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THE COUNCIL OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

**MARGARET S. CHIN**

COUNCIL MEMBER, 1<sup>ST</sup> DISTRICT, MANHATTAN

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PUBLIC HOUSING  
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CIVIL RIGHTS  
WOMEN'S ISSUES  
AGING

August 30, 2013

Robert Tierney  
Chairman  
Landmarks Preservation Commission  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10007

Re: Little Syria Historic Designation

Dear Chairman Tierney,

I am writing to voice my support for the calendaring and designation of a Little Syria Historic District, composed of 103 Washington Street, the Downtown Community House at 105-107 Washington Street, and the last standing tenement at 109 Washington Street.

Beginning in the late 1800s, the neighborhood adopted myriad elements of the rich cultural tradition of the Middle East, from which many of the immigrants originated. Their entrepreneurial spirit transformed the neighborhood, which came to be known as Little Syria, into a thriving community lined with shops, restaurants and coffeehouses. Here, Arab-, Lebanese-, Syrian-, and Greek Americans raised their families, educated their children, formed religious and community organizations, and became part of the fabric of New York City. The neighborhood cultivated the work of famous New Yorkers, including the renowned poet Kahlil Gibran, whose work continues to inspire people around the world. When the community dispersed, many people moved to the flourishing Arab American neighborhoods in Brooklyn. Their cultural contribution continued in their restaurants and grocery stores such as the popular Sahadi Brothers on Atlantic Avenue.

While the residents of Little Syria may have moved on, the Colonial Revival architecture remains. It is a reminder of the cultural diversity upon which New York City is founded, and one that should be preserved and celebrated for future generations. I hope that you share this sense of history and act quickly to preserve this important part of lower Manhattan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Margaret S. Chin".

Margaret S. Chin  
New York City Council member  
District 1 - Manhattan