Supplementary Listing Record

NRIS Reference Number: SG100003932 Date Listed: 5/20/19

Property Name: Alku & Alku Toinen

County: Kings State: NY

This Property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation

for [signature] 5/20/19

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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Amended Items in Nomination:

In Section 8 of the National Register nomination form, Ethnic Heritage/European/Finnish has been added as an area of significance. The context for this area is fully justified. An excellent Finnish resource.

The NEW YORK SHPO was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

3932

NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2012)

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Alku & Alku Toinen

other names/site number Finnish Home Building Association

name of related multiple property listing N/A

Location

street & number 816 & 826 43rd Street ☐ not for publication

city or town Brooklyn ☐ vicinity

state NY code NY county Kings code 047 zip code 11232

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

__ national X statewide X local

R. David Mackey 3-27-2019

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

DSHPO

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

X entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper 5/20/19 Date of Action

Alku & Alku Toinen
Name of Property

Kings County, NY
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [X] private
- [ ] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [x] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	0	**Total**

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC / Multiple Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC / Multiple Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
REVIVALS / Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete
walls: Brick, Limestone
roof: Modified Bitumen
other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Alku and Alku Toinen, at 816 and 826 43rd Street, are two four-story apartment buildings located in the neighborhood of Sunset Park in Brooklyn, New York, along the south side of 43rd Street. Sunset Park is located on the eastern edge of Brooklyn, near a series of docks associated with the South Brooklyn Marine terminal and an industrial district. It is sandwiched between Greenwood Cemetery to the north, the neighborhood of Bay Ridge to the south, and the neighborhood of Borough Park to the east. The Sunset Park neighborhood primarily consists of early twentieth-century buildings: brick- and/or stone-clad row houses and three- and four-story brick apartment buildings, with a handful of wood framed freestanding or semi-attached houses. Commercial/residential buildings tend to be found along the avenues, such as the main commercial thoroughfare Eighth Avenue, while streets are lined with residential buildings; recent zoning changes have resulted in more out-of-context and out-of-scale commercial and residential construction. Alku and Alku Toinen lie one block east of Sunset Park, a public park established in 1890 with a recreation center and pool built by the WPA in 1936. The south side of 43rd Street between 8th and 9th Avenue is composed of 3- to 4-story residential apartment buildings. Along the north side of 43rd Street between 8th and 9th Avenues, there are a few outcroppings of two-story brick clad attached houses among a variety of 3- to 7-story residential apartment buildings.

The street is lined by rectangular planters with street trees, and the sidewalk runs up to the edge of the buildings. The properties begin approximately 120 feet and 180 feet, respectively, east of Eighth Avenue on lot sizes measuring 60 feet wide by 100 feet in depth. The nominated parcels are the lots historically associated with the Finnish Home Building Association's Alku and Alku Toinen cooperative apartments.

Narrative Description

The property developed by the Finnish Home Building Association property includes two apartment buildings: Alku and Alku Toinen.

Alku, 1916 (1 contributing building)

Maxwell Cantor and Boris Dorfman

Alku, located at 816 43rd Street, is a four-story, five-bay by eight-bay, I-shaped dark red and black English bond brick apartment building with a flat roof. Designed in a modest Classical Revival style, the building features limestone details, decorative brickwork, brick and limestone pilasters, and decorative limestone panels and cartouches. The building retains its historic fenestration pattern, but none of the original windows remain; the building currently has six-over-one vinyl sash on the first floor and one-over-one vinyl sash on the upper floors. On the first floor, the central entrance has double doors with metal grilles, upon which house numbers "816" are attached. It is framed by a limestone surround with a central corbeled keystone. The entrance is flanked by four sets of paired sash windows, each of which has limestone surrounds framed by projecting brickwork. A limestone band runs across the façade between the first and second stories. On the upper stories, the outer bays, which all have tripartite windows, are framed by projecting pilasters. The second

and third stories are framed by one continuous pilaster made up of brick headers with limestone caps and bases. A limestone panel is located between the second and third story windows. The tops of the columns end at a brick and limestone entablature with dentil and cartouche detailing which connects to a limestone band running across the façade. On the fourth story, the outer bays are framed by limestone pilasters. On the second through fourth floors, the central bays each have four windows, each with a brick surround and limestone sill. A historic-period fire escape is located on the center of the façade, running from the second through fourth floor; it ends on a limestone balcony supported by large limestone corbels directly above the entrance. The façade is capped by a wide band of stacked brick headers, a third limestone band, and a parapet with English bond and stacked brick detailing. The parapet features cartouches on the outer bays and a projecting brick frame detail along the center bay.

All secondary/off-street facades are finished with common red brick painted with a white cementitious coating. The granite/rubble foundation wall is also partially exposed approximately 3’ above the yard and is coated. Where it runs along the property line, the west elevation is absent of any windows. Where it steps in to form the side yard, there are paired double-hung windows in each bay, and single windows on angled walls in the corners. The north and south walls facing the interior courtyard also have paired double-hung windows. Window openings are supported by steel lintels and/or brick arches, and have bluestone sills. There is one side door centered along the west facade leading into the building and one underpass opening located along the north-facing return wall which leads to the basement and/or the backyard.

The east elevation touches Alku Toinen at the property line and steps in to form a central courtyard shared by both buildings. A brick chimney projects slightly from the northeast corner of the courtyard. Each of the bays facing the courtyard features a single or paired double-hung window. There is an underpass opening located along the north-facing and south-facing return wall which leads to the basement/yards/street level. On the south elevation, each floor has eight single double-hung windows. The fire escape is centered along the facade. There are two openings for underpasses leading to the basement/yards.

On the interior, Alku is divided into four floors and has a total of 16 apartments. The first floor is divided into a vestibule, X-shaped central hallway, four apartments, and stairhall. The first floor vestibule is finished with marble wainscoting, painted walls with decorative plaster frames, rectangular mirrors, crown molded ceilings, and marble base trim. An interior stair with marble treads and risers leads to a secondary in-swinging French door with glass transom framed with marble trim.

The central hallway divides the first floor plan into two apartments at the front and two apartments in the rear. The hallway provides access to the open building stairwell, located along the west (most-external) wall. Building stairwell landings are fairly square in shape. On each floor, the floors have hexagonal mosaic tile with rectangular red, gray, and black mosaic tiles used to create a chain pattern along the edges. The walls have plaster frame detailing and wide, denticulated crown molding with pilaster details, and marble base trim.

The upper floors each have a hallway, stairhall, and four apartments. The upper floors are accessed via a metal staircase, typical of twentieth century apartment buildings in New York City. The staircase is finished with marble treads, metal risers, metal end posts, and a wood handrail; balusters are metal pickets with curled metal elements. Staircase walls and upper floor levels are finished with plaster and/or wallpaper and marble base trim.

All apartment doors are original kalamein hollow metal door and frames, currently painted to achieve a wood effect, with marble door saddles. Marble trim surrounds first floor apartment doors, and wood trim surrounds apartment doors on the upper floors. Each apartment has five rooms; each room has a window. The predominant apartment layout is an L-shaped plan with reasonably sized square rooms. The first room off the hallway is the second bedroom, followed by the bathroom and kitchen stacked together. Subsequent rooms (living room, dining room or master bedroom) can be accessed from the hall or through the kitchen. While these layouts remain intact, finishes in each apartment have been updated over time.

Alku Toinen, 1917 (1 contributing building)
Eric O. Holmgren

Alku Toinen, located at 826 43rd Street, is a four-story, five-bay by eight-bay, I-shaped yellow and red brick Flemish bond brick apartment building with a flat roof. With slightly more modest detailing than Alku, the building features patterned brickwork and limestone details. The building retains its historic fenestration pattern. With the exception of two first floor transoms with square windows, located in the southeasternmost two bays, none of the original windows remain; the building has nine-over-one and one-over-one vinyl windows throughout. On the first floor, the central entrance has double doors, a transom with metal grilles and an eared limestone surround with ALKU TOINEN carved at the top. The entrance is flanked by four sets of paired windows, each of which has a limestone surround. A limestone band runs between the first and second stories. On second through fourth stories, the outer bays, which all have tripartite windows, are framed by continuous projecting red brick header and limestone pilasters. A rectangular pattern made of red brick laid in a soldier course is located between each floor. On the second through fourth stories, the central bays each have four windows, which are framed by a red brick patterned surround and have limestone sills. A historic-period fire escape is located on the center of the façade, running from the second through fourth floors; it ends on a limestone balcony supported by large limestone corbels directly above the entrance. The façade is capped by a band of red brick, a wide band of stacked brick headers, which has a pattern of red brick in a diamond pattern, a second limestone band, and a parapet with Flemish bond and stacked brick detailing. The parapet has angled outer bays and a central, rectangular inset red brick header detail.

All secondary/off-street facades are finished with common red brick painted with a white cementitious coating. The granite/rubble foundation wall is also partially exposed approximately 3’ above the yard and is coated. Where it runs along the property line, the east elevation is absent of any windows. Where it steps in to form the side yard, there are paired double-hung windows in each bay, and single windows on angled walls in the corners. The north and south walls facing the interior courtyard also have paired double-hung windows. Window openings are supported by steel lintels and/or brick arches, and have bluestone sills. There is one side door centered along the east facade leading into the building and one underpass opening located along the north-facing return wall which leads to the basement and/or the backyard.

The west elevation touches Alku at the property line and steps in to form a central courtyard shared by both buildings. A brick chimney projects slightly from the northwest corner of the courtyard. Each of the bays facing the courtyard feature a single or paired double-hung window. There is an underpass opening located along the north-facing and south-facing return wall, which leads to the basement/yards/street level. On the south elevation, each floor has eight single double-hung windows. The fire escape is centered along the facade. There are two openings for underpasses leading to the basement/yards.

On the interior, Alku Toinen is divided into four floors and has a total of 16 apartments. The first floor is divided into a vestibule, X-shaped central hallway, four apartments, and stairhall. The first floor vestibule is finished marbleized wall-papered walls, painted plaster framed panels, rectangular mirrors, crown molded ceilings and marble base trim. An interior stair with marble treads and risers leads to a secondary in-swinging quasi Art-Deco styled French door framed with marble trim.

The central hallway divides the first floor plan into two apartments at the front and two apartments in the rear. The hallway provides access to the open building stairwell, located along the east (most-external) wall. Building stairwell landings are fairly square in shape. On each floor, the floors have mosaic tile laid in herringbone pattern with perimeters detailed in hexagonal tan and black tile in chain patterns. The walls have plaster frame detailing and wide, denticulated crown molding with pilaster details, and marble base trim.

The upper floors each have a hallway, stairhall, and four apartments. The upper floors are accessed via a metal staircase, typical of twentieth century apartment buildings in New York City. The staircase is finished with marble treads, metal risers, metal end posts, and a wood handrail; balusters are metal pickets with curled metal elements. Staircase walls and upper floor levels are finished with marbleized wallpaper, marble base trim.

All apartment doors are original kalamein hollow metal door and frames, currently painted to achieve a wood effect, with marble door saddles. Marble trim surrounds first floor apartment doors, and wood trim surrounds apartment doors on the upper floors. Each apartment has five rooms; room has a window. The apartment layout is predominantly an L-shaped plan of reasonably sized/square rooms. The first room off the hallway is the second bedroom, followed by the bathroom and kitchen stacked together. Subsequent rooms (living room, dining room or master bedroom) can be accessed from the hall or through the kitchen. While these layouts remain intact, finishes in each apartment have been updated over time.

Alku & Alku Toinen
Name of Property

Kings County, NY
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [X] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [X] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History
Architecture

Period of Significance

1916 – ca. 1955

Significant Dates

1916, 1917

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Maxwell Cantor & Boris Dorfman (Alku)
Eric O. Holmgren (Alku Toinen)

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance has been drawn to reflect the history of the Finnish cooperative housing movement, which started in 1916 when the Finnish Home Building Association constructed Alku, and ended ca. 1955, when Finnish families no longer held the majority ownership and cooperative documents were translated into English.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Alku (New Beginning) and Alku Toinen (Second Beginning), the buildings constructed by the Finnish Home Building Association in 1916 and 1917, respectively, are significant under Criterion A in the area of social history at the state level as the first purpose-built true cooperative apartment buildings to be constructed in New York State. Cooperative entities are defined by their non-profit, limited dividend group ownership structure and their adherence to the founding principles of the cooperative movement. Alku and Alku Toinen also have potential national significance, given that many sources suggest that these are the first known cooperative apartments established in the United States.[1] By the time Alku and Alku Toinen were completed, a growing number of Finnish immigrants populated Sunset Park—so much so that eventually it was called "Finntown."[2] The two buildings were the first residential non-profit people's co-operative in New York City and New York State, built by and for Finnish laborers, which operated based on the Rochdale principles established in 1844. These principles, which include democratic control, a nonprofit structure, voluntary membership with individual economic participation, and concern for community, set the foundation for the operation of cooperatives internationally and remain at the core of the cooperative movement.

