



**Greenwich Village
Society for Historic Preservation**

252 East 11th Street
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www.gvshp.org



PRESS RELEASE

November 16, 2010

For Immediate Release

**COMMUNITY GROUPS, ELECTED OFFICIALS,
PRESERVATIONISTS and JEWISH HISTORY GROUPS
CALL FOR CITY TO LANDMARK 326 & 328 EAST 4TH STREET,
THREATENED HISTORIC EAST VILLAGE HOUSES**

Manhattan – The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP) and the East Village Community Coalition (EVCC) were joined today by City Councilmember Rosie Mendez, State Senator Daniel Squadron, Assemblymember Brian Kavanaugh, the Historic Districts Council, and the Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy for a press conference calling for the city to save the threatened historic houses at 326 & 328 East 4th Street with landmark designation. A new owner is seeking permits to build atop the houses and alter them beyond recognition.

When the construction plans were discovered this summer, GVSHP and EVCC wrote to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) asking that the 170 year old, remarkably intact houses be considered for landmark designation (see attached). Councilmember Mendez, State Senator Squadron, Assemblymember Kavanaugh, and the Historic Districts Council have all supported the call for landmark designation (see attached letters).

GVSHP and EVCC have provided documentation to the LPC substantiating these houses' historic significance (see attached), which includes that:

- they are the first and only structures to have occupied these sites;
- they were built for shipping merchants connected to what was then the nearby East River docks;
- one of the houses was built by the same family responsible for the first steamship to cross the Atlantic;
- the houses served as a synagogue for several decades when this was the largest Jewish community in the world, and the congregation's history is significant to the evolution of Hasidic Judaism in the 20th century;
- the houses served for several decades as the home of the Uranian Phalanstery, an anarchist/utopian artists collective associated with Timothy Leary

The LPC has also received hundreds of letters and e-mails calling for landmark designation of these houses, and the buildings have been ruled eligible for the State and National Register of

Historic Places (see attached). However, the LPC has thus far declined to consider the houses for landmark designation (see attached letter).

More information about the houses, their history, and the effort to save them can be found at www.gvshp.org/326-328e4 and http://evccnyc.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=86&Itemid=1.

Andrew Berman, Executive Director of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation said: "It is incredible that these houses have survived 170 years at this location with so little change. That they did so having gone from shipbuilding merchants' houses to immigrant tenements to Hasidic Jewish synagogue to anarchist utopian art collective is nothing short of miraculous. These houses reflect the incredible evolution of the East Village and Lower East Side from seaport to immigrant melting pot to center of the largest Jewish community in the world to artistic haven, and in doing so tell much of the story of New York. If these amazing survivors don't merit landmark status, I don't know what does."

Kurt Cavanaugh, Managing Director of the East Village Community Coalition said: "Age and architectural details aside, the incredible history of these buildings merit landmark protection. The Lower East Side, arguably the most historic neighborhood in New York City, is under-protected by landmark designations and this must change before it's too late."

Councilmember Rosie Mendez said: "With so many aspects of the historic Lower East Side disappearing rapidly, it is so important to preserve all that we can. These buildings span the entire history of our unique community – from early merchant and shipping center, to immigrant sanctuary, to counter-culture mecca. We have a responsibility to cherish this legacy not destroy it."

State Senator Daniel Squadron said, "The buildings on 326 and 328 E. 4th Street, built over 170 years ago, are important historical and cultural parts of the community – altering these buildings would be a loss to the entire city. I urge the Landmarks Commission to designate these historic buildings as landmark sites, and I thank the East Village Community Coalition and the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation for their hard work and dedication to the community."

Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh said, "These are two of the oldest and most significant historic structures on the Lower East Side. They have withstood the test of time – but we're concerned that they won't survive the wrecking ball unless the Landmarks Commission acts to preserve them."

Simeon Bankoff, Executive Director of the Historic Districts Council, said: "These houses represent not just a fragile and irreplaceable piece of the East Village and Lower East Side's history, but of New York's history. New York's landmarks are not just the great monuments like the Empire State Building and the Statue of Liberty. They are the little places that tell how millions of New Yorkers lived their lives over the last few centuries, and our city would be a much poorer place without them."

