

Carroll Gardens: Historic?

By ROBERTA B. GRATZ

The Carroll Gardens Historic District has gone back to being an unhistoric district.

The Brooklyn neighborhood received the long-sought designation from the Landmarks Preservation Commission last May seven years after being first considered.

But there was one hitch: the Board of Estimate, which has final approval, had not yet acted. And Brooklyn Borough President Leone has gotten the commission to temporarily withdraw the designation.

'Marking Time Operation'

"We withdrew the designation report without prejudice," said Harmon H. Goldstone, chairman of the commission. That means it can be resubmitted at any time.

Leone said he asked for resubmission so a public hearing can be held by the Board of Estimate and that "every property owner would be given notice from the Landmarks Commission what their obligation would be if the designation is approved."

The commission, which has sometimes been criticized for acting slowly, held public hearings on the district in 1966 and 1970.

Approval by the Board is usually a mere formality. Occasionally, designations on individual landmarks have been rejected, usually for technical reasons. This is the first time the commission has pulled back a Historic District designation.

Leone said he was hoping to "set a precedent" in making sure the public is better notified. Critics of his action say this will only further diminish the commission's already limited power and take even more time.

'Political Payback?'

One Carroll Gardens resident said the move was a "political payback" because the neighborhood had not gone for Leone in the Democratic primary, which he won. Leone indicated he was getting a lot of pressure not to hold up the designation.

Goldstone said the commission went along with Leone because "we need the support of the Board of Estimate in implementing official designations so we are ready and willing to accommodate." He said he didn't consider the delay a "major drawback."

Leone wants the commission to mail letters to all property owners informing them the Board will vote on the matter. The commission did this before its own hearings were held.

The district—bounded by President, Carroll, Smith and Hoyt Sts.—contains 160 structures built between 1862 and 1884. The commission calls it a "good example of a 19th-Century brownstone residential area."