



August 20, 2003

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

Re: **Federal Era Row Houses of Lower Manhattan**

Dear Chair Tierney:

We write to you to strongly urge your expeditious consideration of designation as individual landmarks the thirteen federal row houses identified in the New York Landmarks Conservancy's document, "Federal Era Row Houses of Lower Manhattan." These include: 67 Greenwich Street; 94, 94 1/2, and 96 Greenwich Street; 57 Sullivan Street; 486 and 488 Greenwich Street; 2 Oliver Street; 127, 129, and 131 MacDougal Street; 7 Leroy Street; and 4 St. Mark's Place.

This designation proposal presents a unique opportunity for the Commission. Through the efforts of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation and historian Susan DeVries, all necessary background and historical research about these buildings has already been compiled, thus easing the usual burden upon the agency staff. Indeed, the research was initially gathered in response to an appeal from the Landmarks Preservation Commission to the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation in the mid-1990's to document the wealth of surviving federal row houses in Lower Manhattan which were undesignated and therefore unprotected. With a few exceptions, in spite of this information having been gathered, these buildings remain undesignated and unprotected. However, these thirteen represent what is perhaps the best opportunity to remedy that oversight.

Perhaps most importantly, however, this proposal presents an opportunity for the Commission to preserve and honor an extremely important period of our city and our nation's history, and to highlight some of Lower Manhattan's most unique resources and historic assets. Particularly at this time, we feel it would be extremely helpful for the Commission to take an action which would so clearly illustrate the unique contributions Lower Manhattan has made to our city and country's history, and to draw much-needed attention to its special character, quality and appeal.

These thirteen houses represent a wonderful cross-section of New York and the nation's first architectural style, in terms of date of construction, form, and geographical distribution. Each merits individual designation, but designating all thirteen will send a strong message about the Commission's desire to protect this fragile and extremely important class of buildings. And while some owners have

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*Established in 1980 to protect the
cultural and architectural heritage
of Greenwich Village.*

Letter to Hon. Robert Tierney re: Federal Era Row Houses
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expressed a willingness to consider supporting landmark designation for their properties (and all owners have been contacted by the Conservancy), many of the houses are in fact vulnerable to demolition or alteration. Recent attempts by the owner of 129 MacDougal Street to sell that property to NYU, and the impending rezoning of the area including 486 and 488 Greenwich Street illustrate only the most well-known and highly publicized reasons for concern for these buildings; without landmark protections, any or all could be lost or compromised at any time.

Please know that you have our strong support for the Commission taking action on designation of these houses and at each subsequent stage of the ratification process. If, in addition to the information and materials which have already been provided, we can supply any further assistance, do not hesitate to let us know. We hope you will use this important opportunity to preserve an irreplaceable part of our city's history.

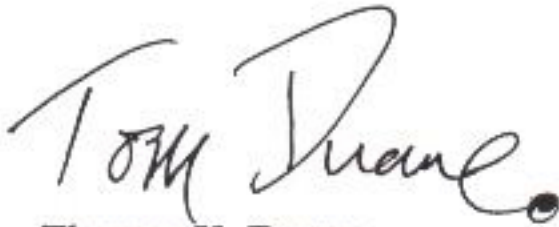
Sincerely,



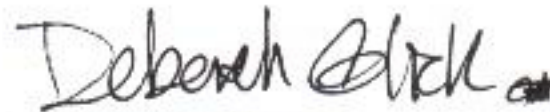
Andrew Berman, Executive Director
Greenwich Village Society
For Historic Preservation




Peg Breen, President
New York Landmarks Conservancy



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