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THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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**Gale A. Brewer, Borough President**

May 10, 2017

Meenakshi Srinivasan  
Chair  
Landmarks Preservation Commission  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor North  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

I write in support of Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation's June 13, 2016 and May 4, 2017 letters for the emergency Request for Evaluation (RFE) of 827-831 Broadway and 47 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street as individual landmarks. These structures are now under immediate threat due to recent filings with the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) and should be calendared expediently.

These cast-iron buildings designed by architect Griffith Thomas contribute to the innovative commercial history of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the rich artistic culture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since these significant structures are not yet protected, on June 10, 2016 plans were filed with the DOB for a new 14-story commercial and community facility building at 827 Broadway and on February 28, 2017, an application for a full demolition of 827 Broadway was filed. Fortunately, both of these applications were disapproved. Nevertheless, the full demolition application filed on February 28, 2017 for 831 Broadway and the March 1, 2017 full demolition application filed for 47 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street were approved.

This portion of Broadway was used primarily for manufacturing between 1860 and 1910 and was home to several businesses including: Lorillard Tobacco, The Wilson Sewing Machine Co., H.J. Duveen, and E.A. Harrison illustrating the significance of these buildings to the growth of commerce south of Union Square. Later, these buildings became live work spaces to expressionist artists Willem de Kooning, Larry Poons and Paul Jenkins, where each of them created notable artwork.

These buildings have historical, architectural and cultural significance and it would be deeply unfortunate to lose them. I strongly urge the LPC to act immediately to protect these buildings while they remain intact and viable.

Sincerely,

Gale A. Brewer  
Manhattan Borough President

CC:

Andrew Berman, Executive Director of Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation  
Bob Gormley, District Manager of Manhattan Community Board 2

**ROSIE MENDEZ**  
COUNCIL MEMBER, 2<sup>ND</sup> DISTRICT

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May 12, 2017

Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair  
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Emergency Request for Evaluation (RFE) for 827-831 Broadway a/k/a  
47 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan**

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

Once again, I write to ask that the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) move with deliberate speed to designate 827-831 Broadway a/k/a 47 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street—buildings that are in imminent danger of being demolished—as individual landmarks. Additional information has become available since last year that enhances the buildings historic architectural significance and merits a re-evaluation by LPC.

Architect Griffith Thomas, an innovator in the use of cast iron, designed these buildings. The buildings were connected to two very important and innovative 19<sup>th</sup> century American businesses: Lorillard Tobacco and Wilson Sewing Machines. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these buildings were home to well-known artists and photographers including Willem de Koonig. In addition, the buildings attracted renowned world entertainers to its antiques dealership.

The buildings were constructed by Pierre Lorillard III who started the family's tobacco business with a factory located in Chatham Street and his grandfather Pierre Abraham Lorillard I created snuff in North America. Moreover, he and his company became one of the largest tobacconists in the United States and are considered pioneers in marketing. The Lorillard logo, shown below, was the best known trademark in the world.



Shortly after these buildings were constructed, Allen Wilson who invented the sewing machine utilized the building for his company's headquarters and showroom, Wilson Sewing Machines. Through the years, there were very notable companies that utilized the building for its business. In the 1950's, notable artists and photographers lived and worked in this building; while in the 1980's, Howard Kaplan made these buildings the home of famous antique dealership.

These buildings have captured the diversity of the City of New York, as well as the United States through its historic and revolutionary commercial establishments. Its' role in the diverse socioeconomic circumstances that advances American life through manufacturing, culture and the arts should not be latest victim of a wrecking ball. It would be a tragedy to allow these cast iron façade buildings to be bulldozed. For all these reasons, I strongly urge the LPC to move as quickly as possible to calendar and designate these buildings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rosie Mendez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent initial "R".

Rosie Mendez  
Councilwoman

**LIZ KRUEGER**  
**SENATOR, 28<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT**

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May 5, 2017

Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair  
NYC Landmarks Commission  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Srinivasan,

I write to urge you to calendar 827-831 Broadway/47 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street for immediate consideration for landmark designation. It is my understanding that these buildings are at serious risk of demolition, and therefore swift action by the Landmarks Commission is critical if these historically, culturally and architecturally significant buildings are to be saved.

Griffith Thomas, one of New York's preeminent 19<sup>th</sup> century architects, designed these buildings in 1866. Thomas was an innovator both in the use of cast iron and in introducing important new architectural styles to the United States. Among his other notable works in New York are the Astor Library, the Fifth Avenue Hotel, the original section of the former New York Life Insurance Building, the Astor Mansion at 33rd Street and Fifth Avenue and the Arnold Constable Building. Many of these other examples of Griffiths work have been demolished, making it all the more critical that these buildings be saved.

