



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

518-237-8643

October 28, 2005

Andrew Berman
Executive Director
Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation
232 East 11th Street
New York, NY 10003

RE: State and National Registers Eligibility Determination
Tunnel Garage
520-528 Broome Street/51-55 Thompson Street
New York County, NY

Dear Mr. Berman

Thank you for your request for a determination of State/National Registers eligibility for the Tunnel Garage at 520-528 Broome Street/51-55 Thompson Street in Manhattan. Based on the information provided the building appears to meet the criteria for listing. Enclosed is the Resource Evaluation for the building. I have also sent a letter and a copy of the eligibility determination to the owner of record for the building, Broome-Thompson LLC.

As you know, in order for a building to be listed in the National Register the property owner(s) must be in favor of the proposed listing. We would need a letter of support from the property owner(s) before the nomination process can proceed.

Please call me at (518) 237-8643 ext. 3266 if you have any questions or email me at kathy.howe@oprhp.state.ny.us.

Sincerely,

Kathleen A. Howe
Historic Preservation Specialist

enc.



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Peoples Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

518-237-8643

RESOURCE EVALUATION

DATE: 10/28/05
PROPERTY: Tunnel Garage
ADDRESS: 520-528 Broome Street
(aka 51-55 Thompson Street)

STAFF: Kathy Howe
MCD: Manhattan
COUNTY: New York Co.
USN: 06101.015698

- I. Property is individually listed on SR/NR:
name of listing:
- Property is a contributing component of a SR/NR district:
name of district:
- II. Property meets eligibility criteria.
- Property contributes to a district which appears to meet eligibility criteria.
- Pre SRB: Post SRB: SRB date

Criteria for Inclusion in the National Register:

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or represents the work of a master; or possess high artistic values; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;
- D. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Tunnel Garage was built in 1922 to the design of architect Hector Hamilton. The two-story industrial building is architecturally significant under Criterion C for its well articulated Arts and Crafts and Moderne influenced design. The two street facades are organized into bays by brick piers with brick soldier courses defining the rectangular spandrels below the industrial windows. The facades are further enlivened by the colorful terra-cotta ornament/lettering and the rounded front corner.

While early-twentieth-century parking garages are not an unusual building type in Manhattan, the Tunnel Garage is one of the city's more notable examples retaining a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The building also appears to meet Criterion A in the area of transportation history. Located near the entrance of the Holland Tunnel, the Tunnel Garage is a surviving symbol of the automobile age and remains a visual landmark of the surrounding South Village and Soho neighborhoods.

If you have any questions concerning this Determination of Eligibility, please call Kathy Howe at (518) 237-8643, ext. 3266.

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October 24, 2005

Robert Tierney
Chairman
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007



**Re: Tunnel Garage, 520-528 Broome Street and
51-65 Thompson Street, Manhattan**

Dear Chairman Tierney:

The Art Deco Society of New York (ADSNY) is very concerned about the fate of this extremely rare and vulnerable New York City resource which possesses architectural and historic significance.

The 1922 Tunnel Garage remains one of the earliest and best preserved examples of its distinct building type in New York. Its corner siting, proximity to the contemporary Holland Tunnel, and fully-developed facade composition establish it as a major element of its Lower Manhattan neighborhood. Especially notable are the completely intact terra-cotta lettering, original steel window units, brickwork, and now-observed terra-cotta panel celebrating the iconic Ford Model T. As such, the Tunnel Garage survives as a significant early 20th century automobile-related resource that is worthy of preservation.

ADSNY joins our NYC preservation colleagues in respectfully requesting your immediate action to protect this unique property from demolition or inappropriate alteration.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.



Glen Leiner
Executive Director

CC: State Senator Tom Duane
City Council Member Christine Quinn
City Council Member Alan Gerson
Assembly Member Deborah Glick
Community Board #2, Manhattan
Historic Districts Council
Friends of Terra Cotta
DOCOMOMO Tri-State Chapter
Modern Architecture Working Group
National Trust for Historic Preservation



FRIENDS OF TERRA COTTA

October 24, 2005
Robert Tierney, Chairman
Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th fl. N
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chairman Tierney,

The Friends of Terra Cotta urge you to consider the long-threatened Tunnel Garage at 520-28 Broome Street/51-55 Thompson Street for a designation hearing. This 1922 garage, the "TUNNEL GARAGE," was designed by Hector Hamilton and is a rare surviving example of an intact garage from this period.

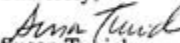
Terra cotta was frequently used for parking garages, but typically the structures were clad in white "Gothic" style terra cotta. They often included appropriate iconography, typically an image of an automobile tire with wings!

The design of the Tunnel Garage has more of an arts and crafts/deco style. Incorporated into the rounded corner of the building is a plaque with a Model-T Ford. Unfortunately this is covered by advertising, but several years ago Christopher Gray featured the garage in his *New York Times* column. He included a historic image showing this unique aspect of the building. Other unusual features of this structure include the handsome brickwork, the bold green terra-cotta signage, and the date plaque as well as additional polychrome ornamental details.

The importance of structures of this nature cannot be underestimated. We need them to help tell the story of New York's history and growth. To demolish this building, which is so close to the Holland Tunnel, our first vehicular link to New Jersey, would be most unfortunate.

