th Street, Manhattan; Public School 27 (1895-97), 519 St. Ann's Avenue, the Bronx; Public School 167 (later 31) (1897-99), 425 Grand Concourse, the Bronx; Morris High School auditorium interior (1900-04), East 166th Street and Boston Road, the Bronx; Wadleigh High School for Girls (1901-02), 215 West 114th Street, Manhattan; Curtis High School (1902-04, 1922, 1925), 105 Hamilton Avenue, Staten Island; Public School 91 addition (1905), 1257 Ogden Avenue, the Bronx; Stuyvesant High School (1905-07), 345 East 15th Street, Manhattan; Boys' High School additions (c. 1905-12), 832 Marcy Avenue, Brooklyn; Westfield Township District School No. 7 addition (1906-07), 4210 Arthur Kill Road, Staten Island; Girls' High School addition (1912), 475 Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn; Public School 72 annex (1912-13), 1674 Lexington Avenue, Manhattan; Flushing High School (1912-15), 35-01 Union Street, Queens; Erasmus Hall High School (1905-06, 1909-11), 899-925 Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn; Newtown High School (1920-21) 48-01 90<sup>th</sup> Street, Queens; and Public School 166 (1897-99), 132 West 89th Street, Manhattan.

<sup>22</sup> Appendix to the *Fiftieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of New York for the year ending December 31, 1896*: Annual Report of the Superintendent of School Buildings (December 31, 1896), 219.

<sup>23</sup> "New York City Historic Schools Study, New York City Public School Architecture: A Brief History," Draft, LPC File; LPC, *Public School 166 Designation Report* (LP-2072), (New York: City of New York, 2000), prepared by Jay Shockley.

<sup>24</sup> "Excellent Character of Mr. Snyder's Work," *American Architect & Building News* (July 29, 1905) 33.

<sup>25</sup> Snyder, "The Construction of Public School Buildings in the City of New York," 49.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. Progressive-era education reform was espoused by individuals like John Dewey, Jacob Riis, Nicholas Murray Butler, and Superintendent William Henry Maxwell, as well as by groups like Club E, Good Government, the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor (AICP), and the Vigilance League, to name just a few.

<sup>27</sup> Even with the enormous building program undertaken by the Board of Education since consolidation in 1898, by 1903, 90,000 students were forced to attend part-time classes. See: Snyder, "The Construction of Public School Buildings in the City of New York," 49.

<sup>28</sup> For more on the City Beautiful, see William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1994).

<sup>29</sup> "Point of View," *Scribner's Magazine* 29 (Feb., 1901), 252.

<sup>30</sup> Jacob Riis, *The Battle with the Slum* (New York: Macmillan, 1920), 353.

<sup>31</sup> John Beverley Robinson, "The School Buildings of New York," *Architectural Record* 7 (Jan-Mar, 1898) 383.

<sup>32</sup> "New York City Historic Schools Study, New York City Public School Architecture: A Brief History," Draft, LPC File

<sup>33</sup> See LPC, *Public School 31 Designation Report* and LPC, *Public School 166 Designation Report*. P.S. 31 was demolished in 2015.

<sup>34</sup> The University of Pennsylvania's Collegiate Gothic buildings were primarily designed by Cope & Stewardson. Princeton's were designed by both Cope & Stewardson and Ralph Adams Cram.

<sup>35</sup> Cohen, 33-34; and "New York City Public School Architecture: A Brief History," draft, LPC Research Files (2000). Glen Patton describes the significance and symbolism of the Collegiate Gothic, and especially its construction of an "Anglo-Saxon myth" for American universities, in "American Collegiate Gothic, a Phase of University Architectural Development," *The Journal of Higher Education* 38, no. 1 (January 1967): 1-8. For more on Snyder and the Collegiate Gothic, see LPC, *Public School 31 Designation Report*; in examining Snyder's oeuvre as a whole, it is clear that the Collegiate Gothic was only one of several historical styles he implemented during his tenure. As P.S. 109 demonstrates, multiple styles were sometimes used within the same building.

<sup>36</sup> AKRF Engineering, "Architectural Evaluation of Public School 64 at 605 East 9th Street and Survey of C. B. J.



Snyder Schools,” (June 5, 2006), report delivered to the East Village Community Coalition and the LPC, 4.

<sup>37</sup> “New York City Historic Schools Study, New York City Public School Architecture: A Brief History,” draft, LPC Research Files

<sup>38</sup> 1902 Board of Education Annual Report, 197; The New York Times and other papers carried weekly listings; AKRF, 2; Henry P. Leipziger, “Free Lecture System of New York City,” *Municipal Affairs* 3 (1899), 466, quoted in Cohen, “Art to Educate: A History of Public Art in the New York City Public Schools, 1890-1976,” PhD Diss. (CUNY, 2002), 2-3.

<sup>39</sup> “A New School Building: New Home for Pupils Long Housed in a Tobacco Factory,” *New York Times (NYT)* (March 30, 1901), p. 9.