Laurie Tobias Cohen of the Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy said: "For nearly fifty years, 328 E. 4th street was home to Congregation Hessed LeAvraham, the only location at the time of the Strayner Chassidic Dynasty and home of their leader, Rabbi Uri Langner, and is now the only built remnant representative of the Chassidic population that resided north of Houston Street. It is part of our historic memory of the diversity within the Great Jewish migration to this great city, and as such, deserves land mark status."

-end-



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August 6, 2010

Hon. Robert Tierney, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th floor
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Urgent Request for Evaluation for 328 and 326 East 4th Street,
Manhattan**

Dear Chair Tierney:

We write to urgently request that the Landmarks Preservation Commission expeditiously evaluate for consideration for individual landmark status 328 and 326 East 4th Street, Manhattan, two incredibly intact Greek Revival rowhouses located between Avenues C and D. Research by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (attached) indicates these houses were built between 1839 and 1841, and, remarkably, in their 170-year history have remained almost completely unaltered on their exteriors.

Now, however, both face the imminent possibility of substantial compromise or worse. Applications filed yesterday with the Department of Buildings and discovered by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation seek to "CONVERT EXISTING 4 STORY CONVERTED DWELLING INTO A HEREAFTER ERECTED CLASS 'A' FIRE PROOF MULTIPLE DWELLING AND ADD 2 STORIES TO EXISTING BUILDING."

As you know, these are some of the oldest intact structures anywhere in the East Village. The level of architectural integrity is incredible, with details including wooden cornices, original stoop ironwork, lintels, and doorway frieze and entablature still intact. These structures date from and reflect the time when the East River was New York's busiest working waterfront, and successful merchants built some of New York's finest homes adjacent to it in these easternmost blocks of what is now the East Village. As you also know, after more than a century and a half of tumultuous change in this neighborhood, very few of these houses survive to this day. Of the few that do, this level of preserved architectural integrity is extremely rare.

Because these applications (attached) have just been filed, there is time for the Landmarks Preservation Commission to act. We hope that you will move swiftly to ensure that these two incredible and noteworthy pieces of New York and the East Village's history are preserved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Berman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew Berman
Executive Director
Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kurt Cavanaugh", with a stylized, looped design.

Kurt Cavanaugh
Managing Director
East Village Community Coalition

Cc: Councilmember Rosie Mendez
Mary Beth Betts, Director of Research, LPC
Municipal Art Society
NY Landmarks Conservancy
Historic Districts Council

ROSIE MENDEZ
COUNCIL MEMBER, 2ND DISTRICT

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**THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

CHAIR - COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HOUSING

COMMITTEES
HEALTH
HOUSING & BUILDINGS
LAND USE
LOWER MANHATTAN REDEVELOPMENT

SUB COMMITTEE
LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING &
MARITIME ISSUES

September 23, 2010

Robert Tierney
Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: 326-28 E. 4th Street

Dear Chairman Tierney:

I write to add my voice to the many that have recommended the designation of two buildings in my district, which I believe warrant landmark designation. 326 and 328 E. 4th Street are two Greek Revival homes built in the mid-19th century. They are the original buildings built on these lots, and they retain to an extraordinary degree the character and detail of the original structures constructed 170 years ago. I believe that they meet the criteria for designation both because of their architectural and cultural merit.

As you know, although they have been under-maintained during the last years, they have not been altered significantly. Both have significant detail remaining, including cornices, lintels, stoop ironwork, etc. They provide excellent examples of the private homes that served the merchant class who lived and worked in this burgeoning part of the city in the mid-19th century.

I also believe that these buildings have significant cultural merit that reflects the incredibly far reaching changes this community has been privy to during the buildings' long existence. While first reflecting the shipbuilding heritage of the early Lower East Side, 328 E. 4th became a Hungarian synagogue in the 1920s, and more recently the home of the Uranaian Phalanstery, which calls itself "an anarchist utopian commune for practitioners of art and cosmology".

It would be a tragedy to lose these precious buildings, and it appears that they are under peril of demolition. I ask you to move as quickly as possible to landmark them.

Thank you for consideration in this matter and many other requests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rosie Mendez".

Rosie Mendez
Council woman



STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY



DANIEL SQUADRON
25th State Senate District

BRIAN KAVANAGH
74th State Assembly District

September 29, 2010

Hon. Robert Tierney
Chair, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioner Tierney:

We write to request timely consideration of landmark status for 326 and 328 East 4th Street, two historic East Village buildings that are threatened with substantial alteration or destruction after a recent transfer of ownership.

