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### **MAS SUES TO COMPEL HISTORIC REVIEW AT BROOKLYN'S IKEA SITE**

The Municipal Art Society has sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with a goal of forcing a legally-mandated review of historic resources at the Ikea site in Red Hook, Brooklyn. The Corps has allowed construction to proceed that will cover over a Civil War-era graving dock on the site with a parking lot — an act that will forever tarnish the historic character of the site and weaken the city's maritime industry.

“For nearly two years, the Corps has said that civic groups and others would be allowed input and comment on demolition and construction plans at Red Hook,” said Kent Barwick, MAS President. “That time never came and we are left with no alternative but legal action. The law requires a proper historic review, and the public deserves it.”

MAS is calling on the Corps to fulfill its responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act which requires a full and fair review of the effects of the Ikea project on all historic properties in the area, including the dock itself. The suit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York on Friday, November 17.

Dating to the 1860s, the dock has obvious historic significance but it also holds great importance as a functioning and virtually irreplaceable piece of maritime infrastructure. The 710-foot ship repair facility is one of only two docks in New York Harbor that can accommodate large, tall ships. Filling it in will diminish maritime capacity in the region.

In February 2005, MAS commissioned alternative plans showing that the site can accommodate the graving dock, the store, and the same number of parking spaces as laid out in Ikea's original plan. The site at 1 Beard Street in Red Hook is roughly the same size as the Atlantic Yards site in Prospect Heights. MAS maintains that Ikea can fit the dock, the store and a parking lot in the same amount of space that the developer Forest City Ratner plans to fit 16 skyscrapers, a park and a sports arena.

“The Army Corps has artificially gerrymandered the permit area to exclude consideration of a significant historic resource,” said Elizabeth Merritt, Deputy General Counsel for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. “This is an issue that has national implications because it reflects a widespread policy of the Army Corps which is fundamentally inconsistent with the National Historic Preservation Act.”

“Ships have been built and repaired in Red Hook since the mid-1700s and up until a year ago this graving dock continued to provide important maritime services and local jobs,” said Jay DiLorenzo, President of the Preservation League of New York State. “The League placed the graving dock on its statewide Seven to Save Endangered Properties list because we believe that, in addition to the loss of those jobs and services, its loss will mean the demise of a unique, functioning and historic feature of the waterfront that helps to define the character of Brooklyn. A thorough Section 106 review, which includes adequate public participation, could result in the retention of the graving dock while allowing for growth and economic development.”

“Without the graving dock, New York City’s ship repair and support services infrastructure is presently inadequate to accommodate the current demand for ship repair, let alone the confirmed future requirements,” said Edward J. Kelly, Executive Director of the Maritime Association of the Port of New York and New Jersey.

The Municipal Art Society is a private, non-profit membership organization whose mission is to promote a more livable city. Since 1893, the MAS has worked to enrich the culture, neighborhoods and physical design of New York City. It advocates for excellence in urban design and planning, contemporary architecture, historic preservation and public art. A project of MAS is the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance, which is dedicated to helping the region reconnect to its greatest natural resource — the harbor, rivers and estuaries of the New York and New Jersey waterfront.

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