Brooklyn's Finnish community, which had grown during the early twentieth century, was familiar with cooperative systems due to their popularity in Finland. In response to the housing crisis in New York City, the lack of housing that met their needs, and the discrimination they faced as new immigrants, a group of working-class Finnish builders established the Finnish Home Building Association to work cooperatively to build suitable and affordable housing for their community. Each family in the cooperative contributed funds and skills to the project and were together responsible for repaying loans from community members and a cooperative bank. By envisioning and constructing the Alku and Alku Toinen cooperative apartments, the Finnish Home Building Association played an important role in launching a movement that became "one of the most provocative in the history of housing in America. It marks a successful attempt by workers' organizations to better the lives of their members without having to rely on speculative builders or social reformers."[3] While Finns were familiar with cooperative ownership, the project was groundbreaking in New York State. As most

[1] "The oldest association covered in the survey is the oldest housing organization in the country, formed on a strictly cooperative basis, of which the Bureau of Labor Statistics has record. This group—Finnish Housing Association, "Alku," Brooklyn, NY was formed in 1916 and erected two buildings with a total of 30 apartments." United States Department of Labor & Housing and Home Finance Agency, *Housing Cooperatives in the United States, 1949-1950: Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, No. 1093* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office. 1951), 10; Gerald Sazama, "A Brief History of Affordable Housing Cooperatives in the United States," *University of Connecticut Department of Economics Working Paper Series* (1996): 1.

[2] F.W. Dodge Corporation, *Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* 97, no. 2514 (1916): 778. Columbia University Libraries Digital Collections; Maurice Loughlin, "Ever Hear of the Little Finland in America? It's Right Here in Brooklyn, Called 'Finntown,'" *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 29, 1932, 7.

[3] Andrew S. Dolkart, "Homes for People: Non-Profit Cooperatives in New York City, 1916-1929," reprinted in *Cooperative Housing Journal* (1993): 30-31.

other cooperative ventures were food-based, the State Department of Agriculture regulated all cooperatives, including housing cooperatives, for decades. Alku and Alku Toinen were lauded by national cooperative publications, gained state and local notice, and were immediately filled and appreciated by members of the Finnish community in Sunset Park. The buildings maintained a stable community which was committed to following community rules and bylaws based on cooperative principles. Each apartment owner had one vote in matters related to the operation of their building, attended regular ownership meetings, and was responsible for paying a small monthly maintenance fee. Apartment rates remained stable throughout the period of significance, not beginning to rise in response to market rates until after the period of significance. Following the model established by the Finnish Home Building Association's ownership structure and building design philosophy, other groups of Finns established their own cooperatives. These spread rapidly within the Finnish enclaves of Sunset Park and the Bronx through ca. 1930. Ultimately, approximately 30 Finnish cooperatives were established in Brooklyn in existing and purpose-built apartment buildings. Many continued to operate after WWII, when the non-profit cooperative became the favored method of housing in New York City.[4] Alku and Alku Toinen were an immediate success, contributed to Finnish social and cultural cohesiveness, and demonstrate the accomplishments of immigrants working together toward a common goal. While the population of the apartments remained stable, the demographic of the cooperative ownership of the buildings was no longer predominantly Finnish by ca. 1955. While the cooperative's documentation changed to English during this period, its founding rules and principles were retained. Both Alku and Alku Toinen remain under cooperative ownership and operation.

The buildings are additionally significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture at the local level as examples of progressive apartment building construction during the period. Designed by first and second generation immigrant architects Maxwell Cantor, Boris Dorfman, and Eric O. Holmgren, the buildings have simple classical revival architectural ornamentation typical of apartment buildings of the period. All three architects worked prolifically in Brooklyn, and were particularly known for their work within Eastern European immigrant communities. While the architects established a basic form and design based on typical area apartment building designs, they worked closely with the Finnish Home Building Association, who had strong input into the materials and floor plans for the buildings that they would be constructing themselves. While the Finnish families who established the cooperatives wanted attractive and affordable housing, they were especially interested in building the kind of light-filled, open living spaces that were impossible to find elsewhere. While New York City's tenement acts and groups of reformers worked to improve living conditions in its tenements, most working-class families were crowded into buildings often lacking available light and air and the basics in sanitation. In contrast, Alku and Alku Toinen boasted five rooms each, modern conveniences, and decorative touches like marble window sills. The efficient plan and generous, light-filled units that were the hallmark of the buildings were lauded by contemporary publications as exemplary examples of housing being constructed for working class, immigrant populations. These attractive plans and collective ownership structure served as the inspiration for nearly two dozen Finnish cooperative apartment buildings constructed in Brooklyn and the Bronx into the 1930s. Finnish-built cooperative buildings vary in size, massing, design, and plan in a reflection of the needs, means, preferences, abilities and number of founding members of the cooperative in addition to prevailing stylistic trends. Rather than copying the floor plan designed by members of Alku and Alku Toinen, members of Brooklyn's other Finnish cooperatives adapted the ideas behind it for their own buildings, creating efficient plans with similar light-filled, open units.

[4] Dolkart, "Homes for People," 31.

Finnish Immigration to New York City

Finnish people began immigrating to the United States in the 1860s, but peak immigration occurred in the early twentieth century in response to poverty in rural regions and political tensions created by the Russian Empire after 1894.[5] Finland had become a Russian Grand Duchy in 1809 when the Finnish-speaking regions of Sweden were ceded to Russia following the Finnish War fought between Sweden and Russia (1808-1809); prior to this time, from the thirteenth century to 1809, Finland had been part of Sweden. Finland would not win its independence until 1917. Attempts to make Finland more dependent on Russia in the latter half of the nineteenth century were met with resistance from the Finns, who had previously enjoyed relative political and cultural autonomy. In 1881, Czars Alexander III and Nicholas II instituted a policy of Russification, which sought to impose Russian culture, language, society, economy, and politics on all Russian territories. Strongly opposed to this policy, Finns banded together to form a nationalistic movement. They successfully managed to prevent some oppressive measures and, within this same time period, developed a trade union movement and a labor movement.[6]

The first Finnish immigrants began coming to the United States settled after crop failures hit Scandinavia in the late nineteenth century. The first wave of Finns, many of whom were shipbuilders, sailors, and carpenters, settled in southwest Brooklyn and found employment on the docks; as a result, they established the first Finntowns in areas near harbors. The largest Finntowns were located in New York in Harlem in Manhattan (between 120th and 130 Streets near Madison Avenue) and Sunset Park in Brooklyn, and later in the Bronx. The Finns who settled in Harlem were mainly housemaids, carpenters, tailors, and construction workers; those who settled in Brooklyn were sailors, carpenters, and tailors. The neighborhood of Sunset Park also attracted Finnish immigrants, who were businessmen, engineers, teachers, and mechanics. It is estimated that in the 1920s and 1930s there were 8,000-9,000 Finns in Harlem and in Brooklyn. While immigration slowed by the 1930s, New York's Finnish community remained robust. By 1960, there were over 10,000 first- and second-generation Finns in New York City.[7]

Finns and the modern cooperative movement

The modern cooperative movement is founded in the Rochdale Principles, a set of ideals for working cooperatively that were established in England in 1844. English laborers living in the Town of Rochdale formed The Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers to address the oppressive economic conditions resulting from the Industrial Revolution and capitalism. The society's founding documents, now known as the Rochdale Principles, laid out a successful and portable model of values and principles for running a cooperative organization or society. The most important of the Rochdale principles are that each cooperative member has one vote and that there are limited returns on capital. In addition, they also emphasized voluntary and open

[5] Katri Ekman, *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York, 1891-1976* (New York: Greater New York Finnish Bicentennial Planning Committee, Inc., 1976), 5.
[6] Savele Syrjala, *The Story of A Cooperative: a brief history of the United Cooperative Society of Fitchburg* (Fitchburg: United Co-operative Society, 1947), 8, 12.
[7] The 1960 census counted 10,306 Finns living in NYC; 4637 of these reported Finnish as their first language. Esko Tommola, *Uuden Maan Rakentajat: New Yorkin Suomalaisten Tarin (New World Builders: New York's Finnish Story* (Helsinki: Otava, 1988), 130.

membership, democratic control, member economic participation, autonomy and independence, education, cooperation with organizations with similar values, and concern for community. Starting with only 28 members who each contributed one pound sterling, a century later the Rochdale Society had over 30,000 members and one million pounds in assets.[8]

In 1920, the concept of cooperative collective ownership was described as follows:

> Cooperation, when spelled with a capital "C," refers to a definite system of reorganization of production and distribution for the service of the people rather than the profit of individuals. It is a movement of people to organize themselves in order to take into their own hands the administration of certain distributive and productive functions which are now administered by private interest for private benefit. It is claimed to be an application of the principles of democracy to industrial and economic life.[9]

The cooperative movement became strong in Finland during the early twentieth century. Consumer cooperatives gathered momentum in this period in Finland, as they did throughout northern Europe more generally. In fact, Finland's co-operative movement was one of the strongest in the west and grew over the course of the twentieth century; co-operatives still account for about 60 percent of all agricultural produce and farm supplies in Finland today.[10] The country's sparse settlement, harsh climate, and rugged terrain made it imperative for people to work together, and there was already a long tradition in Finland of communities banding together for purposes of harvesting, hunting, and building houses (with formal rules and elected leaders). These early co-operative ventures made the Finns "susceptible to the co-operative ideas which came to Finland from other countries, especially Germany, after the middle of the nineteenth century."[11]

The first book on the Rochdale co-operative experiences in England was published in Finnish in 1866 and the idea made significant headway in the 1870s and 1880s as a result of public outreach. In Finland, as in most of the other Northern countries, co-operatives adapted the Rochdale principles to their own form of "active price policy," a philosophy of price competition which argues "that lower prices are as important an advantage to members as dividends."[12] During this time several societies were founded by factory workers, particularly in the larger cities. In 1899, Hannes Gebhard, a professor at Helsinki University and the acknowledged "father of Finnish co-operation," published an influential book on cooperation and founded the Pellervo Society, which spread the movement to the countryside. Cooperation was ideally suited to handle the particular political and economic problems workers and farmers faced in the late nineteenth century. It provided a means of educating Finns in democratic processes for the achievement of independence from czarist Russia. Economically, its practical results helped counteract market fluctuations, high interest rates, and the unequal trade balance enforced by Russia. It also made sense for a country where most farms were small and family owned, and consumers had to make the most of their limited incomes. By 1903, there were 80 local cooperative societies (31 rural, 44 urban, 5 other). The movement was also buoyed by the spread of socialism during this period. These societies then formed alliances and joint ventures with each other that solidified

[8] Feliciano R. Fajardo and Fabian P. Abella, *Cooperatives*, third edition (Manila, Philippines: Rex Book Store, 1997), 12-13; Rochdale Pioneers Museum, "The Rochdale Principles." https://www.rochdalepioneersmuseum.coop/about-us/the-rochdale-principles/

[9] New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, "What is Cooperation?" *Food and Markets* 2, no. 21 (1920): 4.

[10] F. Ray Marshall, "The Finnish Cooperative Movement," *Land Economics* 34, no. 3 (1958): 227.

[11] Marshall, "The Finnish Cooperative Movement," 228.

[12] Marshall, "The Finnish Cooperative Movement," 234.

cooperation. Following the 1905 uprisings in Russia and Finland, cooperative societies increased 250 percent by 1908. In addition to these factors, the spread of co-operative movements in Finland established a culture of cooperation that received very little organized opposition. By 1914, the majority of the Finnish population was involved in some form of cooperation.[13]

Finns who immigrated to New York City brought their familiarity with these forms of organization with them, and used them to help adjust to the challenges of living in a new country and adapting to a new language and culture while maintaining cultural identity. In New York, language barriers inhibited many Finnish immigrants from obtaining jobs within their particular trades and from finding decent housing.[14] Coupled with these struggles was a nostalgia for the traditions left behind, an awareness of the effects of economic exploitation, a belief in mutual aid and self-education, religious ties to the Lutheran Church, and a growing network of Finnish newspapers that kept immigrants informed. Forming cooperative organizations was a practical way for Finnish Americans to maintain cultural identity, distribute Finnish products, and defend themselves against exploitation. In this way, they were able to co-exist as Finns while also developing a new identity in America.[15]

The fact that Finns were a relatively "new" group in the U.S. also opened them up to discrimination by employers and other immigrant groups who already had a stronger foothold in the country. Some saw their language as "proof" that Finns were not European but Asian and used it to argue that Finns should be barred from U.S. citizenship under the Asian Exclusion Act of the early 1900s. Common slurs against Finns included "Finlander," "China Swede," and "roundhead."[16] The success of Finnish immigrants who came to the U.S. can be attributed in part to the Finnish national motto "Sisu," which means "grit" or "perseverance." In *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York,* Katri Ekman writes: "What the Finns found on American shores was not gold, but rather a morass of hardships into which, had it not been for their inborn SISU, or indomitable fortitude, they would have floundered and sunk."[17] Finlandia University in Michigan defines "Sisu" as the following:

> To the Finnish people, sisu has a mystical, almost magical meaning. Sisu is a unique Finnish concept. It is a Finnish term that can be roughly translated into English as strength of will, determination, perseverance, and acting rationally in the face of adversity.
>
> Sisu is not momentary courage, but the ability to sustain that courage. It is a word that cannot be fully translated. It defines the Finnish people and their character. It stands for the philosophy that what must be done will be done, regardless of cost.
>
> Sisu is an inherent characteristic of the Finnish people. You might call it backbone, spunk, stamina, guts, or drive and perseverance. It is a measure of integrity that surpasses the hardship and sees through to the end.