The buildings have housed generations of East Village history: almost two centuries ago, they began as a home for leaders of the neighborhood's vital shipping industry; they later hosted families of immigrants from all over the world, acted as a synagogue for Jewish settlers from Eastern Europe and, most recently, housed artists of the generation that has helped the neighborhood recover and thrive.

Throughout close to two centuries of changing uses, much of the original architectural detail has remained intact, further enhancing the historic value of these structures.

Given the historic value of these buildings, the strong sentiment in the community that they are worthy of landmark status and the imminent plans of the owner to alter them dramatically, we urge you to rapidly consider landmark designation of 326 and 328 East 4th Street. Thank you for your attention to this matter of community concern.

Sincerely,

Daniel Squadron
New York State Senate

Brian Kavanagh
New York State Assembly



HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL

THE ADVOCATE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

232 East 11th Street New York NY 10003
tel 212-614-9107 fax 212-614-9127 e-mail hdc@hdc.org

August 11, 2010

Honorable Robert Tierney, Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building, 9th Floor
One Centre Street
New York City, New York 10007

Dear Chair Tierney,


The Historic Districts Council is writing to support the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation and the East Village Community Coalition's recent Request for Evaluation for 328 and 326 East 4th Street.

By some miracle, these two Greek revival rowhouses in the East Village have remained, from the ironwork of their stoops and areaways all the way up to their dentilated cornices, remarkably intact since their construction some 170 years ago. This miracle seems about to be broken with applications recently filed with the Department of Buildings to substantially alter these historic structures.

While the Landmarks Preservation Commission's dedicated, careful research and outreach to owners is the typical route that has happily ended in many designations throughout the city, now is one of those rare times when swift action is necessary. We request, while there is still time before the permits are approved and pulled, that 328 and 326 East 4th Street be calendared.

Thank you for attention to this matter and the many others throughout the city.

Sincerely,



Simeon Bankoff
Executive Director



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August 20th, 2010

Hon. Robert Tierney, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th floor
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Urgent Request for Evaluation for 328 and 326 East 4th Street,
Manhattan**

Dear Chair Tierney:

As a follow-up to our letter of August 13th, we would like to share with you some additional information pertaining to the architectural and cultural history of 326 & 328 East 4th Street researched by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. We hope that this illustration of how the history of these two houses is so tightly interwoven with the history of the East Village will allow you to reconsider your finding that they fail to meet the criteria for landmark designation.

Architecturally, these houses are extraordinary. The first and only houses ever to occupy these lots, they originally existed as part of a row of several constructed between the years 1837 and 1841 (see attachments 1 & 2). Five of these houses – Nos. 320 to 328 – still exist today. No. 320, which was constructed in 1837-1839, is the earliest of the survivors; the others were first assessed a couple of years later. Though altered to varying degrees, Nos. 320 – 326 most likely originally appeared similar to 328, which is remarkably intact and retains its original height and configuration, dentiled cornice, molded stone sills and lintels, ironwork, and many of its original windows. Its door is especially distinguished for having maintained all of its classic Greek Revival elements including its rectangular sidelights, leaded transom, flat pilasters and brownstone enframement.

No. 326 is nearly as intact as 328. United with its neighbors by a continuous dentiled cornice, it has retained its stoop, ironwork, door enframement, and original height and configuration. The door itself has been replaced, but with one evocative of Alphabet City in the 1970s – a period of major significance in this neighborhood as well.

Nos. 326 & 328 East 4th Street exemplify the highly-significant Greek Revival style, which has yet to be represented among landmarks in this portion of the neighborhood. They are as intact and nearly identical to those along the row at 406-418 West 20th Street in the Chelsea Historic District, which is noted in the designation report as being “one of the most splendid and best preserved uniform rows of town houses in New York City. Simpler, but as carefully designed, it nonetheless ranks with the row at the northeast corner of Washington Square.”

The buildings also have a direct cultural connection to a few noteworthy periods in the history of the far East Village, all of which remain underrepresented among landmarks in the city. The earliest of these periods is that during which the East River thrived as the heart of New York's working waterfront. While the Commission has recognized the significance of the South Street seaport to the history of the city, it has scarcely recognized the contribution of the portion of the East River bordering the East Village. It is no coincidence that a majority of the owners of the first buildings constructed around Lewis Street (since demapped) and Avenues C and D were stakeholders in the industries connected to the waterfront. The original owners of 326 & 328 East 4th Street were no exception.

