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November 15, 2010

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

Re: 35 Cooper Square

Dear Chairman Tierney:

I write to add my voice to those that are recommending the designation of 35 Cooper Square, which was built in the early years of the 19th century, and which has been the home of many illustrious figures and business for nearly two centuries. This building is particularly handsome and distinguished, as it projects a sense of New York's history while in proximity to several other ultra-modern structures along the eastside of the Bowery. I am convinced that 35 Cooper Square deserves designation both because of its architectural as well as its cultural merit.

35 Cooper Square was originally built as a free standing residence with a gambrel roof and twin peaked dormers and chimney that survive today. When the neighborhood changed in the 1870s from a prestigious residential area to a burgeoning commercial venue, the building was altered to accommodate a storefront with a brick supporting arch and decorative cast iron supporting pilasters. At this early period, the façade was also modified to the then fashionable scored crushed brownstone that remains today.

I also believe that these buildings have significant cultural merit that reflects the diversity of this community's history. Apparently, the first owner and occupant of this building was a member of the Stuyvesant family whose farm was just to the north, and later occupants of the building included famous performers such as Liza Minelli and the painter, J. Forrest Vey. More recently, in the 1980's the building housed Hiseai's, a noteworthy restaurant, where the infamous Parking Violations Scandal began and which that ultimately lead to the suicide of the Queens Borough President and the downfall of others.

This very handsome federal style structure is clearly as noteworthy as the buildings just a block or so to the southwest, which are protected by the recently expanded Noho Historic district. I ask you to move as quickly as possible to landmark 35 Cooper Square. Thank you for consideration in this matter and many other requests.

Sincerely,

Rosie Mendez
Councilwoman



THOMAS DUANE
SENATOR, 29TH DISTRICT

CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

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THE SENATE
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February 1, 2011

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

RE: 35 Cooper Square

Dear Chair Tierney:

I write to express my disappointment that the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) has declined to calendar 35 Cooper Square for consideration as an individual New York City landmark. Given the building's architectural, cultural, and historical significance, as well as its imminent danger of demolition, I urge you to reconsider this decision and expeditiously calendar a public hearing.

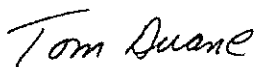
As a Federal-style rowhouse built in the early 19th century, 35 Cooper Square's architecture recalls the post-Revolutionary period of American history with its distinct gambrel roof, two-and-a-half-story height, twin peaked dormers, and large-end chimneys. It is true that the free-standing residence was altered in the late 1800s to accommodate a storefront in what was then a burgeoning commercial district and its façade was modified to reflect the fashion of the time. I would argue that these changes made more than a century ago add to 35 Cooper Square's historic character and should not disqualify it from potential landmark designation. Indeed, as other preservation advocates and elected officials have noted, LPC has designated as individual landmarks several other rowhouses from the Federal era despite alterations.

Futhermore, for more than 200 years, 35 Cooper Square has been a witness to and participant in our City's culture and history. According to neighborhood preservationists, it has housed notable figures including Beat Generation poet Diane DiPrima, actor Joel Grey, author Claude Brown, and painter J. Forest Vey. Infamously, in the 1980s, 35 Cooper Square was home to Hisae's restaurant, which played a central role in the New York City Parking Violations Bureau bribery scheme as well as the sting operation that exposed this major municipal scandal.

As you may know, in early November 2010, Massey Knakal Special Asset Strategy Group announced it had sold 35-39 Cooper Square for \$8.5 million, or \$293 per buildable square foot, to Cooper and 6th Property LLC. It is all but certain that 35 Cooper Square will be demolished to make way for a new development unless LPC intervenes.

There is too little left of New York's beloved, historic East Village. To risk losing 35 Cooper Square with its architectural significance and historical and cultural heritage to another out-of-context and out-of-scale development is tragic. While I appreciate the demands placed on LPC and the limits of its resources, I appeal to you to reconsider your objections and to swiftly calendar 35 Cooper Square for a public hearing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Duane".

Thomas K. Duane
New York State Senator
29th District



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STATE OF NEW YORK
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CHAIR
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DEBORAH J. GLICK
Assemblymember 66th District
New York County

Hon. Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

January 25, 2011

Dear Chairman Tierney:

I am writing to ask that you reconsider your decision to rule out landmark consideration for 35 Cooper Square. It is my understanding that the primary basis for excluding 35 Cooper Square from the process of landmark consideration was based on the alterations made to the façade over the last two hundred years that were observed during a site visit with Councilmember Rosie Mendez. I believe that these alterations are not sufficient cause for a building of 35 Cooper Square's age to be summarily barred from consideration, and that a public hearing in which residents and historic preservation groups could present additional detail regarding the structure's cultural and architectural history could lead you to see the building in a new light.

The building itself is a rare specimen that has remained standing since the transition of the Bowery from a residential area to one that was home to a variety of commercial venues in the early 19th century. While there have been some changes made to the façade of 35 Cooper Square, the building still retains its original twin peaked dormers, chimney, and gambrel roof, and is unmistakably representative of a bygone era in New York City history.

Given the recent construction projects on the Bowery including the Cooper Square Hotel, a 20 story glass tower which is adjacent to 35 Cooper Square, it is clear that this type of building needs the protections granted by landmark status to survive. Absent these safeguards this building will likely be raised by overzealous developers seeking to build yet another out of scale structure with no respect for the character and ethos of the neighborhood.

In addition to the architectural merits of the building, 35 Cooper Square has been home to many notable New Yorkers, including the Stuyvesant family, who were responsible for a large portion of the development of Lower Manhattan, the performer Liza Minnelli, and author Diane DiPrima, who pontificated on the merits of 35 Cooper Square as the quintessential New York City building in her novel, "Memoirs of a Beatnik." It would be a great shame for future historians to look for this noteworthy structure only to be met with the visage of yet another glass and steel structure in its place. It is for these reasons that I ask you reconsider your decision regarding 35 Cooper Square and request that you take the preliminary step of calendaring a hearing on this matter as quickly as possible, so that you might hear from the many supporters of 35 Cooper Square as to the merits of the building and its worthiness for Landmark Preservation.

Sincerely,

Deborah J. Glick
New York State Assemblymember, 66th District