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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

March 9, 2021

**Testimony of Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer to the
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Cal. No. 06: 14 – 16 Fifth Avenue (LPC-21-05867)**

I am Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer and I am here to deliver a statement in opposition to the application for 14–16 Fifth Avenue, located in the Greenwich Village Historic District.

In January 2020, I joined dozens of residents, tenant advocates, and activists in front of this building to call for this Commission’s rejection of the plan to replace the historic home with this out-of-context development. The rally was attended by well over 100 neighbors and elected officials, including State Senator Brad Hoylman, State Assemblymembers Deborah Glick and Harvey Epstein, and City Council Speaker Corey Johnson.

14 – 16 Fifth Avenue was constructed by Henry Brevoort, Jr. one of early New York’s great builders. The twin townhouses were home to a number of prominent artists, activists, and entrepreneurs, including writer Bret Herte, Oscar-winning actress and singer Celeste Holm, industrialist Isaac Merritt Singer of the Singer Sewing Machine Company, French baroness Eva Gourgaud, Civil War Union General Daniel E. Sickles, railroad tycoon George Blanchard, and philanthropist Charles E. Strongest. Preserving these two buildings would also preserve the legacy of the historical figures who worked and lived as their residents.

The average height of the buildings along Fifth Avenue in Greenwich Village is 140 feet. The developer claims that their proposed tower at 14-16 Fifth Avenue is contextually appropriate at 241 feet. I believe that a building that is one hundred feet above the existing buildings on the block is contextually inappropriate.

Most recently on February 16, 2021, Community Board 2 voted to disapprove the demolition of these two historic townhouses. I urge the Commission to deny this application so as to protect the Greenwich Village Historic District and these landmarked buildings for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.