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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
College of Fine Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Hon. Sarah Caroll
Chair, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Carroll,

I am writing in support of the Village Preservation's campaign seeking landmark designation for Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. The church opened in 1902 in a pair of ca. 1850 row houses at 229-231 West 4th Street. The buildings hold a significant connection to the Beat literary and arts movement, as Beat Generation pioneer Jack Kerouac and several of his friends would regularly attend mass at the church. As a scholar of Cold War U.S. literature, the Beat Movement, and of the highly influential and still internationally beloved Kerouac, I consider this church an undeniable part of NY history, and of American cultural history more generally. Kerouac was raised Roman Catholic, returned to the faith throughout his life, and referenced it throughout his work. Kerouac and his friends worshipped at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church throughout the 1950s, often doing so after hosting jazz-poetry readings within Greenwich Village.

Moreover, this building also bears enormous significance as the first church in New York City for a Spanish-speaking congregation. When it opened, it was at the center of "Little Spain", an immigrant community that encompassed parts of northwest Greenwich Village and lower Chelsea. Today, Our Lady of Guadalupe remains as one of the last remnants of this once-thriving community and an important piece of history.

Thanks for reading my letter and for considering Village Preservation's case for landmark designation.

Best wishes,

Professor Todd Francis Tietchen
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