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**MAS Comments on Notice of Filing by the New York City School Construction Authority for the Proposed Site Selection for the Construction of a Primary School Facility in Community School District No. 15, Brooklyn**

July 15, 2016

The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS) herein provides comments on the Notice of Filing (NOF) for the proposed site selection of Block 728, Lots 34 and 36, and any other property in the immediate vicinity which may be necessary for the proposed project, for the construction of a new, approximately 300-seat primary school facility in Community School District No. 15, in Brooklyn.

With regard to the overall project, MAS opposes any plan that would involve the demolition of the 18<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct Station House and Stable. Designed by architect George Ingram between 1890 and 1892, both structures are listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places and are individual New York City landmarks. As such, these structures warrant protection and rehabilitation. We urge the School Construction Authority (SCA) to either select an alternate site for the construction of the school, or sensitively preserve the two buildings by incorporating them into any new design.

As part of its site selection process the SCA was required to conduct an alternative sites analysis for eight other potential sites for a school facility in Community School District No. 15 in Brooklyn. Three sites were eliminated from consideration based a variety of issues, (environmental concerns, size/shape of lot, proximity to MTA train line, etc.). A fourth site was eliminated because SCA determined that the existing building could not be renovated to accommodate a pre-kindergarten facility. A fifth site, 177 25<sup>th</sup> Street is now under lease with the Department of Education (DOE) for a 108-seat pre-kindergarten facility. The site at 4002 Fort Hamilton Parkway was deemed too cost-prohibitive based on the building's deteriorated condition. The remaining two sites identified by SCA in the NOF are still undergoing "various studies" to determine if they are appropriate and can accommodate a small public school facility.

We contend that the protected, historic status of the 18<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct Station House and Stable should be an equally important consideration in site selection and offer the following comments:

- Based on the criteria identified in the alternate site analyses, the SCA must consider renovating, as opposed to demolition of, an existing structure in order to construct a school facility.
- We expect the SCA to enter into public review with the appropriate governing historic preservation agencies, namely the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office.
- The SCA must disclose the status of the alternate site analyses at 250-266 46<sup>th</sup> Street and 291-301 24<sup>th</sup> Street, as well as the studies that are currently underway to determine if these sites can accommodate a small public school facility.

- We expect that if, based on the results of the ongoing studies, one or both of the remaining two alternative sites are deemed able to accommodate a school, the current site would be eliminated from consideration.
- The SCA must consider additional sites for a school in Community School District 15 that have not been subject to an alternative site analysis.

To reiterate: in no uncertain terms, the MAS is entirely opposed to demolition of the landmark 18<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct Station House and Stable.