



*Testimony for Certificate of Appropriateness hearing for
Prospect Park – Upper Vale, Vale of Cashmere – Scenic Landmark*

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

My name is Amanda Davis and I am the project manager of the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, an award-winning and nationally recognized cultural heritage initiative founded by historic preservationists in 2015 to document historic places connected to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community in the city's five boroughs.

The Project joins with our colleagues at the Victorian Society of New York, Historic Districts Council, and other advocates in expressing our concerns over the proposed modifications to the Vale of Cashmere, particularly to the Upper Vale and Rose Garden. These changes would irreparably alter the look, feel, significance, and use of this landscape that was designed as a place of natural beauty, with later City Beautiful elements, and for passive activities. The proposed new building is especially inappropriate. In the 1970s, if not earlier, the Vale of Cashmere became an important cruising, recreational, and social gathering space for the LGBTQ community, particularly for the Black queer community.

It is imperative that the Prospect Park Alliance conduct immediate outreach with these two communities and that the process be far more transparent and inclusive, so that this socially significant LGBTQ landscape is preserved and interpreted rather than erased from the history of Prospect Park.