



**Brooklyn Historical Society**  
128 Pierrepont St.  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
718.222.4111  
[www.brooklynhistory.org](http://www.brooklynhistory.org)

**Media Contact:** Keara Duggan  
347.381.3703  
[kduggan@brooklynhistory.org](mailto:kduggan@brooklynhistory.org)

## Brooklyn Historical Society Opens Exhibition on New Buildings in Historic Districts

**September 29, 2011: Brooklyn, NY –*Context\Contrast: New Architecture in Historic Districts, 1967-Present*** opens at Brooklyn Historical Society on October 6. Focusing on the areas of Brooklyn Heights, South Street Seaport, SoHo, and the Upper East Side, *Context\Contrast* investigates how new buildings and historic districts have learned to coexist in New York, the country's most culturally and architecturally diverse city. The exhibition will run from October 7 to December 31. This traveling exhibition has been shown in New York, Washington DC, and Dallas, and will conclude in Brooklyn Heights, the first Historic District in New York. The timing of this exhibition is particularly exciting as just a few weeks ago the [Landmarks Preservation Commission](#) approved a new historic district surrounding Borough Hall in downtown Brooklyn. Dubbed the [Borough Hall Skyscraper District](#), the area encompasses 21 architecturally distinct skyscrapers and office buildings that pepper Court, Remsen, Montague, Livingston and Joralemon streets. Along with the exhibition, BHS will host a forum with distinguished panelists on November 2 for a lively discussion about the issues involved with designing new buildings in historic districts. *Context\Contrast* is presented as part of **Archtober**, the inaugural month-long festival of architecture activities, programs and exhibitions in New York City.



**Exhibit Dates:** October 7-December 31

**Opening:** Thursday, October 6  
5:00-6:00 p.m. Members-only Preview  
6:00-8:00 p.m. Public opening

**Forum:** Wed., November 2  
7:00 p.m. Doors open 6:30 p.m.  
*The Architecture of Appropriateness*  
**Moderator:** Richard Olcott, FAIA, FAAR, Partner, Ennead Architects  
**Panelists:** Hugh Hardy, FAIA, Founder, H3 Hardy Collaboration  
Architecture; Otis Pratt Pearsall, Preservationist; Thomas F. Schutte,  
President, Pratt Institute; Yolande Daniels, Founding Partner, Studio  
SUMO

### **About *Context\Contrast: New Architecture in Historic Districts, 1967-Present***

New York is often imagined as a perennially new city—a place that marks its history, as *The New York Times* once editorialized, “with gaping holes in the ground.” Yet in the four decades since the 1965 passage of the New York Landmarks Law—the legislative milestone inspiring those remarks—New York has become one of the most influential forces for historic preservation in the United States.

The Landmarks Law established the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission as the agency responsible for identifying and preserving the city's architectural, historical, and cultural resources. To date, the Commission has designated as landmarks 1,291 individual buildings and structures, 112 interiors, 105 historic districts and 16 historic district extensions. Historic districts acknowledge neighborhoods where a particular architectural character and history establish a sense of place. The

neighborhoods explored in this exhibition—Brooklyn Heights (Brooklyn), the Upper East Side, South Street Seaport and SoHo (Manhattan)—illustrate the distinctly different building types and landscapes that can define districts as historic and compel us to consider how they should or should not change.

The legal mandate to determine the “appropriateness” of new architecture in historic districts is one of the Commission’s most challenging tasks. How can new buildings best relate to their historic contexts? By replicating their older neighbors, or through a deliberate contrast of contemporary material and style? Can a new building be taller—or shorter—or shaped differently than others in its district and still be sensitive to its landmark setting?

*Context/Contrast* asks how the Commission’s charge of ensuring “appropriate” new architecture in historic districts has allowed neighborhoods to evolve without endangering the essential character that contributes to their public value and makes them worth protecting.

This exhibition features photographs and renderings of nearly forty compelling new building projects situated in historic neighborhoods, as well as models of both the original and revised design for 27 Cranberry Street in Brooklyn Heights that was just approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission in August 2011.

Exhibition and Forum presented by the Brooklyn Historical Society and underwritten by the [New York Landmarks Preservation Foundation](#). Exhibition organized by the [AIA New York Chapter](#), the [NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission](#), and the [Center for Architecture Foundation](#) in partnership with the New York Landmarks Preservation Foundation.