[13] Xsusha Carlyann Flandro, Christine Huh, Negin Maleki, Mariana Sarango-Manacas, and Jennifer Schork, "Progressive Housing Progressive Housing in New York City: A Closer Look at Model Tenements and Finnish Cooperatives," Columbia Graduate School of Architecture, Preservation, and Planning, Spring 2008, 39. https://www.scribd.com/document/2963635/Progressive-Housing-in-New-York-City-A-Closer-Look-at-Model-Tenements-and-Finnish-Cooperatives.

[14] Ekman, *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York*, 60.

[15] Ekman, *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York*, 2; Syrjala, *The Story of A Cooperative,* 11.

[16] Mary Losure and Dan Olson, "Finland Was a Poor Country: Part 2," Minnesota Public Radio, June 10, 1997. http://news.minnesota.publicradio.org/features/199706/10_losurem_finnpoor/finnpoor2.htm

[17] Ekman, *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York*, 5.

> Sisu is the quality that lets them pick up, move on, and learn something from previous failures. It's the hard-jawed integrity that makes them pay their war debts in full. In short, it's the indomitable will that sets Finns apart and explains many of the incredible things they do.[18]

Finnish American aid societies in the United States offered economic and employment services to Finnish immigrants, as well as educational, social, recreational, and political assistance. Among social democratic Finns in particular, the local association often served as the community center the way that the church did for other immigrant groups.[19] Labor activities took place at local meeting halls, or "halli" in Finnish. These halls were places where Finns could raise money for other Finns in need and discuss local problems, including the lack of quality housing.

The first and perhaps most noted of these in the region was Brooklyn's Finnish Aid Society Imatra, founded in 1890 by John A. Koski, a building engineer. The organization catered to the inhabitants of Brooklyn's Finntown.[20] By 1903, Imatra had founded the Imatra League, a Finnish-American workers' union consisting of approximately 40 subdivisions across the U.S. and Canada, with a total membership of around 2,000. Starting in 1906, Imatra began publishing its own Finnish-language newspaper, the *New Yorkin Uutiset (New York News*). The circulation soared to 15,000 subscribers in the 1920s and 30s.[21]

The society at first operated as a workers' association and held its meetings at various places in Brooklyn. However, in 1908, Imatra's all-Finnish membership built its own 3-story meeting house, Imatra Hall, at 740 40th Street (extant; currently owned and occupied by a Hispanic church). The lot had been purchased for $35,000 after money was secured through loans. The building was designed by architect Mauritz Rosenquist and work was performed by Finnish masons and carpenters who "toiled evenings and weekends without any recompense."[22] The building served as a community center with a bar and sauna, and it hosted lively dances, theater performances, and dinners called "iltamat" in Finnish.

The building was one of the first in the area to have its own generator to produce electricity. It was reported that the Finns bought and installed their own generator due to the exorbitant $3,000 cost that the Edison Company would charge to install electricity.[23] Community histories recall that the installation of this system "was a historical event in the Finntown hill and caused a lot of talk in the neighbourhood [sic] since it was the Imatra Society that brought the first electric lights to the Buck Hill" ("Buck Hill" or "Goat Hill" [Pukin Mäki] was the name Finns gave to the green now known as Sunset Park that lies between 41st and 45th and 5th and 7th Avenues). [24] Imatra Hall was the center of the entire Finnish community in New York, drawing members from

[18] "Our Finnish Heritage," Finlandia University. https://www.finlandia.edu/about/our-finnish-heritage/
[19] Ekman, *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York*, 119-22.
[20] Ekman, *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York,* 121
[21] "A Little Bit of Scandinavia Club recalls Sunset Park´s Past," *New York Newsday* February 27, 1992, 27.
[22] Ekman, *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York*, 124-125.
[23] Ekman, *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York*, 127.
[24] Imatra Hall Centennial Celebration Souvenir Journal (1991), Finnish Home Building Association archives; Mauno Laurila and Anja Laurila, *Memories of Finnish Harlem, 1888-1955: Historical Details of the First Finnish-American Neighborhood in New York City* (Brooklyn: Imatra Foundation, 2011). This history includes the story of a married couple who first met at an event at Imatra Hall, and a Navy sailor who lived in Harlem but reconnected with a shipmate at Imatra Hall.

other areas of the city, such as Harlem. In addition, *New Yorkin Uutiset* occupied the basement of Imatra Hall from October 15, 1908 until October 1929, when the newspaper moved to 4418 Eighth Avenue.[25]

In a meeting at Imatra Hall, a group of Finnish carpenters decided to establish the Finnish American Building Company to build homes in Sunset Park. The company began by constructing one- and two- family houses between 41st Street and 43rd Street and 7th and 8th Avenues for Finnish immigrants.[26] Real estate records from 1909 show the corporation constructed 10 attached row houses. Almost without exception, these homes found either a Finnish buyer or Finnish tenants.[27] This company was the historical predecessor for the group that later constructed the Finnish cooperative apartments in Brooklyn, New York's first true housing cooperative.

Building New York State's First Housing Cooperative

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, New York's immigrant population continued to grow. The increase in population made it challenging, if not impossible, to find quality housing stock at a reasonable price. In the turbulent years before and during World War I, various workers groups went on rent strike and burned effigies of their landlords to protest poor living conditions and exorbitant rents. Frustrated by housing conditions and inspired by the construction of new high rise apartments going up in their Sunset Park neighborhood, a group of Finnish carpenters decided to explore the idea of building cooperative housing.

This small group of Finns and their families met in 1915 and decided to take action, making the groundbreaking decision to build their own homes based on a cooperative model. Ownership would be shared equally among all the residents, with the goal being affordable housing, not profit. The Finnish families who established the Finnish Home Building Association were trailblazers. In addition to building and financing as a group, the idea of an apartment building owned cooperatively by a building association was new. While "home clubs" or "housing clubs" had begun to gain popularity for luxury apartments in Manhattan during the late nineteenth century, they were not true cooperatives. These buildings, such as The Gramercy, were organized as joint-stock companies and did not follow cooperative principles. By contrast, the Finnish Home Building Association's non-profit, limited equity, collective ownership structure was founded using the Rochdale Cooperative principles. Their efforts resulted in the establishment of the first true cooperative apartment buildings in New York City: Alku (New Beginning) and Alku Toinen (Second Beginning).[28]

The group began looking for property in their neighborhood that would be suitable for the project. New York City Fire Insurance and property survey maps show that the property was undeveloped and located at the "city line" between the city of Brooklyn and the town of New Utrecht from the 1870s through 1890s. By 1903, attached rowhouses began to populate the area between 39th Street and 43rd Street and between 7th and 9th Avenues, and by 1916, in-fill development and paving of roadways with asphalt occurred within these same

[25] Ekman, *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York*, 127.
[26] Ekman, *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York*, 60.
[27] Tommola, *Uuden Maan Rakentajat*, 129-30.
[28] United States Department of Labor & Housing and Home Finance Agency, *Housing Cooperatives in the United States, 1949-1950: Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, No. 1093* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951), 10.

boundaries, along with new development advancing southward in the neighborhood.[29] The Finns bought land in the neighborhood where their people were already established. Aware of the increasing local pressures on land, the association moved quickly. They proposed building a four-story apartment building for sixteen interested families on 43rd Street.[30]

According to Finnish Home Building Association's original deeds, it purchased the property for this first building from Stewart McDougall in 1916; it purchased the adjacent lot in a separate transaction later that year.[31] Each family chipped in $500 (almost $11,000, adjusted to current values). The association borrowed $12,000 from other neighborhood residents in the form of what were known as "comrade loans" and obtained the remaining $25,000 as a loan from Workers' Credit Union, a Finnish cooperative bank in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. Fitchburg was home to another large community of Finnish settlers who came to the U.S. after the Civil War; these Finns had formed the Workers' Credit Union cooperative bank in 1914.[32] The committee of six cooperators who oversaw the financing and construction included: V. Rousko, J. Aalto, P. Halko, Hj. Gronman, J. Hoppu and H. Immonen.[33] By the time Alku Toinen was planned, the co-owners had to pay between $2,500-$3,000 depending on the location of the individual apartment within the building that would occupy.

The Finnish Home Building Association's six-member building committee worked with American attorney and socialist Henry Slobodin to handle getting the necessary building papers. This task was slowed by municipal authorities that found the idea of joint ownership strange.[34] At the time, it the idea was precedent-setting, not only in New York City, but also in New York State. New York's earliest non-profit housing co-operatives were classified by the state not as housing but under the Department of Agriculture, which regulated cooperative farms. In a 1920 article about the growth of cooperative-owned entities in New York City in *Food and Markets*, the monthly periodical published by the New York State Division of Farms and Markets, the Finnish Home Building Association was listed as the *only* regulated housing cooperative alongside 21 predominantly food-based organizations. Correspondence with the Department of Agriculture in the 1930s is still on file at Finnish Home Building Association.[35] Decades later, the United States Department of Labor recognized Alku as

[29] Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "Plate 12: [Bounded by 4rd Street, Fourteenth Avenue, 58th Street, Eighth Avenue, 49th Street and Ninth Avenue.]" The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1890. http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e2-49cc-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99; Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "Brooklyn, Vol. 1, Double Page Plate No. 37; Part of Wards 8 & 30, Section 3; [Map bounded by 9th Ave., 49th St.; Including 6th Ave., 36th St.]" The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1903. http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/64b4acd6-f112-4e40-e040-e00a18063442; Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "Brooklyn, Vol. 1, Double Page Plate No. 10; Part of Wards 8 & 30, Section 3; [Map bounded by 9th Ave., 49th St., 8th Ave.; Including 60th St., 5th Ave., 39th St.]" The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1916. http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/6c05633e-3be7-b9cf-e040-e00a18063bc7

[30] Ekman, *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York*, 61; New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, "Pictures of Successful Cooperative Undertakings in New York City," *Food and Markets* 2, no. 21 (1920): 8-15.

[31] Stewart McDougall to Finnish Home Building Association "ALKU", Inc., Land Deed for Block 733, Lot 13, May 18, 1916; Stewart McDougall to Finnish Home Building Association "ALKU", Inc., Land Deed for Block 733, November 11 1916.

[32] Syrjala, *The Story of A Cooperative*, 10.

[33] Ekman, *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York*, 30.

[34] Tommola, *Uuden Maan Rakentajat*, 129-30.

[35] New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, "Consumers' Cooperation in New York City," *Foods and Markets* 2, no. 21 (1920): 7; Letter from The State of New York Department of Agriculture and Markets and Finnish Home Building Association, March 9, 1937. Letter relates to required filing required by the Cooperative Corporations

"oldest housing organization in the country, formed on a strictly cooperative basis, of which the Bureau of Labor Statistics has record."[36]

Dr. James P. Warbasse, the founder of the Cooperative League of the United States of America, interviewed members of the Finnish Home Building Association and wrote one of the most comprehensive contemporary accounts of the project. Focusing on Alku, he described how the group got the project started:

> There were less than a dozen members at first, all being working people. They proposed to build a sixteen-family apartment house, and found themselves facing the problem of raising $45,000.
>
> Finland is one of the most strongly organized cooperative countries on the other side, so these Brooklyn Finns were not appalled by the magnitude of their enterprise. Each paid in weekly installments to the communal treasury until they had $8,000. With this they bought a building plot. Having acquired the land, they went to the Cooperative Bank in Fitchburg, Mass., and raised enough money on a mortgage loan to begin building operations. When this money had been spent they had the foundations and parts of the walls of their cooperative house built. That was something material, so they went to the bank again, and on a second mortgage they raised enough money to finish their house. Too much emphasis cannot be placed on the important part cooperative banking plays in facilitating cooperative house building, for this eliminates the profit-making element from the financing of building operations.[37]

The families set the project in motion quickly. The property deed for Alku was signed May 18, 1916, building plans were filed and announced in the May 20, 1916 issue of *Real Estate Record and Builders Guide*, the permit was issued on May 23, 1916 and construction was completed by December.[38] The group did not waste any time before beginning construction on the second building. The deed for Alku Toinen was dated November 13, 1916 and construction was completed in 1917.