Tax assessment records from 1839 indicate that the original owner of 326 East 4th Street was Fickett & Thomas, a large shipbuilding company that Longworth's city directory from 1827 (approx. 13 years prior to the house's construction) states was located at the corner of Clinton & Water Streets (attachment 3). Notably, Francis Fickett is credited with the construction of the SS Savannah, the first steamship in the world to cross the Atlantic Ocean (attachment 4). He appears in tax assessment records numerous times as the original developer of several homes along the block and was, at least until the 1890s, buried in the East Village's own New York City Marble Cemetery (attachment 5; whether or not his remains are still there has yet to be confirmed). In 1842, the ownership of No. 326 had changed to George Fickett, who is noted in Longworth's 1835 city directory as being a shipbuilder and was most likely a relative of Francis (attachment 6). Little is known of Cornelius Read, the original owner of No. 328, except for two genealogical records that point to his owning a lumberyard and working as a carpenter (attachments 7 - 10). When he died in 1849, the house was transferred to his estate. Between 1845 and 1849, his daughter Catherine and her husband Joseph Bishop lived next door at No. 326, which they allegedly purchased from George Fickett.

Most remarkably, the buildings have remained in their original state through a number of changes in use that stemmed directly from shifts in neighborhood demographics. With the influx of immigrants to what is now known as the East Village in the mid-19th and early 20th centuries came the transformation of many single-family homes to tenements. Both 326 & 368 housed multiple families by the turn-of-the-century (attachments 11 & 12). By 1927, historic building permits indicate that No. 328 housed a synagogue that is believed to have served a Hungarian congregation (attachment 13). The shul remained until 1974, when both buildings came to house the Uranian Phalanstery, which calls itself "an anarchist utopian commune for practitioners of art and cosmology" and still exists today (attachment 14).

East Village folklore paints a romantic picture of the neighborhood in the later post-war years, in no small part due to institutions such as the Uranian Phalanstery, which sprang up when the low cost of living in the neighborhood made it attractive to artists and which paved the way for the neighborhood's resurgence and transformation to a cultural hotbed. The Phalanstery was the brainchild of Richard Tyler, who, together with his wife Dorothea, founded the organization with a mission to document their lives through art (though Richard died in 1983, Dorothea has continued to foster the mission). In the years since, the couple amassed scores of spiritual artifacts that have transformed the buildings' interiors into a sort of shrine to bohemia. The doorway of No. 326 most likely dates from around the time of the Phalanstery's founding.

Nos. 326 and 328 East 6th Street come about as close as possible to a physical representation of the history of the far East Village – from its years as a working port to its shift to an immigrant community to its transformation to an epicenter for the artistic community. That these houses have remained virtually unchanged in the past 170 years is miraculous and noteworthy; that they could be lost to irresponsible

development would be nothing short of tragic. We strongly urge the Commission to reconsider their original assessment and swiftly calendar these buildings for landmark designation.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director
Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation



Kurt Cavanaugh
Managing Director
East Village Community Coalition

Cc: Councilmember Rosie Mendez
Mary Beth Betts, Director of Research, LPC
Municipal Art Society
NY Landmarks Conservancy
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October 28, 2010

Hon. Robert Tierney, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th floor
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Congregation Hessed LeAvraham - The Langer Brandwein Family of the Strayner
Dynasty, 328 East 4th Street, Manhattan.**

Dear Chair Tierney:

We have uncovered some additional historical information on the rowhouse at 328 East 4th Street which, along with its neighbor at No. 326, we have asked you to consider for landmark designation. For nearly fifty years from as early as 1927 through 1974, this largely extant Greek Revival townhouse, now in danger of being altered beyond recognition, was home to Congregation Hessed LeAvraham, the first location in America for the Langer Brandwein family of the Strayner Dynasty of Hasidic Jews.

