

Birthplace of US Gay Rights Movement Declared National Treasure

The Stonewall Inn, a New York City bar widely recognized as the birthplace of the U.S. gay rights movement, was granted historic landmark status by city officials on Tuesday.

The unanimous vote by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission was hailed by gay activists and supporters of the designation who cheered and embraced in an emotional scene.

The Stonewall Inn became an instant gay rights symbol when riots spontaneously erupted on June 28, 1969 following a police raid at the Greenwich Village tavern known for serving a gay clientele in an era of intolerance toward homosexuality.

The episode was later dubbed the "Stonewall Rebellion."

The bar remains an outpost of gay nightlife, easily recognizable by its red neon sign and rainbow flags that flutter above its storefront window and entrance. It is located in a two-story building with a red brick-and-stucco facade at 53 Christopher Street.

The Stonewall Inn is already part of the Greenwich Village Historic District and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but its new designation as a city landmark provides more stringent safeguards guiding any future alteration to the property.

It is the first time in the city's history that a building that is part of a historic district is simultaneously given the landmark status, said Landmarks Preservation Commission Damaris Olivo.

