



March 3, 2023

Hon. Eric Adams, Mayor  
City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Kazimir Vilenchik, P.E.  
Acting Commissioner, NYC Department of Buildings  
280 Broadway  
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Sarah Carroll  
Chair, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
One Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> floor  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Adams, Acting Commissioner Vilenchik, and Chair Carroll,

We write to share our deep concerns about the number of landmarked buildings that have recently been demolished or endangered on the City's watch, and to urge decisive action be taken to reverse this trend.

The case of 10 Fifth Avenue, a highly significant house built in 1848 by the Brevoort family that was endangered by approved work at 14-16 Fifth Avenue — both in the Greenwich Village Historic District — highlights the breadth and scope of this problem, and the urgent need for reform.

Not enough is being done to protect landmarked buildings in cases that should trigger a greater degree of oversight. This includes structures which are particularly vulnerable due to age, type of construction, or deteriorated conditions, as well as work being done by owners who have established track records of problems or violations in work or maintenance of properties. We strongly urge the Landmarks Preservation Commission and Department of Buildings to implement systems to require greater oversight and precautions in such cases.

Cases of particularly vulnerable buildings would include but not necessarily be limited to any structure built upon a rubble foundation or which is not self-supporting or any structure with noted deterioration or neglect that would reasonably mean that structural deterioration or instability is likely. Cases of bad actors would involve owners and developers who've received violations for harassment of tenants, illegal or dangerous work, or allowing their properties to suffer serious deterioration or neglect.

Despite the different causes, the results are the same: the loss of protected historic buildings. We understand that the Landmarks Commission has been considering new policies to address this issue. With the losses accumulating, we ask the Commission act quickly and transparently and provide a deadline for issuing a plan.

We believe that the City, the Department of Buildings, and the Landmarks Preservation Commission can and must do better. It is an essential duty of the City and its agencies to ensure that landmarked properties remain intact and standing. In too many cases, that is not happening.

Sincerely,



Frampton Tolbert, Exec. Dir.  
Historic Districts Council



Elizabeth Goldstein, President  
Municipal Art Society



Peg Breen, President  
The New York  
Landmarks Conservancy



Rachel Levy, Exec. Dir.  
Friends of the Upper East Side



Sean Khorsandi, Exec. Dir.  
Landmark West!



Andrew Berman, Exec. Dir.  
Village Preservation