



**Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation**

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April 22, 2015

Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th floor
New York, NY 10007
via e-mail to msrinivasan@lpc.nyc.gov

**Re: Outstanding Request to Recognize and Protect the Stonewall Inn and Other
Sites of Significance to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) History**

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

I write to follow up on prior letters and meetings with you about the need to recognize and protect key sites of significance to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) history in New York City, including the Stonewall Inn. Some of the most important LGBT history sites in the world are located in our city, many in and around Greenwich Village. Yet few if any of the most important of these sites are explicitly recognized or protected by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for their LGBT history, and thus face the danger of potential future alteration or demolition.

As you know, the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation first reached out to your predecessor about this issue, and we have reached out to you about this in writing and in face-to-face meetings as well, beginning shortly after your appointment in 2014. Though you have indicated that you understand the need to take action on this issue, as we approach yet another anniversary of the Stonewall Riots without such protections in place, I would like to raise the issue again. Additionally, since we first reached out to you, President Obama has referenced the Stonewall Riots in nationally-televised speeches for its singular significance to our nation's civil rights history, and a move is afoot to seek a Stonewall National Parks Service District.

The Stonewall Inn and the riots associated with it are globally recognized as the birthplace and launching pad for the modern LGBT rights movement. For this reason, the site has already been listed on the New York State Register of Historic Places, and the federal government has declared it a National Historic landmark. However, neither of these guarantees the building's preservation, which designation and recognition by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) would in fact do.

Like the Stonewall Inn, other sites of incredible import to the history of the LGBT rights movement are not individually landmarked by New York City, and are only located within designated historic districts which do not make any note of their LGBT history or significance in their designation reports. These include:

- ***Julius' Bar, 159 West 10th Street*** – the oldest gay bar in New York City, and the site of the first planned civil disobedience for LGBT rights in history, which led to the lifting of the prohibition on gay bars in New York State. On this basis, Julius' has been determined eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Though located within the Greenwich Village Historic District, the designation report makes no note of this significant cultural and civil rights history.
- ***The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Services Center, 208 West 13th Street*** – one of the first service centers ever dedicated to the LGBT community, the Center was also the site of the founding of the activist group ACT-UP, as well as many other highly influential LGBT organizations. Though located within the Greenwich Village Historic District, the designation report makes no note of this significant cultural and civil rights history.
- ***The Gay Activists Alliance Firehouse, 99 Wooster Street*** – The home of one of the most highly influential LGBT groups of the post-Stonewall era, the GAA's "zaps" and face-to-face confrontations were highly influential upon other activist and political groups which followed. The group was located in the firehouse during their most active period, from 1971 until the building was firebombed in 1974. Though located within the SoHo Cast-Iron Historic District, the designation report makes no note of this significant cultural and civil rights history.

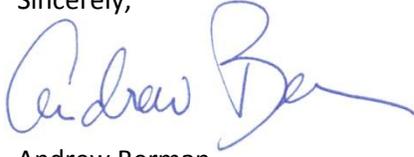
As a result, these singularly significant places currently enjoy no formal recognition or protection from the LPC on the basis of their LGBT history, and thus could be unsympathetically altered or demolished if their architectural or other features alone were not deemed worthy of preservation. This is especially troubling given that in recent years the LPC has refused to landmark and allowed some other tremendously important LGBT history sites, such as 186 Spring Street and the Provincetown Playhouse and Apartments, to be demolished.

I therefore again urge you to consider taking the following actions as soon as possible to ensure that the historic significance of these sites are protected and preserved:

- **Consider the Stonewall Inn and other sites for individual landmark designation, focusing on their LGBT history as a basis for designation**
- **Amend the designation report for the Greenwich Village Historic District and SoHo Cast-Iron Historic District to include information and details about the events which took place at the Stonewall Inn and other sites and their roles in relation to LGBT history**

Across the country, municipalities, states, and the federal government are taking steps to ensure that our nation's LGBT history, and critical sites connected to it, are recognized and preserved. I urge the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission to do the same. It is time for the LPC to formally recognize, protect, and ensure the preservation of the Stonewall Inn and other sites of significance to the LGBT rights movement.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director

cc: Mayor Bill de Blasio
Public Advocate Letitia James
Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer
Congressman Jerrold Nadler
State Senator Brad Hoylman
State Senator Daniel Squadron
State Assemblymember Deborah Glick
New York City Councilmember Corey Johnson
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Gay and Lesbian Independent Democrats
Stonewall Democratic Club
Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club
Village Independent Democrats
Village Reform Democratic Club
Downtown Independent Democrats
SoHo Alliance
New York City LGBT Community Services Center
New York City AIDS Memorial
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