Like most who came to America during the height of Eastern European Jewish immigration, the earliest Hasidic leaders and their followers settled in New York's Lower East Side, as did smaller numbers of Jews who continued to arrive up to and following World War II. Today's well known Hasidic communities in Brooklyn, upstate New York, Montreal, Toronto and elsewhere in North America are composed of post-war immigrants and their forbearers, often from once thriving Lower East Side Hasidic communities. The history of these communities is little known; few traces remain of their decades in our neighborhood. But these communities, and their synagogues, are a central aspect of New York's Jewish and immigrant histories. The building at 328 E 4th Street is exemplary of this period, having served for half a century as a Hasidic synagogue established by an important rabbi.

From 1924-1970, Rabbi Uri (Ira) Langner (1896-1970) headed Congregation Hessed LeAvraham. Following his father, Rabbi Langner had been the *rebbe*, the Hasidic leader, of the small town of Knihynicze, in a part of Galitzia (formerly Poland and Austria-Hungary) now in the Ukraine. He was the grandson of the original Strettiner Rebbe, the founder of this respected Hasidic dynasty. Rabbi Uri Langner (see the attached) was the author of several important religious volumes, including *Nehmad VeNa'im* on the Torah (New York, 1934), *Or HaAggadah* on the *Aggadot* of the *Talmud* (Brooklyn, 1942), *Or HaDe'ah* (Brooklyn, 1958), and *Or HaHaggim* (Brooklyn, 1955). This Hasidic line remains active today in Brooklyn, with followers also in Monsey (upstate New York), Montreal, Toronto and Israel.

The open door of immigration to the United States was closed by the Immigration Act of 1924. Rabbi Uri (Ira) Langer was able to arrive just before the enactment of this law, with sufficient followers to open Congregation Hessed LeAvraham. He and his congregants suffered from anti-Semitism, the turmoil of World War I Europe and the Russian Revolution. As such, this synagogue and its renowned rabbi represent the last of the major migration of approximately 2.2 million Eastern European Jews who immigrated to the United States beginning in 1880. Thereafter, many of those unable to immigrate due to the new immigration law—or their progeny—perished in the German Holocaust. In this way, too, the building at 328 East 4th Street stands as a central memorial to New York immigrant history.

We strongly urge you to landmark Nos. 326 & 328 East 4th Street before the planned alterations to the buildings obliterate all evidence of their remarkable past.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director
Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation



Kurt Cavanaugh
Managing Director
East Village Community Coalition

Cc: Mary Beth Betts, Director of Research, LPC



**New York State Office of Parks,
Recreation and Historic Preservation**

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau • Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

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October 1, 2010

David A. Paterson
Governor

Carol Ash
Commissioner

Andrew Berman
Executive Director
Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation
232 East 11th Street
New York, NY 10003

RE: State and National Registers eligibility evaluation request
326 and 328 East 4th Street (Uranian Phalanstery)
New York County, NY

Dear Mr. Berman:

Thank you for your interest in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. After reviewing your eligibility evaluation request for the brick row houses at 326 and 328 East 4th Street in the East Village, it is the opinion of the State Historic Preservation Office that the buildings appear to meet the criteria for listing to the Registers. Attached to this letter is a copy of our Resource Evaluation.

A copy of this letter of eligibility is being forwarded via email to Mehdi Matin of the Uranian Phalanstery. In order for a building to be listed in the National Register, the property owner must not oppose the proposed listing. It is the policy of the State Historic Preservation Office to work closely with owners to inform them of the potential benefits of listing. Not only is listing to the Registers a prestigious honor, it brings with it economic benefits. Not-for-profit organizations that own registered properties may apply for historic preservation grants from various sources. Owners of historic commercial properties listed in the National Register may qualify for historic preservation tax credits. The Tax Reform Act of 1986 allows a 20 percent tax credit for the substantial rehabilitation of income-producing historic properties.

If the owner of the property expresses interest in proceeding with listing the property, we will provide detailed information on the next steps at that time. If you have any questions about this determination of eligibility please feel free to call me at (518) 237-8643 ext. 3266.

Sincerely,

Kathleen A. Howe
Historic Preservation Program Analyst

cc: Mr. Mehdi Matin

enc.



**New York State Office of Parks,
Recreation and Historic Preservation**

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David A. Paterson
Governor

Carol Ash
Commissioner

RESOURCE EVALUATION

DATE: October 1, 2010

STAFF: Kathy Howe

PROPERTY: Row houses at 326 & 328 East 4th Street

MCD: Manhattan

COUNTY: New York Co.

