



Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation

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October 16, 2015

Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: Support for Landmark Designation of 57 Sullivan Street, Manhattan

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

I am writing to urge the Commission to designate 57 Sullivan Street as a New York City landmark. This significant structure was one of thirteen Federal houses proposed for designation by GVSHP and the Landmarks Conservancy in 2002. This designation proposal enjoyed strong support from local elected officials, the local community board, neighbors and preservation organizations across the city.

57 Sullivan Street is one of the oldest surviving houses in Lower Manhattan. We believe it is the oldest house in the South Village, and it maintains many of its significant features of this first architectural style of the newly born American republic. Though altered somewhat in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these alterations are typical of the era, reflect the ongoing evolution of life in New York, and are consistent with those alterations found on other individually landmarked federal houses in New York. The house retains its front stoop, brick-clad front façade laid in Flemish bond, and incised brownstone lintels. Its most remarkable intact feature is the incised entry arch with incised keystone and impost blocks. The third floor was added by 1858 and the Flemish bond was continued on this story as was the use of similar lintels seen on the lower floors. Exposure of the frame on the south façade during demolition of an adjacent house revealed for a time the underlying wooden construction.

As one of the oldest surviving houses in Manhattan, 57 Sullivan Street has born witness to and participated in the story of the evolution of housing in New York City. It started as a single-family house at its inception in the early nineteenth century. As the demographics of the neighborhood changed, it became multi-family housing for Italian immigrants. Today it has returned to a single-family residence.

The house was constructed c. 1816-17 on land formerly owned by Alexander L. and Sarah Lispend Stewart. David G. Bogert, a mason, owned it from 1817 to 1841, and its next owner and occupant, Thomas Bray, was an Irish immigrant who owned a liquor store on Grand Street. Following Bray's death in 1880 and into the twentieth century, the house was rented to Italian immigrant families,

reflecting the change in the surrounding neighborhood. In 1900 three families and two boarders, all first- and second-generation Italian-Americans, made 57 Sullivan Street their home. By 1920, as many as 21 people resided there. At the turn of the twenty-first century, 57 Sullivan Street was restored and is currently a single family residence. In 2013 it was listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places as a contributing property within the South Village Historic District.

The fact that this rare example of an early nineteenth century intact Federal style residence still survives at this location is quite remarkable. 57 Sullivan Street is certainly worthy of individual landmark designation.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew Berman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Andrew Berman
Executive Director



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Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: Support for Designation of 801-807 Broadway, Manhattan

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

I am writing to urge the Commission to designate 801-807 Broadway, the former James McCreery and Co. Store, as a New York City individual landmark. This cast-iron structure built in 1868 is highly significant not only as one of New York's most prominent commercial emporia of the nineteenth century, but as a facilitator of the transformation of Lower Manhattan in the late twentieth century from manufacturing district to residential neighborhood.

James McCreery & Co. Dry Goods opened its doors in 1869. Mr. James McCreery, an Irish immigrant, was employed by Ubsdell, Pierson & Lake, a department store located on Broadway and Grand Streets. He worked his way up to become a partner in the company. Upon Lake's retirement in 1867, the company was renamed James McCreery & Company. McCreery then commissioned a new store on Broadway and 11th Street, responding to the area's growing population of wealthy New Yorkers who were moving north of Washington Square. The building was designed by architect John Kellum, known for his work in the new medium of cast-iron. Kellum incorporated into the design a new kind of show window with extensive glazing. The opulent Italianate/French Second Empire style provided an appropriate setting for the extravagant goods housed inside, namely the luxurious silks unavailable elsewhere.

Focusing on the female shopper, the store catered to the monied carriage trade. Before long *The New York Times* would deem it "one of the most highly esteemed dry goods establishments in America." In 1872 the newspaper commented on the store's goods: "Shawls, silks and furs, of good quality, and especially suited to the season, may be obtained at McCreery & Co.'s establishment, Broadway and Eleventh-street. They have recently added largely to their stocks, and now offer a fine selection of goods intended for ladies' use."

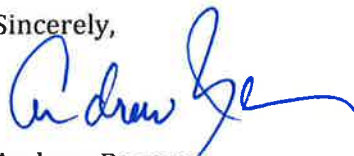
Around 1895, McCreery followed the department store trend up to "Ladies' Mile," 6th Avenue between 14th and 23rd Streets, when he opened his second store on 6th Avenue and 23rd Street. According to CastIronNYC.org, "McCreery sold the [11th Street] building to the Methodist Book Concern and Missionary Society and leased back space in the lower floors; McCreery repurchased the building in 1889. James McCreery & Co. remained in the building until 1902. By 1910 the original mansard roof had been replaced....and the storefront housed Fleischman's Restaurant." The upper floors were occupied by factories that produced suits, shoes, and leather wares.

In 1966, 801-807 Broadway became one of the first structures in New York City to be considered for individual landmark designation by the Commission due to its overwhelming architectural and cultural significance. However in 1971, a fire began in one of the factories and destroyed the interior of the building before designation could take place. Thanks to the cast-iron construction, though, the façade was left unscathed. The following year, the building was purchased by the Elghanayan brothers. When their intentions to demolish the remaining shell and erect a high-rise apartment building in its place were announced, the community protested. Residents rallied along with the Friends of Cast Iron and community groups, appearing before the Board of Appeals. In response, the Board Standards and Appeals granted variances that, for the first time, made adapting a cast iron structure such as this to residential use feasible and legal, thus paving the way for a slew of similar such conversions in Lower Manhattan and throughout New York that would follow.

Stephens B. Jacobs Group, PC, architects, was commissioned to transform the burned shell into 144 apartments – no two of which are identical. The large, arched windows, the interior Corinthian cast iron columns, and the original high ceiling dimensions were retained, resulting in dramatic spaces. The mansard roof was removed, and as part of the renovation, two setback stories were added. It was renamed the Cast Iron Building. Completed in 1974, it was the first renovation of a cast iron building into conventionally-financed housing and a fine example of re-purposing vintage structures. While the building lost its Second Empire Mansard roof through this process and gained a new, setback rooftop addition, much of the structure's original cast-iron façade from the 19th century remains intact. At the same time, the late 20th century alterations reflect one of the most consequential and influential building transformations in Lower Manhattan and New York of the last half century, thus making 801-807 Broadway arguably of even greater significance now than when it was first calendared by the Commission in 1966.

For both its architectural and historic significance, this building demonstrably deserving of designation as a New York City Landmark. It is one of the most striking cast iron buildings in the City, it was one of the premier 19th century shopping emporia and the late twentieth century alterations reflect one of the most consequential and influential building transformations in Lower Manhattan and New York of the last half century.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director



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Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: Support for Designation of 138 Second Avenue, Manhattan

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

I am writing to urge the Commission to designate 138 Second Avenue as a New York City landmark. This grand, intact Federal style house was proposed for landmark designation in 2009, as it is a rare link to the days when this stretch of Second Avenue was one of the premiere residential addresses in New York. This proposed designation enjoyed strong support from the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation and other local East Village and preservation organizations.

138 Second Avenue was built in 1832 by Thomas E. Davis, and it is one of the few surviving homes by this prolific developer of grand, late-Federal style houses in what is now known as the East Village. Two other residences built by Davis, Nos. 4 and 20 on St. Marks Place, have been designated as individual New York City landmarks. 138 Second Avenue bears much in common with those structures, including the striking Gibbs door surround, the Flemish bond brick work and the scale of the house. In the late nineteenth century, the fourth story was enlarged on 138 Second Avenue and an Italianate cornice and stoop railing were added. Also at this time, a projecting bay at the parlor and basement levels was added; the projection was further enlarged by 1916. These changes are part and parcel of the building's compelling history and evolution, and reflective of the particularly rich history of the transformation of Second Avenue into one of New York's premiere immigrant cultural centers. The house is also an excellent vintage example of the sensitive conversion of a portion of a row house to commercial use.

Davis moved to New York City in 1830 and began to acquire and develop real estate in the area in and around St. Marks Place and formerly part of Peter Stuyvesant's Bowery Farm. Davis built grand three-and-a-half-story, Federal style, marble and brick clad town houses, like 138 Second Avenue, along St. Marks Place, as well as other parts of the City. The area of lower Second Avenue and the adjacent side streets became the fashionable place for well-to-do New Yorkers to reside from the 1830's through the 1850's. Another area which Davis developed was Carroll Place, now Bleecker Street between Thompson Street and LaGuardia Place, which includes several similarly grand Federal style houses which were designated as part of the South Village Historic District in 2013.

