



October 10, 2026

Hon. Lisa Kersavage, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
253 Broadway, 11th floor
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Immediate danger to 86 University Place within
the proposed South of Union Square Historic District**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Andrew Berman

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VILLAGEPRESERVATION.ORG**

Dear Chair Kersavage,

I write to bring to your attention the immediate danger to 86 University Place within the proposed South of Union Square Historic District. Plans have been filed involving demolition of the building to replace it with seven luxury condos (the current building has four residential units along with commercial space). The existing structure was built in 1840, with its distinctive fifth floor and its prominent cornice added in 1880, while its commercial addition on the lower two floors was added in 1919.

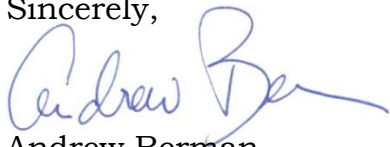
Each of these stages of 86 University Place's development relate to a period of its profound significance to New York City history: as the home of one of New York's great 19th century philanthropists who was key to the establishment of the New York Public Library, the American Museum of Natural History, the nation's first chronic disease hospital, the city's first library for women, among other institutions; as the home of one of its most prominent immigrant families and businesses of the late 19th century during the great age of immigration; and as home of one of New York's most important pre-Stonewall LGBTQ+ gathering spots and the "Mayor of Greenwich Village," Barney Gallant, who gained celebrity for being the first person in New York to be prosecuted for violating prohibition.

In 2020, Village Preservation [submitted extensive documentation](#) to the Landmarks Preservation Commission about the history and significance of this building, part of voluminous documentation we have provided to the Commission about the [proposed South of Union Square Historic District's unique significance](#) (see "Landmarks Proposals").

As you know, the proposed South of Union Square Historic District has been [determined eligible](#) for the State and National Registers of Historic Places [based upon both its architecture and historic events](#) connected to the area, and the proposed landmark designation [has received support](#) from a broad range of scholars, civil rights organizations, writers, elected officials, academics, community and preservation organizations, as well as thousands of New Yorkers.

For these reasons, and given the immediate danger facing 86 University Place, I urge the Commission to move ahead right away to designate and protect this building and the surrounding proposed historic district.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director

cc: Manhattan Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal
City Councilmember Harvey Epstein
Assemblymember Deborah Glick
Assemblymember Grace Lee
David Siffert
Community Board 2, Manhattan
Preservation League of NY State
NY Landmarks Conservancy
Historic Districts Council
NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project