Please take the time to consider this matter carefully – but realize the importance of acting sooner, rather than later. Development pressures are strong and preservation is suffering many losses. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,


Susan Tunick
President

Friends of Terra Cotta/New York State
c/o Tunick, 771 West End Avenue 10E
New York, New York 10025
212/932-1750

CHRISTINE C. QUINN
COUNCIL MEMBER, 9TH DISTRICT

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224 WEST 30TH STREET, SUITE 1204
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TEL: 347-7572
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December 16, 2005

Robert Tierney
Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street
Ninth Floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Tierney:

I am writing regarding the Tunnel Garage at 520 Broome Street. I strongly recommend that the Landmarks Preservation Commission consider landmarking this site.

The Tunnel Garage is not an ordinary garage. The garage is part of New York's automobile history. The garage was built in 1922, a time when automobile travel was a luxury. It became one of the first parking garages in Manhattan.

Furthermore, the structure of the garage represents one of the more interesting designs in the neighborhood. The garage has an exterior brick wall with Art Deco ornamentation. One of its unique characteristics is a terra-cotta medallion of a Model T Ford, which is located at the corner of the building.

I urge you to preserve a piece of history by landmarking the Tunnel Garage. Thank you for taking time to look into this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Quinn'.

Christine C. Quinn
Councilmember

Cc: Greg Levine, Friends of the Tunnel Garage
Andrew Berman, Greenwich Village Society For Historic Preservation
Community Board 2



DEBORAH J. GLICK
Assemblymember 66th District
New York County

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIR
Social Services Committee

COMMITTEES
Children and Families
Environmental Conservation
Higher Education
Ways & Means

November 17, 2005

Robert Tierney
Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street
Ninth Floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Tierney:

I am writing to you in support of landmarking the Tunnel Garage at 520 Broome Street. Although it is outside the SoHo Cast-iron historic district, the building is a beloved part of an attractive and historic neighborhood.

The Tunnel Garage is one of the more interesting and playfully designed buildings in the neighborhood. Its exterior contains elements of art-deco, arts and crafts and classical styles. Like the Chrysler building, the Tunnel Garage has a terra-cotta tribute to the automobile age – a replica of a Model-T Ford on the building's rounded corner.

Furthermore, the building was designed by famed architect Hector O. Hamilton. Hamilton, who was from East Orange, NJ, beat out several Russians in a competition to design the Palace of the Soviets, a Capitol building for the U.S.S.R. envisioned by Vladimir Lenin as a statement of Soviet power. Although Hamilton's design was eventually denounced after his refusal to join the Communist Party, the fact that Hamilton, an American, was initially awarded the commission is testament to his uniqueness and creativity.

I urge you to move forward with the landmarking of the Tunnel Garage an irreplaceable neighborhood treasure.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Deborah J. Glick
Assemblymember

HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL

THE ADVOCATE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

232 East 57th Street New York NY 10003
tel 212-674-9107 fax 212-674-9127 e-mail hdc@hdc.org

November 29, 2005

Hon. Robert Tierney, Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building
One Centre Street, 9th floor, North
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioner Tierney:


The Historic Districts Council is writing to request that the Landmarks Preservation Commission immediately consider the Tunnel Garage at 520 Broome Street for individual landmark designation. As you are aware, this unique and early example of an automobile garage is under imminent threat of demolition.

Built in 1922 in anticipation of the soon to be completed Holland Tunnel, this carefully detailed brick and terra cotta garage is an iconic symbol of the area's history. It was recently deemed eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Local residents, including Community Board 2 and preservation groups such as the Art Deco Society, the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, Friends of Terra Cotta are all in agreement about this building's significance and value to the community. We join them in supporting the designation of this building.

Thank you for the Commission's recent excellent and responsive work in the West Village. We hope hear you will again hear the pleas of the city and save this wonderful multi-layered piece of New York City history.

Sincerely,


Simeon Bankoff
Executive Director

MODERN ARCHITECTURE WORKING GROUP

Andrew Dolkart Franny Eberhart Michael Gotkin Jeffery Kroessler Roger Lang Sandra Levine
Christopher London Nina Rappaport Vicki Weiner Caroline Zaleski
John Juray, John Kriskiewicz, Co-Conveners

Preservation and Advocacy of New York City's Modern Architectural Heritage
175 West 13th Street New York, New York 10011 NYCHistorian@att.net

November 1, 2005

Hon. Robert Tierney
Chair, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: Tunnel Garage, 520-528 Broome Street/51-55 Thompson Street

Dear Chair Tierney:

I'm writing on behalf of the Modern Architecture Working Group regarding the threat of demolition to the above-referenced property, which falls within the South Village Historic District study area being examined by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation.

Constructed in 1922 to the designs of Hector Hamilton, the Tunnel Garage has long been a local landmark in SoHo. The design of this structure marks the transition stylistically from the late Arts and Crafts style to the Machine Age Art Deco. Located at a well trafficked, prominent location, the demolition or alteration of this unique industrial structure would be a appalling loss. One of the oldest extant purpose-built automobile garages in New York, the building marks both the coming of the automobile age and the nearby construction of the Holland Tunnel, which was the first vehicular connection to cross the Hudson. Although garages of this type became common throughout Manhattan as the City entered the automobile age, the Tunnel Garage is particularly distinguished for its age, its elegant poly-chrome terra-cotta signage, its dramatic and unusual rounded corner recalling the excitement of the speed of the automobile, its animated brickwork, the intactness of nearly all historic details including ornamentation and early steel sash industrial windows, and its prominent position on the approach to the Holland Tunnel. It is an integral element of this historic neighborhood, which has long been characterized by 19th and 20th century industrial architecture at its edges.

The Modern Architecture Working Group requests that the LPC consider measures to protect this building from demolition or inappropriate alteration.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter,

John Kriskiewicz