State of Land Use and the Built Environment

FINDING #1

The number of housing units authorized by new building permits in New York City decreased between 2017 and 2018.

New York City issued permits for 20,012 new housing units in 2018, down 6.7% from 2017. Aside from 2015, the year the 421-a tax incentive expired, the number of permits issued during the post-recession years is about one third lower than the pre-recession years. Of the building types, the number of permits issued for one- to four-unit buildings decreased the most from 2017 (-23.0% to 1,597) and made up the smallest share of the new units authorized in 2018 (8.0%). Fewer units were authorized in new buildings with five to 49 units than in 2017 (-19.8% to 4,844) while the number of units authorized in new buildings with 50 or more units increased slightly (1.8% to 13,571). In 2018, the largest share of newly authorized units continued to be in buildings with 50 or more units (67.8%) and that share increased by 5.7 percentage points from 2017.

Figure 1: Residential Units Authorized by New Building Permits by Property Size, New York City

Sources: New York City Department of Buildings, NYU Furman Center

Note: This year we have changed to use New York City Department of Buildings data from NYC Open Data, and values for this indicator differ from what we have published previously. For more information about these changes and the compilation of this indicator see the Methods section in Part 3 of this report.
Citywide, there were over 26,000 new residential units authorized for occupancy in 2018.

Between 2017 and 2018, the number of new units receiving a certificate of occupancy in New York City increased by five percent to 26,992, exceeding the previous peak in 2007. The vast majority of new units authorized for occupancy were in buildings with 50 or more units (72.7%, up from 70.0% in 2017). Both single unit buildings and buildings with five to 49 units had fewer residential units issued certificates of occupancy than in 2017, while both buildings with two to four units and buildings with more than 50 units had more new units authorized for occupancy.

Two new historic districts covering 461 tax lots were approved in 2018.

In 2018, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated two new historic districts: an extension to the existing Boerum Hill Historic District in Brooklyn (291 lots) and a new historic district in Central Harlem from West 130th to 132nd Streets (170 lots). The two districts included 461 individual tax lots, over twice the 161 lots designated as historic districts in 2017 (1 designation) and one lot larger than the designations in 2016 (2 designations).

Sources: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, NYU Furman Center

Note: There were no lots designated in historic districts in 2005.
In 2018, New York City designated 12 individual landmarks in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens.

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated six buildings in Manhattan, four buildings in Brooklyn, and two buildings in Queens as landmarks. There were no new landmark designations in the Bronx or Staten Island. In Manhattan, the designated buildings included the Sony Building, the Manhattan School for Science and Mathematics, El Barrio’s Artspace P.S. 109, Richard Webber Harlem Packing House, the Emmett Building, and the James Nomad Hotel. The four newly designated landmarks in Brooklyn were Hans S. Christian Memorial Kindergarten, 238 President Street House, the Dime Savings Bank of Williamsburg, and the Dr. Maurice T. Lewis House. In Queens, the newly designated buildings included the Far Rockaway Fire House and the 101st Precinct Police Station. There were no interior landmarks designated in 2018.

Figure 4: Individual and Interior Landmark Designations in 2018, New York City

Sources: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, NYU Furman Center