<sup>40</sup> List of School Buildings, CBJ Snyder File, LPC Research Files; plan and cost data is listed in the *Annual Report of the Board of Education* (New York Municipal Archives, 1898-1901). See also: “Building Intelligence,” *The American Architect & Building News* 63, no. 1210 (March 4, 1899): xii; “Projected Buildings,” *Real Estate Record and Guide (RERG)* (February 18, 1899); “Estimates Receivable,” *RERG* (February 25, 1899); “Contracts Awarded,” *RERG* (March 11, 1899).

<sup>41</sup> See LPC Research Files re: Snyder’s H-plan schools.

<sup>42</sup> “A New School Building,” 9.

<sup>43</sup> For further description, including some of the no-longer-extant interior, see “Public School 109,” National Register Nomination Report (2000). Interior details included wood and glass doors, pressed-metal ceilings, and cove cornices.

<sup>44</sup> Bell, 8.

<sup>45</sup> “Housing Authority Charts Two Projects: Upper East Side Apartments Scheduled – Both Will Be Federally Subsidized, Cost to Top 50 Million, One Development Will be Near Triborough Bridge – Second to Be at 97th Street,” *NYT* (November 1, 1951), p. 31.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. NYCHA Archive, LaGuardia Community College.

<sup>47</sup> Francesco Cordasco and Eugene Bucchioni, *The Puerto Rican Experience: A Sociological Sourcebook* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1973), 183-185.

<sup>48</sup> Bell, 8.

<sup>49</sup> For more on Puerto Rican activism in East Harlem, see: Sonia Song-Ha Lee, *Building a Latino Civil Rights*

*Movement: Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and the Pursuit of Racial Justice in New York City* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

<sup>50</sup> Bell, 8.

<sup>51</sup> National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), *Public School 109, New York, NY (00NR01656)* (listed September 22, 2000), nomination prepared by Kathy Howe.

<sup>52</sup> Artspace PS109 won: the 2014 State Preservation Award from New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation; the 2015 Renaissance Award from Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts; the Lucy G. Moses 2015 Preservation Award from the New York Landmarks Conservancy; the 2015 Preservation Award from The Preservation League of New York; the 2015 Preservation Award from the Victorian Society of New York; and the J. Timothy “Timmy” Anderson Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation from the National Housing and Rehabilitation Association.

## Findings and Designation

Public School 109 (now El Barrio's Artspace PS109)

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and the other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that Public School 109 has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and culture characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, P.S. 109 is architecturally and culturally significant as a Progressive-era elementary school designed by the Superintendent of School Buildings Charles B. J. Snyder; that P.S. 109 combined the eclectic historicism of the Collegiate Gothic style with modern construction methods and an early use of the H-Plan building footprint, embodying the goals of urban educational and social reform at the turn of the 20th century; that it features limestone and brick cladding, and a stylistic expression that joins elements of the late Gothic with French Renaissance motifs and the order of Beaux-Arts planning; that its decorative elements include terracotta ornament such as ribbons, crests of arms, projecting gargoyles, pointed Tudor arch enframements, elaborate dormer windows, and a large copper-clad spire; that it represents only the second time that Snyder used the H-plan layout, which he would adopt as the plan of choice for mid-block school sites; that the H-plan consisted of parallel wings surrounding two street-facing courtyard spaces, and was intended to create large recreational areas while protecting students' access to light and air; that P.S. 109 played an important stabilizing role within the changing community of

East Harlem throughout the 20th century, as the blocks immediately surrounding it were transformed by urban renewal and a NYCHA public housing project, the George Washington Houses, which now surrounds the building; that P.S. 109 was turned into affordable artist housing and underwent an award-winning restoration by Artspace in 2015; that P.S. 109 continues to serve as a reminder of the historic street grid which sat on the border between Yorkville and East Harlem.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark Public School 109 (now El Barrio's Artspace PS109), 215 East 99th Street, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1649, Lot 9 as its Landmark Site.

### Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair

Frederick Bland  
Wellington Chen  
Michael Devonshire  
Michael Goldblum  
Anne Holford-Smith  
Jeanne Lutfy  
Adi Shamir-Baron  
Kim Vauss  
Commissioners



**Public School 109, 215 East 99th Street**  
Barrett Reiter, LPC, March 2018





**Public School 109, East 99th Street Facade**  
Barrett Reiter, LPC, October 2017





**Public School 109, East 99th Street Facade**  
Barrett Reiter, LPC, October 2017





**Public School 109, East 99th Street Facade**  
Barrett Reiter, LPC, October 2017



**Public School 109, East 99th Street Facade**  
Barrett Reiter, LPC, October 2017



**Public School 109, East 99th Street Facade**  
Barrett Reiter, LPC, March 2018



**Public School 109, Eastern Facade**  
Barrett Reiter, LPC, March 2018





**Public School 109, Northern Facade**  
Barrett Reiter, LPC, March 2018



**Public School 109, Northern Facade**  
Barrett Reiter, LPC, March 2018



**Public School 109**  
Barrett Reiter, LPC, March 2018