Alku, located at 816 43rd Street, was designed by Maxwell Cantor (1887-1967) & Boris Dorfman (1892-1964). Their office was listed as 373 Fulton Street, Brooklyn. Alku Toinen, located at 826 43rd Street, was designed by Eric O. Holmgren (1879-1951); his office was listed as 371 Fulton Street. While only limited information has been collected on these men, all three were first or second generation Eastern European immigrants, were members of the Brooklyn Society of Architects and American Institute of Architects, and designed a significant number of residential homes, apartment buildings, and commercial buildings in Brooklyn. The Finnish Home Building Association also retains several original architectural drawings for both buildings as well as the 1916 written specifications by Eric O. Holmgren, establishing the materials, standards, work procedures for construction.

Maxwell Cantor, a Russian Jew, immigrated to New York City in 1893 and began working as an architect soon after the turn of the twentieth century.[39] Newspaper articles published in the *New York Times* and *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* indicate that Cantor was active in the field, participating in committees that affected all architects in

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Law. Collection of Finnish Home Building Association; Jill Suzanne Shook, *Making Housing Happen, 2nd Edition; Faith-Based Affordable Housing Models* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2012), 133.

[36] United States Department of Labor & Housing and Home Finance Agency *Housing Cooperatives*, 10.

[37] James P. Warbasse, "Cooperative Housing," *Foreign Born: A Bulletin of International Service* National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association of the United States of America 2, no. 7 (1921): 210-211.

[38] Tommola, *Uuden Maan Rakentajat*, 129-30.

[39] Federal Census, New York, 1910, 1920, 1930; "Maxwell Aaron Cantor," United States World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942, database with images, FamilySearch.

the region. For example, he was elected head of the Architects Club of Brooklyn in 1930 and promoted streamlining building processes and establishing uniformity in decision-making between different city agencies.[40] Cantor operated his own architectural practice for a few years before engaging in a relatively short-lived partnership, approximately 1915-1918, with Boris Dorfman.[41] Dorfman, also a Russian Jew, immigrated to New York City in 1903. He trained under Bradford Lee Gilbert and Frederick Warren before opening his own architectural firm in 1913.[42] Both Cantor and Dorfman received commissions from the Eastern European immigrant and Jewish communities and were familiar with the struggles these communities faced as a result of housing shortages and discrimination. Cantor was particularly known for his contributions in this realm and may have offered the firm's services at a reduced cost for the design of Alku.[43] Both men maintained successful individual practices into the mid-twentieth century.

Eric Olof Holmgren was born in Brooklyn to first-generation immigrants from Sweden.[44] Holmgren began working as an architect in Brooklyn by the early twentieth century, Much of his work was directly with the borough's Scandinavian community and he was particularly well known for his Lutheran churches and charitable institutions, such as the Kallman Scandinavian Orphanage. Holmgren served as a director of the Brooklyn Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and was known for his involvement in local churches and charitable organizations and his philanthropy. Holmgren may have also offered his services at the Finnish Home Building Association for a reduced rate. This strategy served him well. After the success of Alku Toinen, Holmgren was commissioned by other cooperative groups and designed several apartment buildings surrounding Sunset Park; these include Sunset Court, River View, Sun Garden Homes, and Park Slope Homes.[45]

Both Alku and Alku Toinen feature simple, Neoclassical revival style facades typical of apartment building construction during the period. By relying on simple pilaster detailing and limited use of limestone, the architects were able to achieve a pleasing and cost-efficient design. The predominant use of brickwork also lent itself to the skills of the Finnish builders involved in the project. The result was a sturdy, well-constructed masonry building that reflected the Finnish families' desire for attractive and affordable good housing.

The original members' contribution to the actual physical construction of the buildings was said to have been assigned according to their individual strength, with most of them being primarily carpenters and other construction workers. According to Warbasse:

> In the construction of this building there was no contractor. The society appointed one of its own members to superintend construction. Labor was hired by the day. Members of the society who were artisans were employed

[40] "Seek Uniform Rules: Architects Would End 'Conflict' In Authority Over Buildings," *New York Times*, March 30, 1930, 60; "Elect Maxwell Cantor Architects Club Head," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 10, 1930, 31.

[41] Searches for Dorfman and Cantor, Office for Metropolitan History, http://www.metrohistory.com/index.htm

[42] "Boris Dorfman, 82, Architect 50 Years," *New York Times*, July 2, 1964; Federal Census, New York, 1920, 1930 Federal Census; "Boris Waldemar Dorfman," United States World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942, database with images, FamilySearch.

[43] Flandro et. al., "Progressive Housing in New York City," 45-6.

[44] Federal Census, New York, 1910, 1930; "Eric Olof Holmgren," United States World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942, database with images, FamilySearch.

[45] "Eric O. Holmgren Dies; Boro Church Architect," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, April 8, 1951, 23; "Among New Building Operations in the Metropolitan Area: Kallman Scandinavian Orphanage," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 25, 1930, 39; Flandro et. al., "Progressive Housing in New York City," 43.

> on the job. The superintendent bought the materials. It was on this construction that a New York building inspector picked up a handful of mortar and exclaimed, "My God, that is the first real mortar I have seen in New York in fifteen years!" [46]

To these families, the functionality, efficiency, and livability of the interior was of utmost importance. The decorative details in common spaces are slightly more upscale, including tile flooring, crown molding, and marble trim, especially on the first floor. However, these extravagances were largely not carried out on the upper floors, or into the apartments themselves. Instead, each individual unit offered the luxury of larger, light-filled spaces. According to a 2008 comparative study of Finnish coops by Columbia University architecture students, there are more parallels between Finnish "working housing" in Helsinki and the Finnish co-ops in Sunset Park than between the latter and existing tenement buildings for the working class in New York. While both tenements and Finnish "working housing" both housed wage laborers, the Finnish model is linear and has a double-loaded corridor, creating smaller, shared spaces with large windows that provided plenty of natural light and air.

Moreover, the study shows that the Finnish Home Building Association buildings and the Finnish co-ops that followed it reflect considerable improvement in the arrangement of spaces, interior circulation, and the availability of light and air over existing New York City tenements. Typically, tall masonry buildings, tenements were constructed to maximize the number of units with minimal concern for living conditions; to cut costs, families shared tenement units, further exacerbating problems. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, New York City passed legislation to improve housing for low-income workers. The 1867 Tenement Act, which required a window in each sleeping room, fire escapes, and sufficient privies for each tenement, offered the first incremental change. The 1879 Act (known as the "old law") required that windows open onto plain air instead of into an interior room, resulting in "dumbbell" style tenements with small air shafts. However, these changes only marginally improved the often overcrowded and unsanitary conditions inside tenements and created new problems, such as air shafts that became de-facto garbage pits and flues during a fire. In an effort to rectify unanticipated and unintended consequences of the previous acts, the 1901 Tenement House Act (known as the "new law") required outward facing windows in every room, open courtyards, effective ventilation, fire safety measures, and indoor toilets. This act was accompanied by greater enforcement, as well as wider interest in the establishment of model tenement buildings offering more space, light, and sanitation to residents. Designs and plans for new law and model tenements varied widely, though all were larger in scale and attempted to maximize the number of units while improving the availability of light, air, privacy, and toilet facilities in the building.[47]

While these acts gradually improved conditions, Alku and Alku Toinen showed a vision for another leap forward. Their spaces are larger and brighter due to the inclusion of efficient, wider corridors and windows in every room compared to existing housing for working people that typically had longer, darker, and narrower corridors.[48] In addition, the enhanced layouts make better use of space, allowing for greater privacy, interior circulation, and light and air. Inside and out, Alku and Alku Toinen were carefully designed and built "with an

[46] Warbasse, "Cooperative Housing," 210-211.
[47] Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 21-49; Flandro et. al., "Progressive Housing in New York City," 9, 10, 24-35 (architectural assessment of model tenements compared to new law tenement designs).
[48] Flandro et. al., "Progressive Housing in New York City," 49-50.

enhanced degree of craftsmanship" in comparison with prior housing for working people.[49] Publications from the 1920s note how progressive these apartment buildings were in comparison to other housing constructed for working class people in New York City:

> The rooms are light and airy, with large windows. There is an ample hall, a kitchen large enough for the whole family to get into at once, a wide living room, opening with double glass doors into an equally comfortable dining-room. Then there are two bedrooms and a good sized bath. And all so very modern!—An intermural telephone in each apartment, up-to-date bathroom fixtures, including a shower. In the kitchen, white enameled set tubs and sink, and many other advantages all for less than they used to pay for much inferior quarters.
>
> The occupants are mostly young married people with families of children. No rules against children here. The men are carpenters, machinists, engineers and tailors. One is impressed with the cheerfulness of the wives and the healthfulness of the children in these landlordless homes. After visiting the apartments one feels that America has much to learn from the Finns."[50]

The Finnish Home Building Association's cooperatives also included in housing exhibitions as New York City continued to investigate ways to resolve the housing crisis.[51] In his account of the project, Dr. James P. Warbasse praised the group, stating:

> We may find an excellent practical illustration of cooperative housing much nearer home, however, than in Switzerland. In Brooklyn, New York, an experiment has been made by a group of Finns which is worthy of a pilgrimage.[52]

Professionals from outside of Finntown and the region marveled at the two buildings and the fact that working-class families could build and own their own homes. In 1919, a *New York Tribune* reporter, Inis Weed, wrote of the two co-ops: "A family on a day's wages owning the apartment in which it lives? But seeing is believing. There they stand, two four-story brick apartment houses, with attractive entrances, wide groups of windows, and areas affording a flood of light for every room" – and all for a maintenance fee of $27 a month)."[53] Finland's major Swedish-language newspaper, *Hufvudstadsbladet* (*Capital Newspaper*), echoed the praise in 1926: "In Finntown one can own one's own home for a very modest sum." It noted how the "extremely stylish stairways are lit all night" and each apartment has "a bathroom and sink with hot and cold water, and heating as well."[54]

After Construction / Operation of the Cooperative

The records held by the Finnish Home Building Association, including meeting minutes, accounting ledgers, and shareholder certificates, were recorded in Finnish and evidenced a cooperative spirit.[55] The population in Alku and Alku Toinen remained stable during their early decades. The 1930 census confirmed that both

[49] Flandro et. al., "Progressive Housing in New York City," 56.
[50] New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, "Pictures of Successful Cooperative Undertakings in New York City," 8-15.
[51] "Cooperatives Open Housing Exhibition," *New York Times*, February 27, 1924, 28.
[52] Warbasse, "Cooperative Housing," 210-211.
[53] Tommola, *Uuden Maan Rakentajat*,130.
[54] "Finntown i Brooklyn [Finntown in Brooklyn]," *Hufvudstadsbladet*, May 30, 1926, 5.
[55] See Appendix for translated Meeting Minutes from the Finnish Home Building Association Archives. The document references residents as "Comrade."

buildings housed 95 percent first and second generation Finnish people. In addition, 80 percent of the households living in Alku and 57 percent of the households living in Alku Toinen were involved in the building trades.[56] The documentation kept by the cooperatives switches to the English language toward the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s and is likely indicative of the change in demographics at the cooperative into the second half of the twentieth century. The current house rules and by-laws at Finnish Home Building Association were translated into English from the earlier iterations in Finnish.

As summarized in *Progressive Housing in New York City: A Closer Look at Model Tenements and Finnish Cooperatives*:

> the Finnish housing cooperative system was based on non-profit principles, meaning that each apartment was worth one share, both in purchasing and selling. The owner of the share would receive the same amount of money that she/he bought the apartment for when they decide to sell it, regardless of speculative market prices. Along with the purchase of the share, each shareholder also gains one 'vote.'" The cooperative was "built and run, not for profit but for the service of the occupants.[57]

The Finnish Home Building Association's commitment to providing affordable housing is evidenced by the fact that the purchase price of apartments remained the same from 1921 to at least 1948. Contracts in the association's archive from 1921, 1935, and 1948 show, for example, that the sale price for Apartment #11 in Alku remained at $2900 over a period of at least twenty-seven years. Throughout the period of significance, if not beyond it, apartment prices did not follow market rates but remained stable and affordable.

