



**Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation**

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August 31, 2012

Daniel McEnany
Historic Preservation Program Analyst
New York City - Long Island - City of Buffalo
Office of Parks, Recreation, & Historic Preservation
Peebles Island, P.O. Box 189, Waterford, NY 12188-0189

**Re: Request for Determination of Eligibility for State and National Registers of
Historic Places for 186 Spring Street, Manhattan**

Dear Dan,

I write to request that the NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) consider a determination of eligibility for the State and National Registers of Historic Places (SNR) for 186 Spring Street, Manhattan. As an altered 1824 rowhouse within the SNR-eligible South Village Historic District, I understand that 186 Spring Street is already likely eligible as a contributing site within that district, and would appreciate consideration of a determination to that effect. However, based upon the extraordinary significance of the house in relation to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) rights movements and AIDS activism, I believe that it is also eligible to be determined to be of extraordinary significance based upon this history.

In addition to the information already provided to the SHPO by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation ([HERE](#)) and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force ([HERE](#)) regarding the residents of this house from 1970 to 1981, we have recently uncovered some additional important information which merits consideration and establishes the extraordinary historic significance of those who lived here.

As has already been established, Jim Owles, Arnie Kantrowitz, and Bruce Voeller, residents of 186 Spring Street and leaders of the Gay Activists Alliance, played a key role in having the first bill introduced in the New York City Council and in the New York State Legislature in 1971 that would have banned discrimination based upon sexual orientation. However, we have since become aware that these were actually the very first "gay rights" bills ever introduced anywhere in the country (see [HERE](#)). Versions of these bills were enacted by the City of New York in 1986 and the State of New York in 2002, but it must also be noted that since this first bill was introduced at the initiation of these residents of 186 Spring Street (among others), twenty-one states and the District of Columbia, as well as literally hundreds of municipalities and counties, have passed similar legislation (see [HERE](#)).

Additionally, as Director of the National Gay Task Force, Bruce Voeller played a key role in having the very first federal legislation outlawing discrimination based upon sexual orientation introduced in the U.S. Congress (see [HERE](#)). Voeller also, as co-director of the Task Force, arranged and co-lead the first delegation of gay rights leaders to meet with the White House in 1977 (see [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)); at a press conference that followed, attendees proclaimed "history was made today" and the meeting led to multiple changes in the ways in which various federal agencies treated lesbian and gay Americans (see [HERE](#)).

I greatly appreciate your attention to this matter and all of your assistance in our pursuing this determination. Do not hesitate to let me know if there is additional information I can provide, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Berman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Andrew Berman
Executive Director