827-831 Broadway/47 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street is an extremely important piece of the commercial history of 19<sup>th</sup> Century New York. The buildings were connected to two of the most important and innovative American businesses of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Lorillard Tobacco and Wilson Sewing Machines.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century these buildings were at the center of key cultural and artistic movements. Starting in 1958 the upper floor of 831 Broadway served as the loft and studio of Willem de Kooning, one of the foremost Abstract Expressionist artists of the 20th century and leading figure of the 'New York School' of painting. It was here that he painted Rosy-Fingered Dawn at Louse Point, the first of his paintings acquired by a European museum, and Door to the River, which is now in the Whitney Museum of American Art. It was also here that in 1962 he was photographed by noted portraitist Dan Budnik. That image is now in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art.

In later years the noted abstract expressionist painters Larry Poons and Paul Jenkins both also lived and worked in studios here, speaking to the key role this building played in the mid-to-late 20th century art world. Jenkins moved into the building in 1963, and owned the space until 1985. In 1963 he painted his work Phenomena 831 Broadway. Larry Poons lived and worked there at least into the late 1990's.

Given the significant contributions that these buildings have made to New York's architectural, commercial and cultural history, 827-831 Broadway and 47 East 12th Street I strongly support the immediate calendaring of these buildings. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liz Krueger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Liz Krueger  
State Senator



THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

DEBORAH J. GLICK  
Assemblymember 66<sup>TH</sup> District  
New York County

CHAIR  
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Ways & Means

May 16, 2017

Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair  
Landmarks Preservation Commission  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007

RE: 827-831 Broadway & 47 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

In 2016, a request was submitted to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for emergency historical status consideration of 827-831 Broadway and 47 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street in central Greenwich Village. These two buildings are currently not landmarked but exist close to other landmark districts and carry significant architectural and cultural weight that add to the historic nature and quality of the Broadway section of Greenwich Village. All four addresses and structures were originally built and owned by the Lorillard family, of what eventually became the Lorillard Tobacco Company. Additionally, these 19<sup>th</sup> Century structures are similar in design and were originally linked amidst what were generally commercial and manufacturing buildings.

Lower Manhattan played a vital part in America's role in Arts history. Willem de Kooning lived and worked at 831 Broadway during a particularly important part of his career. He created a major body of work at this well lit studio, as many other artists did in various lofts in the area. It is crucial to preserve these buildings by landmarking them.

827-831 Broadway and 47 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street provide significant historical context in an otherwise largely commercial area. Again, while neither building lies within a historic district, they are adjacent to other historic areas of our community and contribute to the long-running history of Greenwich Village. Lower Manhattan holds a disproportionate number of historic sites that are important for understanding both the architectural and cultural progression of our City, and exemplify the historical record that we value. However, like many buildings in Lower Manhattan, development and real estate pressures are threatening the survival of these structures. I am requesting the LPC calendar these buildings for a hearing, so that the public can weigh in on their importance to the community and the overall history of New York City.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to commenting further along with the community on these potentially landmarked buildings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah J. Glick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deborah J. Glick  
Assemblymember

Terri Cude, Chair  
Daniel Miller, First Vice Chair  
Susan Kent, Second Vice Chair  
Bob Gormley, District Manager



Antony Wong, Treasurer  
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Erik Coler, Assistant Secretary

## COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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May 19, 2017

Chair Meenakshi Srinivasan  
Landmarks Preservation Commission  
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

I write in support of Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation's June 13, 2016 and May 4, 2017 letters for the emergency Request for Evaluation of 827-831 Broadway and 47 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street as individual landmarks.

These cast-iron buildings, designed by architect Griffith Thomas, are under immediate threat as can be seen by recent filings with the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB). They should be calendared as soon as possible.

I am sure you are well aware of the history of this portion of Broadway and the significant role these buildings played in the growth of commerce and the expressionist artists that created world-famous artwork in these buildings. You have already heard about the significant artists that made their homes and studios here and the vital role these structures played in the shaping of our area. This area of Greenwich Village serves as a snapshot of this history and a point of great pride in the Community Board 2 area so well known for its art/cultural roots and its role in the development of commerce. These buildings contribute strongly to a sense of place and a documentation of history that brings people to Greenwich Village from all over the world...to visit, to photograph, and to live in this historic neighborhood.

We urge the Commission to act immediately in order to protect these important buildings.

Sincerely,

Terri Cude  
Chair, CB2 Manhattan

Chenault Spence  
Chair, CB2 Landmarks Committee

c: Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Andrew Berman, Executive Director, Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation