

17 March 2023

Hon. Eric Adams, Mayor
New York City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Adams:

I write to express my enthusiastic support for the landmark designation of the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe at 229-231 West 14th Street, also known as *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* and *Iglesia Católica Guadalupe*. Founded in 1902 as the first national parish for the 45,000 Spanish-speaking Catholics in New York City, and dedicated to the Patron Saint of Mexico, the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe has long been a fixture in New York City's Hispanic and Latinx community.

Historically, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church is a rare and, according to the AIA Guide to New York City, "extraordinary brownstone conversion" of two circa 1850 single-family row houses into a religious space. The establishment of this church was key to the growth of the "Little Spain" neighborhood around 14th Street near the Hudson River. In 1921, architect Gustave E. Steinback designed the Spanish Colonial Baroque-style façade, which was added as part of the remodeling of the building, its style chosen to reflect the cultural heritage of its congregation.

It was an important gathering place for Spanish-speaking Catholics, who came to Our Lady of Guadalupe for weddings, christenings, funeral services, and daily masses and confession offered in both Spanish and English. Other Spanish commercial and cultural institutions soon clustered in the vicinity of the church, and the neighborhood became a hub for Spanish-speaking immigrants from Puerto Rico, Cuba, Mexico, and other parts of Central and South America.

This building has been determined eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places. And, indeed, Our Lady of Guadalupe fits well within the Landmarks Preservation Commission's "Equity Framework" and stated commitment to including and recognizing our city's diverse histories and constituencies.

As those of us who have lived and worked a good part of our lives in New York City derive much pride from its multi-ethnicity and its commitment to diversity, it has been a concern of ours that the city has very few designated landmarks that honor the history of New York City's Hispanic and Latinx populations. This would be a fine opportunity to recognize a place of worship that historically has served those populations.

Mayor Adams, I believe your administration can make a fine contribution to that goal, by giving Our Lady of Guadalupe Church the recognition it deserves and thus lay the foundation for future accomplishments. This would be a powerful symbol of respect and empathy that will be greatly appreciated by our community.

Sincerely,
Orlando José Hernández
Independent writer and Professor Emeritus
Hostos Community College-CUNY

17 March 2023

Hon. Sarah Carroll, Chairperson
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioner Carroll:

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Commissioner Carroll, your support to this petition can make a difference. Giving Our Lady of Guadalupe Church the recognition it deserves would be a powerful symbol of respect and empathy that will be greatly appreciated by our community.

Sincerely,
Orlando José Hernández
Independent writer and Professor Emeritus
Hostos Community College-CUNY