In 1850, the row house became the home of the prominent merchant Duncan Pearsall Campbell (1781-1861) and Maria Bayard Campbell. The Campbells were very well-placed in New York society — as much so as Daniel Leroy (the son-in-law of Elizabeth Stuyvesant and Nicholas Fish, and brother-in-law of Senator

Daniel Webster) of 20 St. Mark's Place. Maria Bayard Campbell was the daughter of William Bayard, prominent New York City banker. Duncan Campbell had been a partner in the legendary New York merchant house of Le Roy, Bayard & Co. He was a director of many companies and charities, and, as a trained physician, was a trustee of the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Prior to the Civil War, the demographics of this part of Manhattan began to change. The more well-to-do native-born residents began to move northward and the Lower East Side began to be populated largely by German immigrants. The area became known as *Kleindeutschland*, or 'Little Germany,' and single family residences like 138 Second Avenue were frequently converted into multi-family housing. These structures were also modified to accommodate commercial and institutional purposes. In 1874, No. 138 was combined with No. 136 to form the Association for Befriending Children and Young Girls, operated by the Sisters of the Divine Compassion. In 1881, No. 134 was added to the complex. The stated object was "To rescue young girls who need reformation in any degree, or for any cause, and to protect children from evil influences." It was later renamed the House of the Holy Family by the Archdiocese and, according to the *New York Times*, "besides having charge of children and young girls, now has a day school for neglected Italian children and an industrial school, in which between 300 and 400 children are taught to sew and are clothed."

In 1916, *The New York Times* announced that 138 Second Avenue would be the new headquarters for the League of Foreign-Born Citizens, a "non-racial, non-sectarian organization, founded in 1913, for the purpose of interesting the immigrant in civic affairs and inspiring those who had not been naturalized to take steps towards making themselves American citizens... owing to the gift of \$1,500 from Mrs. Vincent Astor...the League...is enabled to move into a new clubhouse [at 138 Second Avenue]... from the old headquarters with only one-fifth that capacity at 82 Second Avenue."

138 Second Avenue was recently beautifully restored and serves as an excellent representation of the late Federal period style. It is also representative of the evolution of this part of the City from a fashionable residential community to an immigrant neighborhood. I therefore strongly urge the Commission to designate 138 Second Avenue as an individual New York City landmark.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director



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Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
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One Centre Street, 9th Floor
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Re: Support for Designation of 2 Oliver Street, Manhattan

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

I am writing to urge the Commission to designate 2 Oliver Street as a New York City landmark. This significantly intact survivor was first heard for designation in 1966, the earliest days of the Commission, and was one of thirteen Federal houses proposed for designation by the GVSHP and the New York Landmarks Conservancy in 2002. This designation proposal enjoyed strong support from the local elected officials and preservation organizations city wide.

2 Oliver Street was built in 1821 by Robert Dodge and the third story was added around 1850. Its simple design and features reflect characteristics of many federal-era residences, and the third story addition is done in a manner quite typical for such early relics of New York's first wave of urban development. Intact details include its simple massing, the brick clad front elevation set in a Flemish bond, and brownstone sills and incised lintels.

Over the course of its long history, 2 Oliver Street has been home to two particularly prominent residents who add to the building's historic significance -- James O'Donnell was among America's first trained architects, and Dr. Antonio Pisani, a noted physician and Commissioner of the New York City Board of Education, recognized for his work within the Italian immigrant community. Both men are reflective of the waves of immigrants to come through lower Manhattan in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and both men enjoyed significant professional successes.

James O'Donnell was born in 1774 in County Wexford, Ireland, and came to the United States in 1812. Along with Benjamin Latrobe, he was among the first trained architects to practice in the United States who apprenticed in Europe. O'Donnell leased 2 Oliver Street from Robert Dodge; Dodge lived around the corner on Chatham Square and worked as a painter and a glazier. While in residence at 2 Oliver Street, O'Donnell designed the nearby Fulton Street Market (1821-22). Other New York works by O'Donnell included the renovation and extension of Columbia College (1817-20), the Bloomingdale Asylum (1818-21), and Christ Church on Anthony Street (1822-23). After fourteen years in New York, he moved to Montreal where he designed the Basilica of Notre Dame, one of North America's largest and earliest Gothic Revival Churches.

Dr. Antonio Pisani was born in New York circa 1873 to Italian immigrants, Bernardo and Mary Pisani. Dr. Pisani graduated from Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1896 and began practicing medicine in New York. He moved into 2 Oliver Street between 1900 and 1905, and lived there

with his family while conducting his medical practice. Dr. Pisani also served as Commissioner to the Board of Education between 1909 and 1917, received the Chevalier of the Crown of Italy in 1913 in recognition of his work in the United States with Italian immigrants, was awarded Outstanding General Practitioner of the Year by the Council of the New York State Medical Society, was president of the Columbus Hospital medical board 1942-44, and served as trustee of the Italian Savings Bank and the East River Savings Bank ([NY Times, 10/15/1954](#)). Dr. Pisani died at the age of eighty-one in 1954.

In light of its intact physical structure and connection to important figures in New York's history, I urge you to designate 2 Oliver Street a New York City Landmark.

Sincerely,



Andrew Bernan
Executive Director