Contracts ("välikirja" in Finnish) changed to membership certificates in 1955. This appears to have been a purely semantic change, possibly due to new regulations for cooperatives; both documents served the same purpose: establishing proof of membership and the right for each member to vote. The co-op still has membership certificates today. No purchase price data is indicated on the sale of apartments after 1955. Maintenance costs also remained low at Finnish Home Building Association as well as other Finnish cooperative buildings. On August 20, 1972, the *New York Times* stated that Katri Ekman's rent, or maintenance fee, was $30 per month. She stated, "We are a hard-working people and we are concerned about providing for our own. As immigrants from Finland came here, we helped find them work and invited them to join the co-ops."

Dr. James P. Warbasse praised the Finnish Home Building Association for its bold solution to the housing crisis in New York City:

> In Europe, while the state and municipalities are tossing back and forth to each other the responsibility of carrying out adequately housing enterprises for thousands of their homeless citizens, and while little is being done by their party-ridden political governments, cooperators have set themselves to the task of providing homes. While parliaments debate the problem and politicians conspire with real estate dealers to pillage the people, cooperators are actually building garden cities and rows upon rows of apartment houses. If the people can afford to rent houses from landlords, they can afford to own the houses in which they live; for it is the rent they pay that makes it possible for the landlord to be the owner. They can make themselves the owners by paying the rent to themselves. This is the cooperative principle.

[56] Flandro et. al., "Progressive Housing in New York City," 43-44.
[57] Flandro et. al., "Progressive Housing in New York City," 13.

> Here in America we abuse the authorities for their failure to pass housing legislation, but we must learn that the housing shortage cannot be met merely by the state's enacting laws; it can only be met by the erection of new houses. The problem of adequately housing the people without private profit, without fearful insecurity, without graft and without delay, can be solved only when the people themselves realize their power and their opportunity and unite in their own cooperative building societies and then proceed to supply their own needs free from the predatory landlord and the impotent state.[58]

Once this group of innovative Finnish families demonstrated a non-profit / limited dividend shared equally by a group was not only possible but also demonstrably successful, others would follow their example. Both Alku and Alku Toinen were completed more than a decade before the Amalgamated Cooperative Apartment House (1927-30) and the United Workers Cooperatives (1926-29; NR Listed, 1986) in the Bronx; both are sometimes mistakenly attributed to be the first not-for-profit cooperative housing built in New York City.

Impact and Influence of the Finnish Home Building Association

By 1920, Brooklyn had 22 cooperatives – including a bakery at 43rd and Eighth Avenue, a restaurant, meat market, grocery store, poolroom and two garages – with the Finnish Home Building Association still being the only cooperative apartment buildings identified.[59] All of Finntown's cooperative businesses were founded on the same five blocks on Eighth Avenue.[60] With thousands of members, they did a brisk business. In 1922, the United States Department of Labor reported that, in total, they had revenues of $260,000, the equivalent of $4 million today. In the 1920s and 30s, a host of housing cooperatives and member-owned businesses lined Eighth Avenue in Sunset Park where residents could buy their daily necessities of milk, bread, and meat and dozens of co-op apartments built by and for working-class immigrants. The avenue was dubbed the Finnish Broadway or "Espis", short for Esplanade, to locals. The success of these Finntown cooperatives was seen as proof that the socialist dream of "production for use, not profit" could be realized in America.[61] The cooperative apartment buildings in particular were the most admired and imitated.

Other groups of Finns, aiming to repeat the Finnish Home Building Association's success, purchased 12 existing apartment buildings within the Sunset Park area and converted them to co-ops; they included the Sunset Home Association at 705 41st Street and 4015 Seventh Avenue (both extant; NR Listed, Sunset Park HD, 1988).[62] Construction of new buildings was delayed by World War I; however, by the 1920s, 15 Finns formed the Sun Heights Building Corporation, whose purpose was to construct cooperative apartment

[58] Warbasse, "Cooperative Housing," 210-211.
[59] Florence E. Parker, "Consumers' Cooperative Societies in the United States in 1920," *Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics No. 313.* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923), 130; Esther Wang, "Bread + Butter Socialism: A History of Finnish-American Co-ops," *Open City*, June 19, 2014.; I. Kaufman, "Brooklyn Has Many Cooperative Unions; Membership Grows," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 4, 1920, 11.
[60] Parker, "Consumers' Cooperative Societies in the United States in 1920,"130.
[61] The words of a New York activist quoted in Wang, "Bread + Butter Socialism," n.p.; Many sources regard Finns as among one of the most socialist-leaning immigrant groups in America. Al Gedicks, "The Social Origins of Radicalism Among Finnish Immigrants in Midwest Mining Communities," *Review of Radical Political Economics* 8, no. 3 (1976): 1-31; Peter Kivisto, *Immigrant Socialists in the United States: the case of Finns and the Left* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984).
[62] Ekman, *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York*, 62; Flandro et. al., "Progressive Housing in New York City," 42.

buildings in Sunset Park.[63] Notably, two of the 15 men were original shareholders at the Finnish Home Building Association: V. Rousku and Hjalmar Peltola. The Sun Heights Building Corporation's first project was the 70-unit apartment complex called Sun Gardens Homes in 1924; two 40-unit buildings followed: Parkside Association (549-561 41st Street) and Park Slope Homes (521-531 41st Street) in 1927 (all extant; NR Listed, Sunset Park HD, 1988). All three projects were designed and filed with the Buildings Department by Eric O. Holmgren, the architect of Alku Toinen.

The size, style, and appearance of extant Finnish cooperatives in Brooklyn varies. Many of the pre-existing buildings that were converted to cooperative ownership during the 1910s and 1920s are similar to Alku and Alku Toinen in size and design. These brick and stone apartment buildings are typically 4-5 stories tall, have symmetrical, revival-style facades with central entrances, and 16-20 units. It is unclear if the conversion of these buildings to a cooperative ownership structure also included a renovation of the interior to establish units similar to those at Alku and Alku Toinen. Purpose-built Finnish cooperatives vary in design, massing, and size. Primarily constructed during the 1920s, these brick and stone apartment buildings tend to feature a simpler aesthetic relying on patterned brickwork and minimal architectural detailing. Several have inset central entrances and courtyards, while others are more similar to earlier apartments which extended to the sidewalk. They also range dramatically in size, from 16 units to 72 units, based on the size and abilities of the interested group of co-operators. While a comprehensive study of the interior plans of these buildings has not been possible, it is clear that natural light and efficient, open plans continued to be a hallmark of apartment unit designs in Finnish cooperatives.[64]

Between 1916 and 1930, numerous Finnish co-ops were built after Alku and Alku Toinen: about 20 four-story apartment buildings in built in Brooklyn's Finntown, four in the Bronx, several in New Jersey, and even one in Karelia, in the former Soviet Union.[65] Additionally, a few already-existing buildings built by non-Finns were bought in Sunset Park and Harlem's Finntowns and converted into co-operatives. By 1927, a little more than a decade after Alku was built, there were 27 Finnish-owned co-op buildings in Sunset Park, with maintenance costs that were less than half of the rent of apartments in privately owned buildings. "Why is it that the Finns can put up houses on the cooperative plan and we cannot?" asked Clarence Stein, chair of the State Commission on Housing and Regional Planning, in 1924. Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia praised the Finns in 1937: "If more would follow your example, the problem of slum clearance could be solved more speedily and decent housing conditions could be provided for all people."[66]

According to Esko Tommola, the Finnish cooperative buildings in Sunset Park had shareholders composed predominately of Finns, but also included Swedes and Russians.[67] After Alku and Alku Toinen, each cooperative had an official association name, such as "The Advance" (Edistys), "Parkhill," "Riverview," and then "Park Slope Homes, "Sunset Homes," "Elmo Homes," "Baltic Homes," and "Florence Homes"; most were designated with Finnish nicknames by the community. For example, Sun Gardens was nicknamed "Hikipisara"

[63] Ekman, *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York*, 63
[64] Flandro et. al., "Progressive Housing in New York City," 50-56 (analysis of interior designs of three purpose-built Finnish cooperatives), 105-135.
[65] Tommola, *Uuden Maan Rakentajat*, 128.
[66] Tommola, *Uuden Maan Rakentajat*, 128.
[67] Tommola, *Uuden Maan Rakentajat*, 130-31.

or “Drop of Sweat” because interested shareholders had to put all of their savings into it. The Advance was nicknamed “Moscow” for its left-leaning residents.

As noted above, knowledge of the Finnish Home Building Association and subsequent Finnish cooperatives spread beyond Sunset Park to other Finnish neighborhoods in the region, including to a group in the Bronx which endeavored to start a similar project. Nils Sundqvist, a long-time resident of Brooklyn’s “Moscow” co-op, explained to interviewer Esko Tommola:

> Bronx Finns traveled to Albany, the capital of New York State, in order to obtain a building permit. There they had to sort the issue out for a long time. Finally, the state building authorities said that, because the whole co-operative principle was very odd to them, it would be good if the Bronx Finns could contact the Finns in Brooklyn and construct their building with the permit already granted to them. Thus the authorities spared them an extremely difficult authorization process, the accuracy or legality of which was not entirely clear. The Bronx Finns ended by doing what the authorities counseled, and the co-operative apartment building in the Bronx was built based on the “Alku I” building permit.[68]

In the 1930s, the U.S. government restricted the numbers of incoming immigrants because of the poor economic situation in the United States.[69] Between World War I and World War II, quotas established by the government limited immigration to 564 Finns per year.[70] Coupled with this, since construction came to a halt during the Depression, Finnish carpenters could not find work in New York City. Many moved to other places such as Connecticut, where they could be more self-sufficient; many purchased farms and raised chickens.[71] Many also returned to Finland in this period; approximately 20–25 percent of all Finnish immigrants to the U.S. repatriated.[72] These factors resulted in reduced membership among Finnish organizations and less demand for building cooperative apartment buildings for the community.[73] Esko Tommola recounted that had it not been for the Depression, Finns would have continued building co-operative buildings in Brooklyn and elsewhere in New York. The last two cooperative apartment buildings constructed were “Leopola” and “Elmo Homes” on the verge of 1929.

The economic situation in the United States put a strain on the Finnish cooperative buildings. Unemployed Finns who could no longer afford the maintenance were forced to leave for cheaper apartments and to default on payments to the cooperative associations. In some cases, the associations acquired possession of the apartment in default while other cooperatives folded completely when the quantity of empty apartments meant that the remaining families could not afford building expenses.[74]

Later History of the Finnish Home Building Association

[68] Tommola, *Uuden Maan Rakentajat*, 132.
[69] Saija Silén, “Finnish-American Architecture and Architects in Northern and Eastern Parts of the United States of America 1850-1950: From Rural Tradition to Urban Ideal” (MA Thesis, University of Jyväskylä, Department of Art and Cultural Studies, 2008), 1.
[70] Ekman, *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York*, 119.
[71] Ekman *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York*, 63-65.
[72] Reino Kero, *Migration from Finland to North America in the Years between the United States Civil War and the First World War* (Turku: Institute for Migration, 2009 [1974]), 16.
[73] Flandro et. al., “Progressive Housing in New York City,” 42.

The Finnish Home Building Association has continually operated Alku and Alku Toinen as cooperative apartments since they were constructed. Alku and Alku Toinen are 100 percent owner occupied, with the exception of the superintendent, who occupies one apartment in Alku Toinen with his family. The number of non-Finnish owners has increased significantly over the decades and the building rules have been adjusted. However, it is clear that Finnish carpenters were very far-sighted when drawing rules for these co-operatives. The cooperative association-based ownership did not allow apartments to be used as collateral, which spared groups using this model from being taken over by banks in later years.

Not all of the other Finnish Cooperatives built during the early twentieth century were as successful. In later years, the decline of the Finnish community in Brooklyn was noticeable. Finnish churches sold their buildings and land to others, more businesses closed, and Finnish residents, like many white New Yorkers, continued to flee Sunset Park and the city for the suburbs of Long Island, New Jersey, and elsewhere. The Brooklyn cooperative nicknamed "Mannerheim" became partly owned by a bank in 1988; only five apartments were owned by the building association. Outside of Brooklyn, Manhattan's Finnish cooperative apartment buildings had been sold in the 1950s; two of the four Finnish cooperative buildings in the Bronx were still in operation in 1968 but were no longer predominantly occupied by Finns.[75] Nonetheless, in Katri Ekman's 1976 book, she states that all of the Finnish co-ops which survived in Brooklyn continued to run according to the original cooperative principles upon which they were founded.[76] The 2008 Columbia study identified 30 extant Finnish cooperatives in Brooklyn; it is unclear how many have been converted from cooperative ownership.[77]

Imatra Hall remained important as a cultural landmark for Finnish-Americans into the late twentieth century. Many celebrated Finnish artists, athletes, and politicians visited the hall, including Olympian Paavo Nurmi in 1966 and President Mauno Koivisto in 1985. Finnish remained the society's official language until 1986. On the organization's 100th anniversary in 1991, 40th Street in front of Imatra Hall was officially co-named "Finlandia Street" as part of the large centennial celebration. The Finnish population of Brooklyn plummeted from 10,000 during the mid-twentieth century to just 200 in 1992. The Imatra Society ended in 1996 due to financial difficulties as a result of declining membership. Only a few third-generation Finns have stayed in the area.[78] A 1972 a *New York Times* article titled "Brooklyn's Finntown Losing Its Flavor" stated:

> The sauna in Finntown is for sale, thus lending further evidence to the fact that this once-thriving Finnish community in Brooklyn is declining…Residents estimate that there are 1,500 Finns left in Finntown; most are elderly single women and widows….Most of the young people have moved away…because they do not have the ties that have kept their parents together in the community.[79]

By that time, several Finnish cooperative businesses in Brooklyn also no longer existed: the larger of the two garages was sold during the Depression and the cooperative market on 43rd and 8th Avenue was reported to have been sold in 1948.[80] In addition to the declining number of Finnish residents, post-war economic shifts

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[74] Tommola, *Uuden Maan Rakentajat*, 131.
[75] Tommola, *Uuden Maan Rakentajat*, 132.
[76] Ekman, *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York*, 123.
[77] Flandro et. al., "Progressive Housing in New York City," 105-135.
[78] "A Little Bit of Scandinavia Club recalls Sunset Park´s past," *Newsday*, February 27, 1992, 27.
[79] Ari L. Goldman, "Brooklyn's Finntown Losing Its Flavor," *New York Times*, August 20, 1972.
[80] Ekman, *A History of Finnish American Organizations in Greater New York*, 66.

and the rise of chain stores and mass production forced most of the cooperative businesses in Sunset Park out of operation.[81]

Sunset Park's Finnish community was eventually replaced by a large Latino population as well as Polish and Russian immigrants in the neighborhood's neatly arranged row houses. Most recently, immigrants from the Canton region of China have arrived and Eighth Avenue is currently considered the location of Brooklyn's Chinatown. In 2018, the history of the Finnish Co-ops was honored in a new wall mural in Bush Terminal focusing on the neighborhood of Sunset Park; it depicts Alku Toinen in a row of Finnish co-ops.

[81] Wang, "Bread + Butter Socialism."

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

Alku & Alku Toinen
Name of Property

Kings County, NY
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .29
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

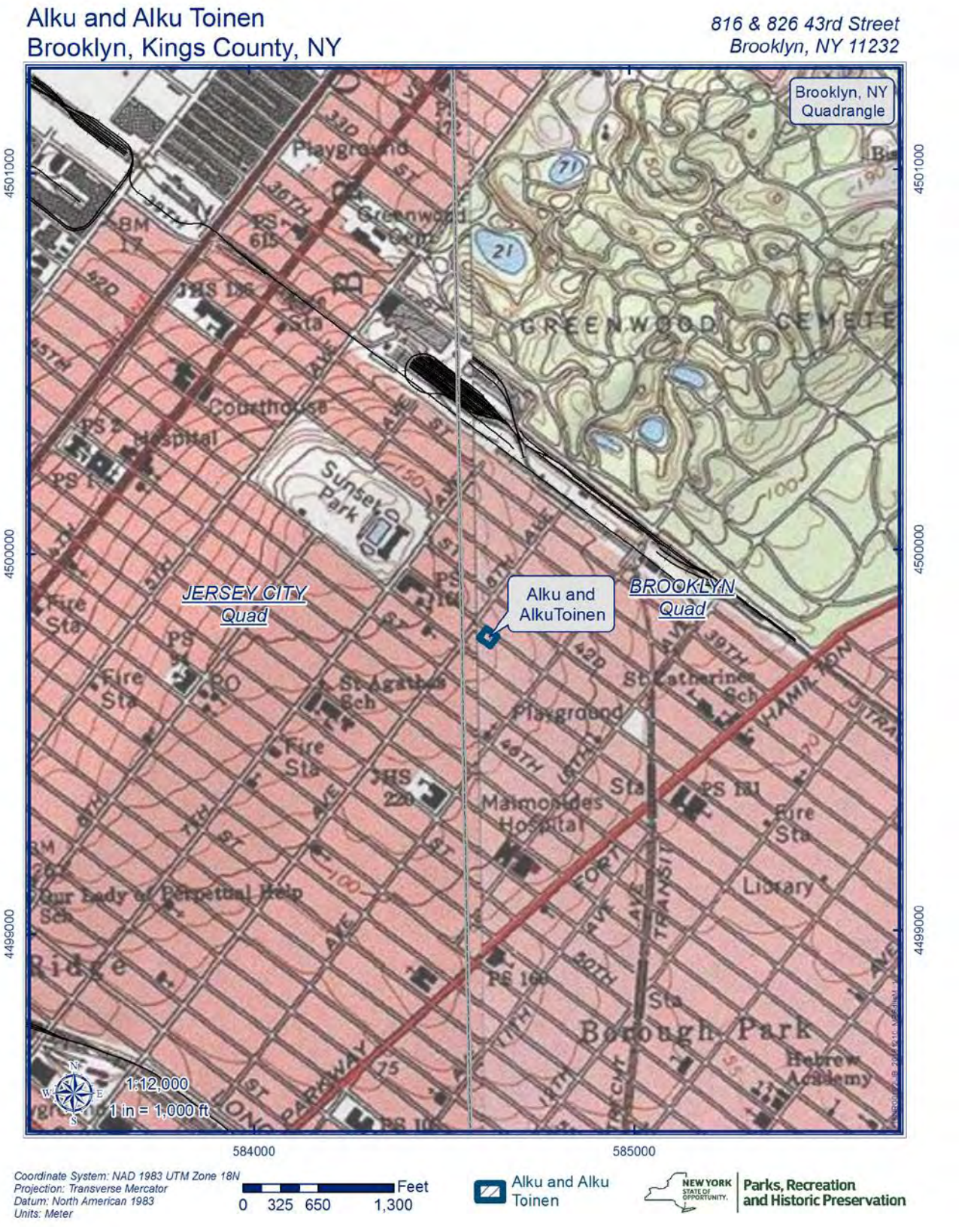
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	584621	4499774	3			
2				4			

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary incorporates the parcels historically associated with Alku and Alku Toinen, the cooperative apartment buildings constructed by the Finnish Home Building Association.


Alku and Alku Toinen
Brooklyn, Kings County, NY
816 & 826 43rd Street
Brooklyn, NY 11232
Brooklyn, NY Quadrangle
JERSEY CITY Quad
BROOKLYN Quad
Alku and AlkuToinen
Courthouse
Hospital
Sunset Park
Playground
Greenwood Cemetery
Maimonides Hospital
Borough Park
Library
Hebrew Academy
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Sch
St Agatha Sch
St Catherines Sch
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1 in = 1,000 ft
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
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Feet
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Alku and Alku Toinen
NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY.
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation


Alku and Alku Toinen
Brooklyn, Kings County, NY
816 & 826 43rd Street
Brooklyn, NY 11232
Σ = .29 Acres
584621E 4499774N
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4499500
584400
584700
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Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter
Feet
0 80 160 320
Alku and Alku Toinen
NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY.
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Alku & Alku Toinen
Name of Property

Kings County, NY
County and State

Alku & Alku Toinen
Name of Property

Kings County, NY
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cecilia Feilla and Valerie Landriscina (edited by Jennifer Betsworth, NY SHPO)

organization _____ date December 2018

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

e-mail _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

  A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Alku and Alku Toinen

City or Vicinity: Brooklyn

County: Kings State: NY

Photographer: Valerie Landriscina

Date Photographed: February and December 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0001
North facade, Alku (816 43rd Street)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0002
North facade, Alku Toinen (826 43rd Street)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0003
West facade, Alku (816 43rd Street)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0004
East facade & south-facing return wall of Alku (left side) and West facade and south-facing return wall of Alku Toinen (right side)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0005
East facade & north-facing return wall of Alku Toinen (left side) and West facade and south-facing return wall of Alku (right side)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0006
South facade of Alku and Alku Toinen

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0007
East facade, Alku Toinen (826 43rd Street)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0008
Main entrance, Alku (816 43rd Street)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0009
Entrance vestibule, Alku (816 43rd Street)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0010
Entrance vestibule, Alku (816 43rd Street)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0011
Entrance hall, Alku (816 43rd Street)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0012
Entrance hall near mailboxes, Alku (816 43rd Street)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0013
Stairs & Landing at upper floor, Alku (816 43rd Street)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0014
Entrance hall, Alku (816 43rd Street)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0015
Main entrance, Alku Toinen (826 43rd Street)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0016
Entrance vestibule, Alku Toinen (826 43rd Street)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0017
Entrance vestibule, Alku Toinen (826 43rd Street)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0018
Entrance hall, Alku Toinen (826 43rd Street)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0019
Entrance hall, Alku Toinen (826 43rd Street)

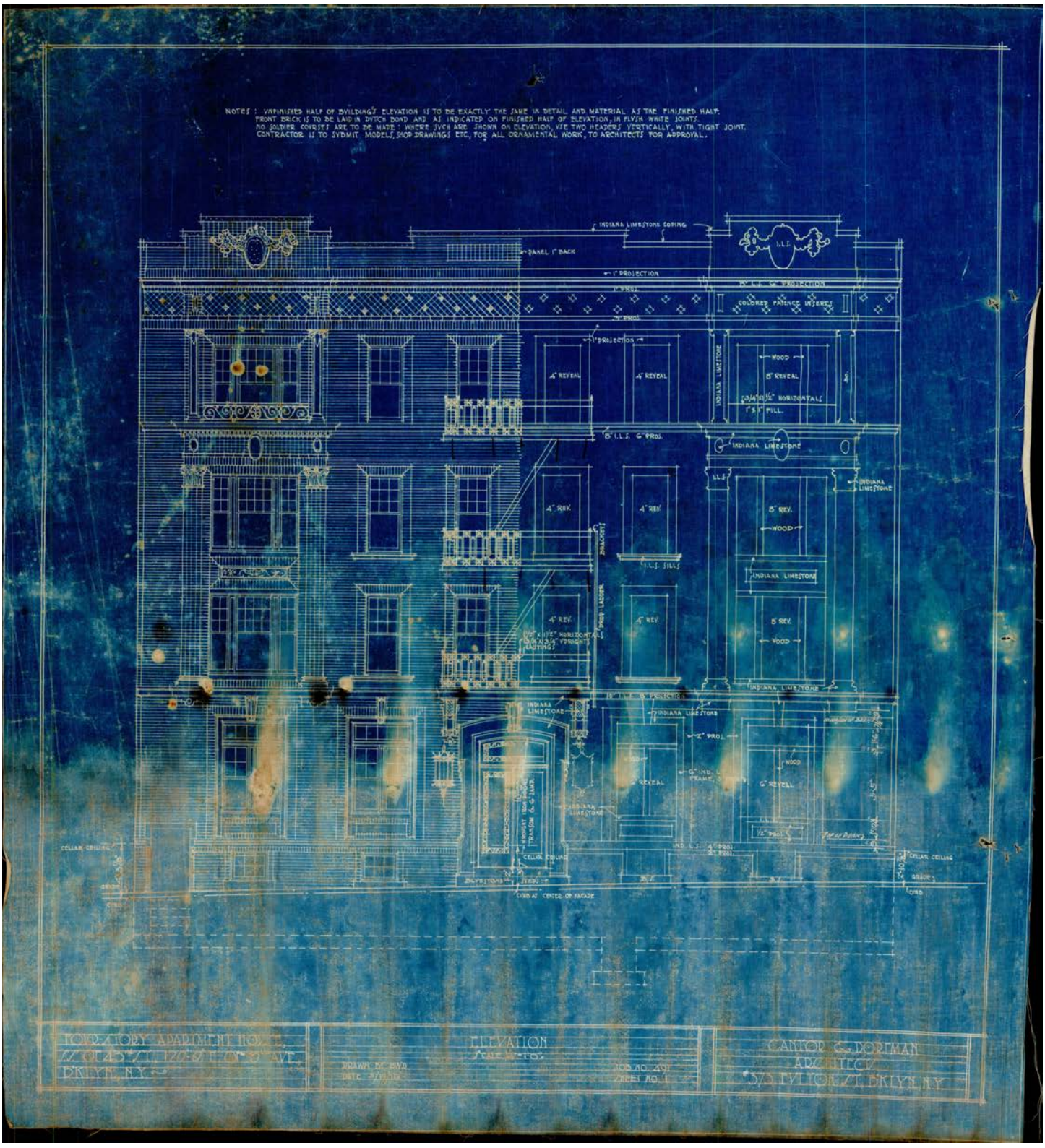
NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0020
Stairs & Landing to first floor, Alku Toinen (826 43rd Street)

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0021
Alku, Interior, Entrance into apartment dining room

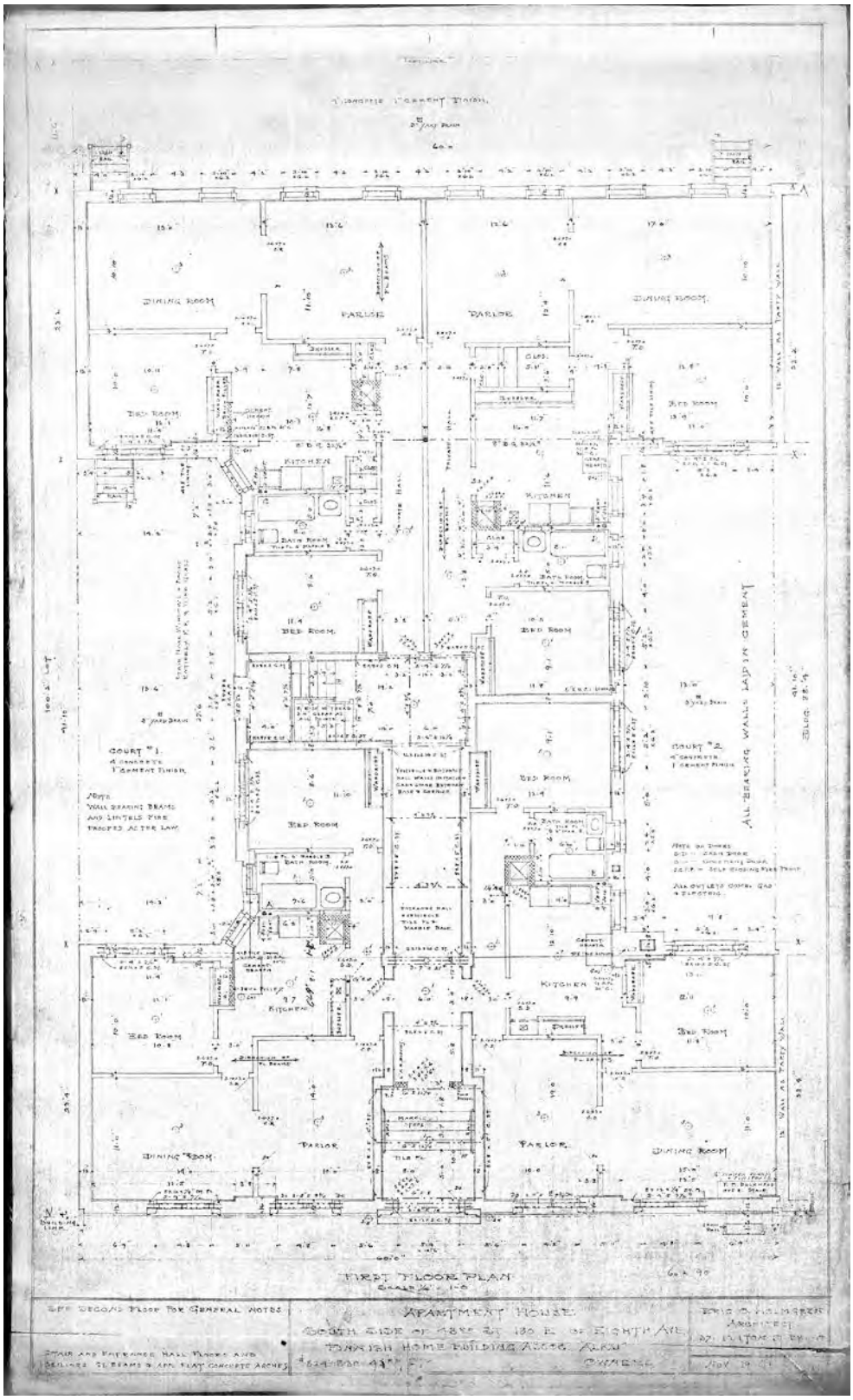
NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0022
Alku, Interior, apartment living room

NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0023
Alku, Interior, hallway with bedroom, bathroom, and hall closet doors

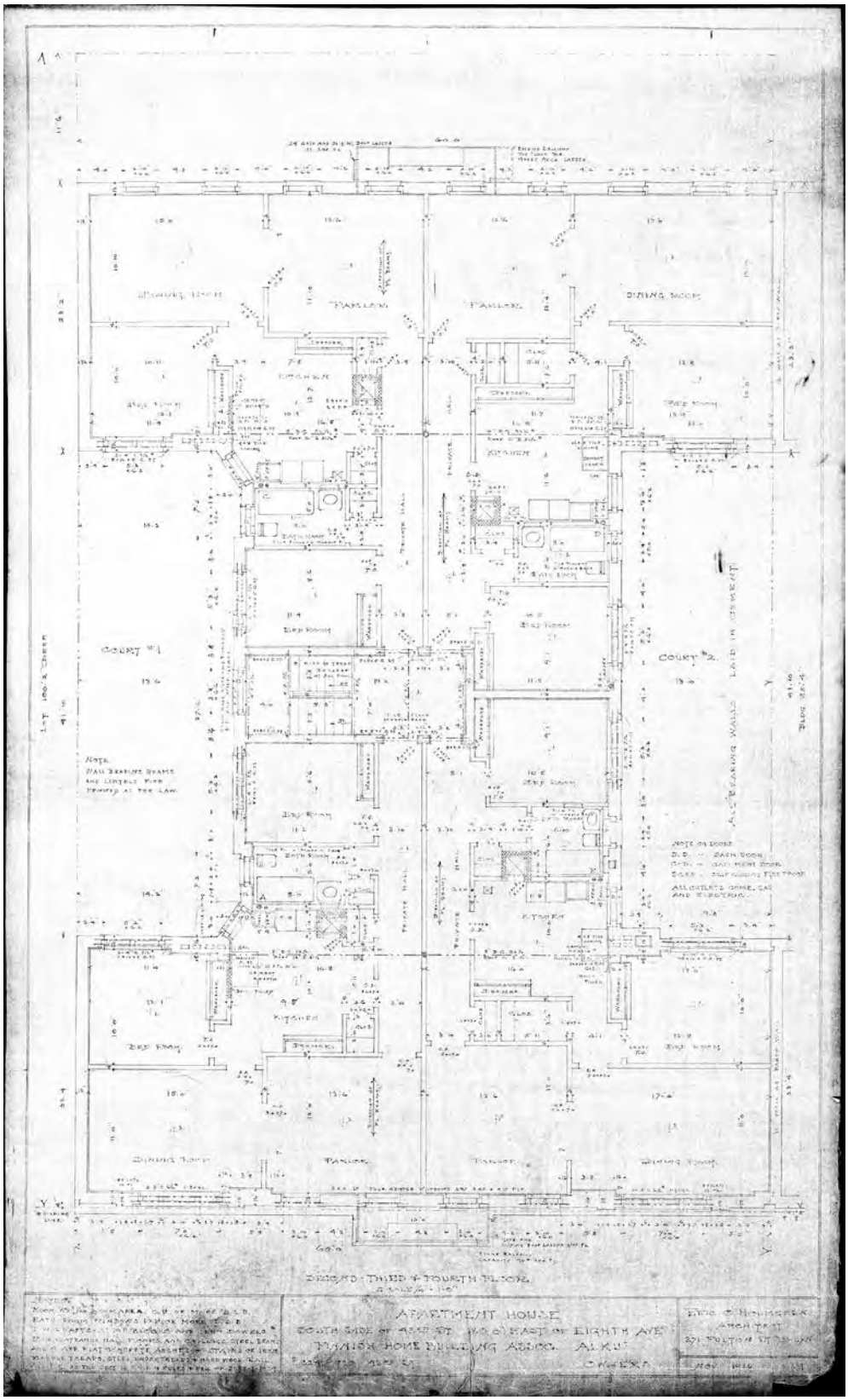
NY_Kings Co_Alku and Alku Toinen_0024
Alku Toinen, Interior, flooring and trim



Alku, elevation plan, Cantor & Dorfman, 1916. Alku & Alku Toinen archives.

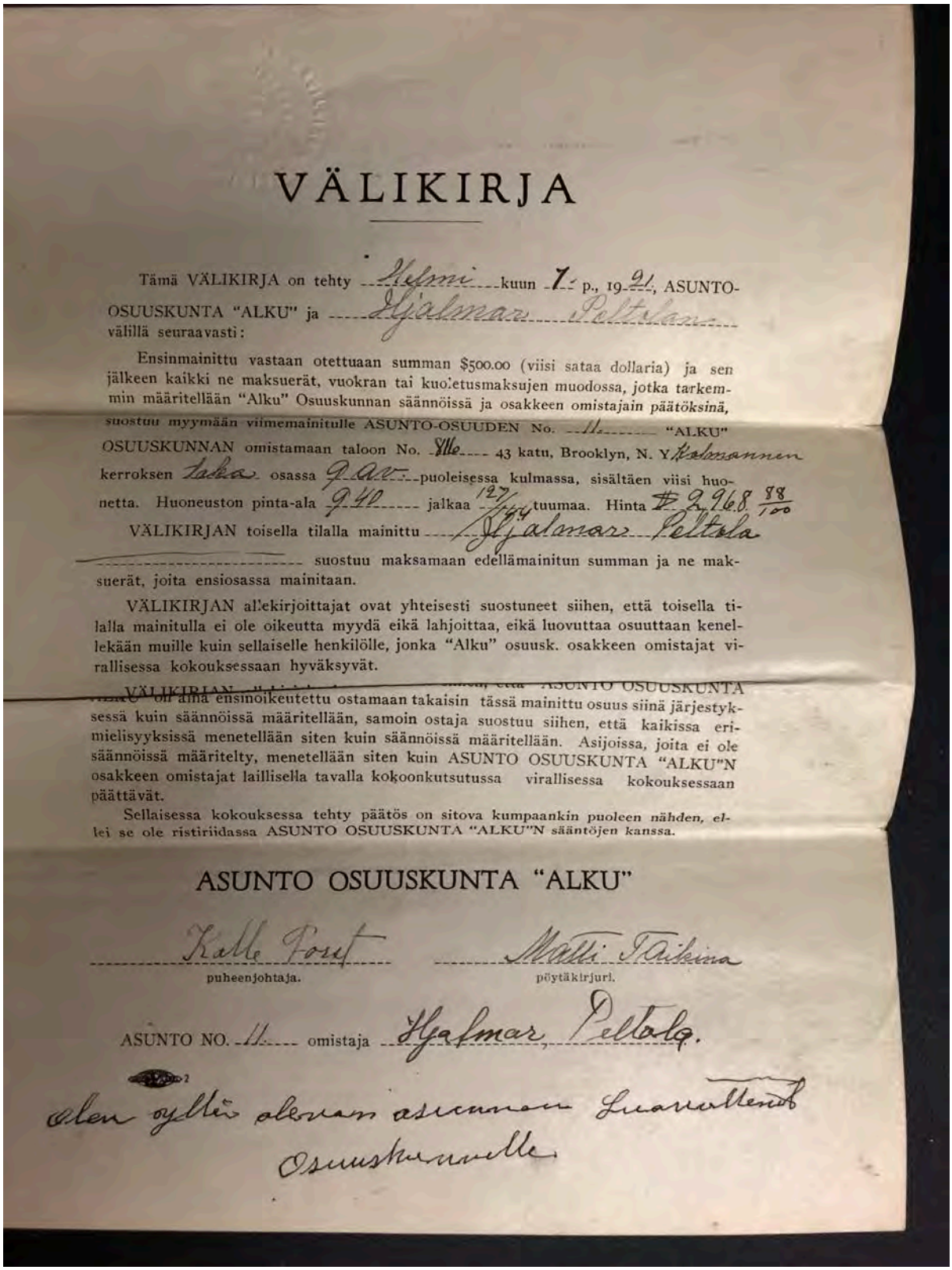


Alku Toinen, first floor plan, Holmgren, 1917. Alku & Alku Toinen archives.



Alku Toinen, upper floor plan, Holmgren, 1917. Alku & Alku Toinen archives.

Tax photograph, ca. 1940. New York City Municipal Archives.



