



**National Trust for
Historic Preservation**
Save the past. Enrich the future.

March 26, 2021

Peter Van Scoyoc, Supervisor
Town of East Hampton
159 Pantigo Road
Town Hall Meeting Room
East Hampton, NY 11937

Dear Mr. Van Scoyoc:

The National Trust for Historic Preservation¹ urges the Town of East Hampton to develop a sustainable, long-term plan for the rehabilitation and management of the James Brooks and Charlotte Park Home and Studio. Preservation Long Island and local advocates have contacted the National Trust over the last 12 months raising concerns about the future of this Town owned site and have asked us to intervene. On March 3, 2020, we wrote to the Town of East Hampton requesting a halt to demolition. We now join with those advocates asking the Town to officially rescind the demolition permit for the historic landmark, mothball the property to prevent further deterioration, and develop a revised plan for the long-term future of this nationally significant site.

The Brooks-Park property, designated a Town of East Hampton Historic Landmark in 2014 and determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 2017, is an exceptional example of an environment that reflects the artists' domestic and creative lives and contributes to the Town of East Hampton's larger history of being an artists' enclave. It comprises the home and studio buildings of James Brooks (1906-1992) and his wife Charlotte Park (1918-2010), leading members of the New York School and the East End art community in the mid-to late twentieth century. The Brooks studio, designed by the artist himself in the late 1950s, and the Park studio, a repurposed vernacular building, are both intact, as are the house and guest cottage, which were moved to the site in 1957 from their original location in Montauk.

We commend the Town of East Hampton for purchasing the 11-acre site in 2013 with Community Preservation Funds (CPF). In 2017, the Town of East Hampton entered into a License Agreement with Peconic Historic Preservation, Inc. We understand that the license agreement has been rescinded and the Town of East Hampton is looking for a new

¹ The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a non-profit membership organization that brings people together to protect, enhance and enjoy the historic places that matter to them. With headquarters in Washington, DC, 9 field offices, 27 historic sites open to the public, and partner organizations in all 50 states, the National Trust provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to a national network of people, organizations and local communities committed to saving places, connecting us to our history and collectively shaping the future of America's stories.

steward of the property. The National Trust is aware of conversations between the Town and interested residents concerned about the future of the site. We strongly urge the Town to allow at least an 18-month period of time for these local residents to organize and develop a sustainable plan for the restoration and programming of this local landmark. Requesting a budget, restoration and programming plan in a matter of a few weeks is unreasonable. When done right, such a process takes time and energy and should not be rushed. The Town should also use available CPF Funds to mothball and stabilize the property while plans are developed for the rehabilitation and reuse of the site.

With our decades of experience owning, preserving, reimagining and supporting our nation's historic sites through our own National Trust Historic Sites and programs like the Historic Artists Homes and Studios network², we at the National Trust are confident there are solutions to preserving the Brooks-Park Historic Landmark property. The National Trust would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your colleagues to discuss a potential collaboration to save this significant place.

The National Trust joins advocates at Preservation Long Island and in the local community to encourage the Town of East Hampton, the steward responsible for the Brooks-Park Historic Landmark, to treat the site as the artistic and historic treasure that it is. Given the property's historic significance and cultural importance to understanding East Hampton's heritage, we urge the Town of East Hampton to officially rescind the demolition permit, mothball the property, and work with interested parties to develop a revised plan for the long-term future of this extraordinary property.

Sincerely,



Seri Worden
Senior Field Director

² The Historic Artists' Homes and Studios network (HAHS) is a professional network comprised of 44 preserved artists' homes and studios throughout the country, now open as public sites. HAHS sites reflect the breadth and depth of art history in the United States – all representing the best standard practices in stewardship and preservation while exhibiting innovation in interpretation and outreach. Collectively, HAHS sites draw more than 1 million visitors annually to learn about the legacy of American Art.