USN: 06101.018018

- I. Property is individually listed on SR/NR:
name of listing:
- Property is a contributing component of a SR/NR district:
name of district:
- II. Property meets eligibility criteria.
- Property contributes to a district which appears to meet eligibility criteria.
- Pre SRB: Post SRB: SRB date

Criteria for Inclusion in the National Register:

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or represents the work of a master; or possess high artistic values; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;
- D. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE¹:

Based on the information provided², the two adjacent three-story, brick houses at 326 and 328 East 4th Street appear to meet Criterion C as excellent examples of Greek Revival row houses of the late-1830s and early 1840s. They are also significant under Criterion A as a microcosm of the evolution of nearly two centuries of history of this part of the Lower East Side, better known today as the East Village. They represent the history of the East Village – from its years as a working port, to its shift to a point of entry

¹ Much of the information for the "Statement of Significance" is excerpted from Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, "Historic Resource Inventory Form on 326 & 328 East 4th Street," September 14, 2010, on file at SHPO.

² The interiors of the houses have not been evaluated for their historic integrity. When information and photographs on the interiors become available the SHPO will reevaluate the status of the buildings at that time.

for waves of immigrants, to its role as the heart of the largest Jewish community in the world, to finally its transformation to an epicenter for the artistic community.

Many of the early owners of houses located in the far East Village worked in the waterfront industries on the nearby East River. Tax records indicate that the original owner of 326 East 4th Street was Fickett & Thomas, a large shipbuilding company. Records also indicate that Francis Fickett was the original developer of several homes along the block.

With the massive influx of immigrants to the East Village in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many single-family houses became multiple-family dwellings as was the case with both 326 and 328. Around that time, the Lower East Side/East Village became the largest Jewish community in the world. Reflecting this shift, 1927 building permits indicate that No. 328 housed a synagogue that is believed to have served a Hungarian congregation. The shul remained until 1974, when both buildings came to house the Uranian Phalanstery, which calls itself "an anarchist utopian commune for practitioners of art and cosmology" and still exists today.³

This history of changing populations combined with the buildings' architectural distinction, make 326 and 328 East 4th Street among the most remarkable survivors in this part of the East Village. The three-story row houses were built in 1837 and 1841 in the newly fashionable Greek Revival style. The houses have brick facades, high basements, and stoops with wrought iron railings. The façade of no. 328 retains a higher degree of historic integrity than no. 326. The entrance at No. 328 retains its rectangular sidelights, transom, Doric pilasters, denticulated entablature, and brownstone enframing. The classical enframing at no. 326 is intact while the original door was replaced, but with one evocative of the neighborhood's transformation to an artistic enclave in the 1970s. Many of the original multi-light wood windows are intact at no. 328. Windows have simple sills, and lintels of simple moldings. Many of the original lintels have been removed at no. 326. The roofline of both is marked by a wood cornice, with a row of dentils above a wood fascia board.

Their undoubted architectural distinction and their unusual history -- both residential and institutional -- mirroring the history of its neighborhood, combine to make this Greek Revival pair unusual East Village survivors.

³ Rhonda Lieberman, "Stuff of Dreams," ARTFORUM, August 6, 2010, accessed online at <http://artforum.com/diary/id=26095>.



Robert B. Tierney
Chair

1 Centre Street
9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

212-669-7888 tel
212 669 7955 fax

August 12, 2010

Mr. Kurt Cavanaugh
Managing Director
East Village Community Coalition
143 Avenue B
New York, NY 10009

Dear Mr. Cavanaugh:

Thank you for your letter concerning the buildings at 328 and 326 East 4th Street.

In light of the plans filed for both buildings, a senior staff committee of the Landmarks Preservation Commission conducted an expedited review. After carefully reviewing the proposals we found that both buildings have suffered the loss and replacement of some significant features, and are in too poor a physical condition to rise to the level of individual landmarks. Further, the Commission's research department has identified better examples of Greek Revival-style row houses in the East Village. Commission staff is actively pursuing these row houses, among numerous other buildings, as potential individual landmarks.

As you know, the Commission's survey of the East Village has led to the landmark designation of several individual buildings, and I look forward to working with you and the East Village Community Coalition as we continue our efforts to preserve this neighborhood's history.

Thank you for your interest in historic preservation and in the work of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Sincerely,


Robert B. Tierney

cc: Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation