



May 26, 2026

Hon. Lisa Kersavage, Chair
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
253 Broadway, 2nd floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Kersavage,

Congratulations on your appointment and approval as the Chair of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. I reach out to you in your new capacity about several items I hope to bring to your attention that I urge the agency to address. They range from outstanding designations of historic sites and areas, to enforcement of regulations regarding the landmarks law.

Specifically, these include:

- **Action on the Proposed South of Union Square Historic District.** The Commission has still failed to consider designation of the proposed South of Union Square Historic District, first presented in 2018. The proposed district has been determined eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places, based upon both its architecture and the historically significant events and movements connected to it. Scores of scholars, cultural institutions, foundations, elected officials, writers, advocacy organizations, civil rights leaders, and civic and preservation organizations have called upon the Commission to designate the district, due to its architectural significance as well as its significance to the history of visual arts, music, civil rights, LGBTQ+ rights, the women's movement, immigration, publishing, labor, film, fashion, civil liberties, commerce, and social justice movements. Hundreds of New Yorkers have written the Commission in support of designation, and the Preservation League of NY State named the proposed district one of its "Seven to Save" in 2022, one of the seven most historically significant and endangered sites in the state. While since we have proposed the district for designation the Commission has designated a handful of buildings in the area as individual landmarks, other sites connected to significant artistic, publishing, LGBTQ+, civil war, anti-slavery, public health, commercial, and popular cultural history in the neighborhood have been destroyed or altered. We have submitted more than a dozen documents containing over 350 pages of research documenting the historic significance of the neighborhood, as well as a 50-page survey of the area arguing for its worthiness for landmark designation authored by architectural historian and former LPC Survey Director and Deputy Director of Research Anthony W. Robbins. I strongly urge the Commission to move to protect this incredibly significant and increasingly endangered area, which speaks to the Commission's "Equity

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Framework,” adopted in 2021 with the purported purpose of ensuring designations cover our city’s broad diversity of histories, particularly those previously underrepresented in designations. (All documents connected to the proposed South of Union Square Historic District can be found [HERE.](#))

- **Most Holy Redeemer Church complex, 173 E. 3rd Street.** In response to a request for evaluation submitted by Village Preservation and others, the Commission has stated that the building “may merit consideration for individual landmark designation,” but has so far not acted to consider designation. The 1851 church (altered in 1913) and related buildings represent generations of immigration history in our city as well as the evolution of religious liturgy and fire safety measures. The building is immediately endangered due to moves by the Archdiocese to close it. Designation would fall under the principles of the LPC’s “Equity Framework.” (All documents connected to Most Holy Redeemer Church can be found [HERE.](#))
- **Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, 229 West 14th Street.** The city’s first Spanish-language church, this structure dates to the 1850s as grand rowhouses built for the Delmonico family, converted to use as a church in 1902 and given its current Spanish Baroque facade in 1921. The church served generations of Spanish-speaking congregants from Spain, Mexico, Cuba, and other parts of Latin America. The building is currently endangered as it has been closed and deconsecrated by the Archdiocese, pointing to likely sale. The Commission has so far declined to act upon the request for landmarking, broadly supported by local elected officials, scholars of Latino history, preservationists, and local institutions, claiming that the facade is too highly altered, in spite of multiple designations the Commission has undertaken of more highly altered structures, and its key features connected to its history as a church remaining intact. It should be noted that almost none of the Landmarks Preservation Commission’s designations reflect our city’s Hispanic and Latino history and community, in spite of their comprising almost one-third of the city’s population. Designation of this site would help fulfill the LPC’s “Equity Framework.” (All documents connected to Our Lady of Guadalupe Church can be found [HERE.](#))
- **New York Eye and Ear Infirmary, 218 Second Avenue.** The city’s oldest hospital and second oldest specialized hospital in the Western Hemisphere, the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary has played a tremendously important role in the development of ophthalmology in America and in the provisions of services to people with disabilities. This historic building, the oldest sections of which date to the 1850s, had the ribbon cut for its newest section in 1903 by Helen Keller. Designation is strongly supported by local and citywide elected officials, as well as disabled advocacy organizations. In response to a request for evaluation by Village Preservation, the commission said the building “may merit consideration for individual landmark designation.” So far, however, no action has been taken,

in spite of the structure's future remaining in doubt. Currently no site designated by the Commission appears to primarily speak to the history of people with disabilities in our country. Designation of this site would help address the mandate of the LPC's "Equity Framework." (All documents connected to New York Eye and Ear Infirmary can be found [HERE.](#))

- **Expanded historic district and landmark designations in the [East Village](#).** The East Village is one of New York's most historically rich neighborhoods, containing its oldest site of continuous religious worship, Manhattan's oldest house still in use as a residence, and a vast array of sites connected to the history of immigration, labor, and pioneering cultural movements. When the East Village/Lower East Side Historic District was designated in 2012, it was explicitly premised upon a survey which only covered one quarter of the East Village (south of St. Marks Place and west of Avenue A), with the remainder of the neighborhood to be considered. Village Preservation has shared voluminous documentation with the Commission regarding significant additional historic resources in the area, and submitted specific requests for evaluation with documentation on the history of [285-287 East 3rd Street](#), the [San Isidoro y San Leandro Orthodox Catholic Church of the Hispanic Mozarabic Rite at 345 East 4th Street](#), and [Theatre 80 \(78-80 St. Marks Place\)](#), but the Commission has not acted on any of these. Many of these sites played significant roles in the labor, immigration, Hispanic/Latino, Black (285-287 East 3rd Street), urban homesteading, and otherwise culturally avant garde history of New York, and many are endangered and/or have been lost since first brought to the Commission's attention. Designation of many of these sites would help address the mandate of the LPC's "Equity Framework."
- **Request for Evaluation of Thirteen Unprotected Sites in Greenwich Village.** On July 28, 2025, Village Preservation submitted documentation to the LPC regarding the historic significance of various sites located outside of designated historic districts and otherwise lacking in landmark protections in Greenwich Village. The Commission responded by acknowledging that several of these sites may merit consideration for individual landmark designation. While it said that several of the sites did not merit consideration for individual landmark designation, no evaluation was provided regarding our suggestion that several of these sites could be designated as extensions of the existing Greenwich Village Historic District to which they are adjacent. Regardless, no action has yet been taken on any of these sites, which remain open to compromise or demolition. Sites included were significant for the roles in relation to LGBTQ+, artistic, commercial, political, immigration, and housing history, and thus would address the mandate of the LPC's "Equity Framework."
- **Condition of [Tony Dapolito Recreation Center, 1 Clarkson Street](#).** Village Preservation has decried the ongoing state of neglect and deterioration of this

landmarked building, designated in 2010 as part of the Greenwich Village Historic District Extension II for its significant architecture, connection to immigration history, and role in providing critical public services and infrastructure for over a century. The NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has left the building in a state of disrepair for six years, even as funds have been allocated to fix it and analysis done by the Department's own engineers have said the building can be repaired and mapped out plans to do so. Instead, DPR has left the building to rot and decay while it has sought to pursue plans for demolition. A year ago we called upon the Commission to fulfill its responsibility to protect this building and demand DPR commence repairs. Your predecessor chose not to, saying that in spite of the lack of repairs, DPR had "acted as the Commission would like any property owner to behave." After an additional year of inaction, I urge you to revisit this decision and consider the damage and decay which results from the Park's Department's continued lack of repairs.

- **Condition of [Police Athletic League Building, 34 1/2 East 12th Street](#).** Similarly, this city-owned, individually landmarked building has remained in a continuous state of disrepair, in this case for almost twenty years. While the City has fortunately not stated or evidenced any intention to pursue demolition of this 1855 building, which served as the city's first school and high school for girls, it has nevertheless neglected the building to an alarming degree, with visible signs of deterioration on the facade. We continue to urge the Commission to monitor this building and call upon its sister agency, the NYPD, to undertake necessary repairs immediately.
- **Dramatic decrease in new landmark designations by the Commission in recent years.** As documented [in our report analyzing sixty years of landmark designations in NYC](#), in recent years the LPC has curtailed new landmark designation to a degree unprecedented in the Commission's history, with fewer and less extensive designations taking place in every part of the city. While the merits or necessity of designation of any one site or location can be debated, the empirical data shows an abrupt and dramatic downturn in new landmark designations by the Commission that is completely anomalous for the agency and breaks from decades of practice. Perhaps more disturbingly, we found the very few designations taking place in recent years were disproportionately for sites which were already landmarked, already protected from demolition or loss by other encumbrances or regulations, faced no immediate danger or were unlikely to face any danger in the foreseeable future, or were designations with highly limited efficacy, i.e. interior designations, which can be nullified by any property owner by choosing to end customary public access to the space. By contrast, the Commission has disproportionately refused to consider for landmark designation sites with no current landmark protections and with no other regulatory regime or encumbrances to protect them, sites facing immediate danger or potential danger in the foreseeable future, and sites

requiring exterior landmark designation, which cannot be nullified at will by a property owner. I strongly urge the Commission to reverse this disturbing trend.

- **Lack of penalty for violation of landmarks regulations.** In recent years, there have been multiple prominent and concerning cases of those who have violated landmark regulations receiving little or no penalty from the LPC for their actions. The two most glaring examples include 14 Gay Street and 16 Fifth Avenue. At the former, an owner and his hired contractor performed illegal work which structurally compromised and required the demolition of a completely intact landmarked 1827 house of extraordinary cultural and historic significance. Virtually no penalty was applied to either responsible party, in spite of the Commission repeatedly telling us that litigation was being pursued. At 16 Fifth Avenue, a developer violated vibration monitoring requirements resulting in extensive damage to the landmarked 10 Fifth Avenue, a largely intact Gothic Revival 1848 rowhouse, displacing 30 residents (several elderly) in 14 units (several rent-stabilized) for more than two years, and almost resulting in the demolition of the building. In spite of this, the developer responsible received little or no penalty for this egregious violation and the extreme harm it caused. The lack of penalty is disturbing not only for the lack of accountability for the illegal work done, but for the message it sends to other bad actors, encouraging them to operate with similar carelessness or malice without facing consequences. These two examples are only the tip of the iceberg of cases in recent years where the Commission has done little or nothing in the face of egregious, dangerous, and damaging work by owners and developers and those they hire. After a rash of demolitions and damage to historic properties, Village Preservation [recommended a raft of reforms to city agencies](#), including the LPC, to address this serious problem and help prevent its continuation. None of these recommendations were adopted. I strongly urge you to revisit those recommendations and consider further and additional steps to ensure that such violations do not continue to be incentivized by inaction in response by the LPC.

I appreciate your attention to these multiple serious issues. I look forward to your response and to seeing how the Commission can address these outstanding concerns.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director

Cc: Manhattan Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal
City Councilmember Christopher Marte, Chair, NYC Council Committee on Landmarks

City Councilmember Harvey Epstein
City Councilmember Carl Wilson
Community Board 2, Manhattan
Preservation League of NY State
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