VÄLIKIRJA

Tämä VÄLIKIRJA on tehty Helmi kuun 7 p., 19 21, ASUNTO-OSUUSKUNTA "ALKU" ja Hjalmar Peltola välillä seuraavasti:

Ensinmainittu vastaan otettuaan summan $500.00 (viisi sataa dollaria) ja sen jälkeen kaikki ne maksuerät, vuokran tai kuoletusmaksujen muodossa, jotka tarkemmin määritellään "Alku" Osuuskunnan säännöissä ja osakkeen omistajain päätöksinä, suostuu myymään viimemainitulle ASUNTO-OSUUDEN No. 11 "ALKU" OSUUSKUNNAN omistamaan taloon No. 911 43 katu, Brooklyn, N. Y. Kolmannen kerroksen taka osassa 9 av puoleisessa kulmassa, sisältäen viisi huonetta. Huoneuston pinta-ala 940 jalkaa 127/144 tuumaa. Hinta $2968 88/100

VÄLIKIRJAN toisella tilalla mainittu Hjalmar Peltola suostuu maksamaan edellämainitun summan ja ne maksuerät, joita ensiosassa mainitaan.

VÄLIKIRJAN allekirjoittajat ovat yhteisesti suostuneet siihen, että toisella tilalla mainitulla ei ole oikeutta myydä eikä lahjoittaa, eikä luovuttaa osuuttaan kenellekään muille kuin sellaiselle henkilölle, jonka "Alku" osuusk. osakkeen omistajat virallisessa kokouksessaan hyväksyvät.

VÄLIKIRJAN [illegible] ASUNTO OSUUSKUNTA "ALKU" oll aina ensinoikeutettu ostamaan takaisin tässä mainittu osuus siinä järjestyksessä kuin säännöissä määritellään, samoin ostaja suostuu siihen, että kaikissa erimielisyyksissä menetellään siten kuin säännöissä määritellään. Asijoissa, joita ei ole säännöissä määritelty, menetellään siten kuin ASUNTO OSUUSKUNTA "ALKU"N osakkeen omistajat laillisella tavalla kokoonkutsutussa virallisessa kokouksessaan päättävät.

Sellaisessa kokouksessa tehty päätös on sitova kumpaankin puoleen nähden, ellei se ole ristiriidassa ASUNTO OSUUSKUNTA "ALKU"N sääntöjen kanssa.

ASUNTO OSUUSKUNTA "ALKU"

Kalle Forst
puheenjohtaja.

Matti Taikina
pöytäkirjurl.

ASUNTO NO. 11 omistaja Hjalmar Peltola.

Olen oyllin olevan asunnon Luovuttanut Osuuskunnalle

Alku contract, 1921. Alku & Alku Toinen archives.

Hilja and Toivo Slomaa in front of Alku Toinen, ca. 1970. Alku & Alku Toinen archives.


02/24/2018


ALKU TOINEN
02/24/2018


02/24/2018


07/07/2018


07/07/2018


02/24/2018


04/14/2018


WELCOME


Exit


ALKU" TOINE
826
NO SMOKING


EXIT


NO SMOKING
NO FUMAR
EXTERMINATOR
SATURDAY
OF
WELCOME

National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.
Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination
Property Name:	Alku & Alku Toinen
Multiple Name:	
State & County:	NEW YORK, Kings

Date Received:	Date of Pending List:	Date of 16th Day:	Date of 45th Day:	Date of Weekly List:
4/3/2019	4/22/2019	5/7/2019	5/20/2019	5/28/2019

Reference number:	SG100003932
Nominator:	SHPO

Reason For Review:

__ Appeal	__ PDIL	**X** Text/Data Issue
__ SHPO Request	__ Landscape	__ Photo
__ Waiver	__ National	__ Map/Boundary
__ Resubmission	__ Mobile Resource	__ Period
__ Other	__ TCP	__ Less than 50 years
	__ CLG	

X Accept _____ Return _____ Reject **5/20/2019** Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:	
Recommendation/ Criteria	

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236 Date

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

NYC
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Kate Lemos McHale
Director of Research

1 Centre Street
9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

212 669 7902 tel
212 669 7797 fax

March 12, 2019

R. Daniel Mackay
Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Re: Alku & Alku Toinen, 816 and 826 43rd Street, Brooklyn (Block 733, Lots 13 and 17)

Dear Deputy Commissioner Mackay:

I am writing on behalf of Chair Sarah Carroll in response to your request for comment on the eligibility of Alku & Alku Toinen, located at 816 and 826 43rd Street, Brooklyn, for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The agency has reviewed the materials you submitted and has determined that Alku & Alku Toinen appear to meet the criteria for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Therefore, based on this review, the Commission supports the nomination of the buildings. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kate Lemos McHale
klemosmchale@lpc.nyc.gov

AMERIKAN UUTISET
Since 1932 The National Newspaper for Finnish-Americans

80 years
1932-2012

January 2019

FEB - 7 2019

Att: Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Div. for Historic Preservation
Peebles Island
Waterford, NY 12188

Dear Jennifer Betsworth:

The Amerikan Uutiset is the National Newspaper for Finnish-Americans since 1932. The paper is written primarily in Finnish, but articles also appear in English. It is owned by the Finnish Media Group, Inc. I am the Editor in Chief. Robert Alan Saasto, Esq., a frequent writer for the paper about New York events, has kept us up to date about the intent of Alku 1 and 2 to be designated historical sites.

I am writing to strongly support this endeavor.

Many of our readers originate from Finntown in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, New York. The cooperative buildings built by the Finnish immigrants, and the concept of cooperative associations, are well known to the Finnish immigrants, and their heirs. The Finnish immigrants built the first coop buildings long before laws were formalized to regulate their existence. It is fitting that Alku 1 and Alku 2 be recognized as the first coops built by these Finnish immigrants.

I am enclosing an article I wrote about this important endeavor, which was printed in the Amerikan Uutiset issue dated January 16, 2019. I am also enclosing an English translation made by Robert Alan Saasto, Esq.

Again, on behalf of myself and the readers of our paper, I wish to express my gratitude to the Board of Alku 1 and 2 for pursuing this project, and to express our full support!!

Truly yours,

Mikko Koskinen
Editor-in-Chief
Amerikan Uutiset

Finnish Media Group, Inc.
807 Lucerne Avenue, Rear, Lake Worth, FL 33460
Tel: (561) 540-5440, fax: (561) 540-5899
www.amuutiset.com • amuutiset@aol.com

Mailing address:
Amerikan Uutiset
P.O. Box 128, Lake Worth, FL 33460

THE FINLANDIA FOUNDATION, NEW YORK METROPOLITAN CHAPTER, INC

BOX 2590, GRAND CENTRAL STATION NEW YORK, NY 10163 • www.finlandiafoundationny.org

New York 1/4/2019

NYS OPRHP
Div. for Historic Preservation
Peebles Island
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188
Att: Jennifer Betsworth, Historic Preservation Specialist

Finlandia Foundation New York Metropolitan Chapter, Inc. very much supports the idea that the famous Alku 1, as the starting location of the whole co-op style of living in New York and in the United States, will be designated a historical landmark.

Sincerely,

Eero Kilpi

PhD, President

FF NYMC

Finland Center Foundation
@Centre for Social Innovation
601 West 26th St # 325-102
New York, N.Y.10001
www.finlandcenter.org
1-646-704-8000

January 9, 2019

NYS OPRHP

Div. for Historic Preservation

Peebles Island

P.O. Box 189

Waterford, NY 12188

Att: Jennifer Betsworth, Historic Preservation Specialist

Finland Center Foundation is a New York City based nonprofit organization for Finnish culture, community and commerce.

According to WNYC.org, ..." The Alku and Alku Toinen are the names of the two buildings that make up the first not-for-profit, housing cooperative in New York City. Located just east of the park, the co-op was established back when this area was known as "Finntown" because of the large Finnish population. Rather than rent in tenement-style buildings, a few of the Finns decided to pool their money to build buildings and set up a housing cooperative called the Finnish Home Building Association. This was 1916, and the idea took off. **Ten years later,** 25 Finnish coops were established in the area, and the idea spread throughout New York City."

Given the historical importance of the creation of these buildings, Finland Center Foundation very much supports the initiative to designate the Sunset Park Co-op building "Alku 1" a historic landmark.

Jaana Rehnstrom, President

president@finlandcenter.org

Finland Center Foundation

is recognized under the 501(c)3 code by the IRS

FINNISH AMERICAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION
43 Prospect Street
Huntington New York
finnishamericanlawyer.org
tel: 917 834 3636 fax: 631 223 1780

February 10, 2019

Att: Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Div. for Historic Preservation
Peebles Island
Waterford, NY 12188

Dear Jennifer Betsworth:

I am the founder and President of the Finnish American Lawyers Association. Our members come from throughout the United States and Finland. I encourage you to visit our website for details.

I am writing because I want to support this endeavor to have Alku 1 and 2 designated historical buildings.

I am very familiar with Alku 1 and 2 and the other Finnish coop buildings in Sunset Park. That neighborhood was known as "Finntown" when I was a boy. When I became a lawyer I represented many of the Finns who sold their apartments in the Finnish coop buildings to new immigrants. The coops were run by Boards elected by the members pursuant to their individual building membership agreements, which pre-dated the coop laws in New York State. Each building unit had one vote and one membership certificate which was transferred upon payment to the new member. The transfer was noted in the books and the deal was done. Only cash was permitted. I personally had to explain to non- Finnish lawyers the procedure. As the prices rose, buyers needed financing from banks, which eventually forced the buildings to convert to formal coop status to enable financing.

It is important that Alku 1 and Alku 2 be recognized as the first coops built by these Finnish immigrants. It is a first step in recognizing that the Finnish immigrants brought the concept of cooperative ownership to the United States.

I am enclosing an article which was printed in the Amerikan Uutiset issue dated January 16, 2019. I am also enclosing an English translation made by me. This article sets forth the historical significance of these buildings and demonstrates the interest of the Finnish Americans in seeing the buildings get the historical designation they deserve.

Truly yours,

Robert Alan Saasto

Robert Alan Saasto

FINLANDIA FOUNDATION
FLORIDA CHAPTER

January 30.2019

Att: Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Div. for Historic Preservation
Peebles Island
Waterford, NY 12188

Dear Jennifer Betsworth:

On behalf of the Finlandia Foundation, Florida Chapter, I am writing to strongly support the application for historical designation for Alku 1 and 2 in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, New York.is endeavor.

Many of our members originate from Finntown in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, New York. It is well known among the original Finns who lived there that these buildings were built by the Finnish immigrants before them and brought the concept of cooperative ownership to the United States

Truly yours,

Kaarina Langeland, PH.D, Professor emerita
President Finlandia Foundation
Florida Chapter

SIBELIUS BREDABLICK LODGE

No. 880, F. & A. M.
Box B4, 18th Floor, 71 West 23rd St., New York, NY 10010

February 11. 2019

Att: Jennifer Betsworth
NYS OPRHP
Div. for Historic Preservation
Peebles Island
Waterford, NY 12188

Dear Jennifer Betsworth:

I am a Trustee of the Sibelius Bredablick Lodge. I am writing on behalf of the Sibelius Lodge to support the application for historical designation for Alku 1 and 2 in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, New York.

Sibelius Lodge was formed in 1965 by Finnish Americans and named after the famous Finnish composer. Many of those initial members came from Finntown in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, New York. Many of the members today are descendants of those originating members.

The Sibelius Lodge strongly support Alku 1 and 2 being designated historical sites to recognize the Finns who built the buildings and brought the concept of cooperative ownership to the United States.

Truly yours,

Robert Alan Saasto, Trustee

Richmond Hill Historical Society
85-03 114th Street, Richmond Hill, NY 11418
www.richmondhillhistory.org

New York State Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation
Peebles Island State Park
PO Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188
Attn: Jennifer Bettsworth

Re: Finnish Home Building Association
826 43rd Street, Brooklyn

Dear Ms. Bettsworth;

On behalf of the Richmond Hill Historical Society, I am expressing our support of the SHPO designation of this important landmark. It opened a new home ownership opportunity and paved the way for thousands of similar homes, nationwide.

Thank you for considering this landmark. Please feel free if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

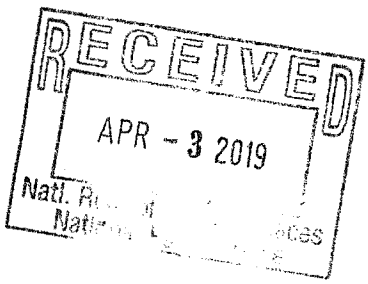
Ivan Mrakovcic R.A.
President,
Richmond Hill Historical Society

cc: Valerie Landriscina R.A.

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY.
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ERIK KULLESEID
Acting Commissioner



28 March 2019

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following five nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Alku & Alku Toinen, Brooklyn, Kings County
St. Luke's Hospital, New York, New York County
George Washington Hotel, New York, New York County
Waterloo High School, Waterloo, Seneca County
Sidney H. Lowndes House, Northport, Suffolk County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office