



Greenwich  
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Society for  
Historic  
Preservation

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August 16, 2006

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

**Re: Request for Evaluation for 84 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street,  
Block 539 Lot 18, Manhattan**

Dear Chair Tierney: *Bob*

I write to request that the Landmarks Preservation Commission evaluate the above referenced property, the New York Board of Fire Underwriters Fire Patrol #2, for landmark designation. Such a request takes on a particular urgency because the owner of the property, the New York Board of Fire Underwriters, has announced its intention to sell off the property for development (see attached articles), which would likely result in the building's alteration or demolition.

The building itself is a handsome Beaux Arts structure with a 2-story rear structure built in 1906 to the designs of Franklin Baylis. It was built for the Fire Patrol of the New York Board of Fire Underwriters, and has functioned in that capacity for the last one-hundred years. The Fire Patrol itself is a two-hundred year old institution which predates the New York City Fire Department. In fact, it is believed that fire patrols of insurance underwriters are an institution originated by Benjamin Franklin, and virtually every large city in the United States used to have one. However, New York's is not only the oldest in the country, it is the only one still operating. The Fire Patrol #2 is in fact one of the last remaining physical vestiges of this historically significant institution, as there are just three remaining patrol houses in operation – this one, one at 240 West 30<sup>th</sup> Street, and one in downtown Brooklyn.

However, with the New York Board of Fire Underwriters' recent announcement of their plans to shut down and sell off these houses, that may all soon change. While the Commission cannot and does not regulate either use or ownership of designated structures, it would seem wholly within its purview to at least ensure that such a rare vestige of such an important slice of the city's history is preserved.

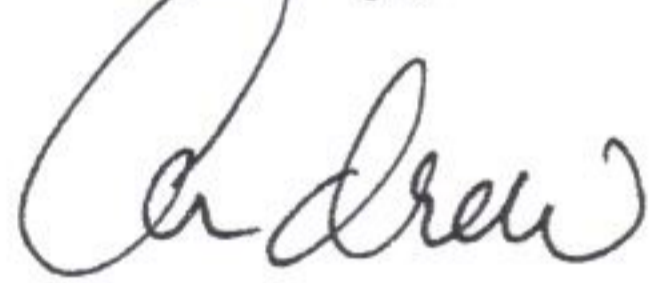
GVSHP is especially concerned about this property because it lies within our South Village Historic District study area. GVSHP will be submitting to the Landmarks Preservation Commission a proposal or proposals for historic district designation for the South Village which will likely include this site this fall. As per prior communications with the Commission, during the three-year period during which we have conducted this study and done extensive research and analysis to provide the Commission with the maximal information to consider such a proposal, we have also brought any threats to historically significant buildings within the area to the Commission's attention in the hope that action would be taken to save them. As you know, during this time such historically

significant buildings as the Circle in the Square Theater, the Sullivan Street Playhouse, and the Tunnel Garage were all lost. We hope not to see further losses to the integrity of this historically rich area.

To assist in the Commission's consideration of this request, I have included a copy of the original New Building Form from 1906 for the fire patrol building. As you know, GVSHP has similar historic material on every building surrounding this site in our South Village Historic Study Area (which extends north to 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and east to LaGuardia Place), so if the Commission is interested in considering this building along with any of its neighbors, we would be happy to share with you all data we have about them.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and please do not hesitate to let me know any additional way in which I could be of assistance in its consideration. I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman  
Executive Director

Cc: Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer  
City Council Speaker Christine Quinn  
State Senator Tom Duane  
City Councilmember Alan Gerson  
Assemblymember Deborah Glick  
Community Board #2, Manhattan  
Community Board #5, Manhattan  
Mary Beth Betts, Director of Research, Landmarks Preservation  
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New York Landmarks Conservancy  
Historic Districts Council  
Beaux Arts Society  
International Association of Fire Fighters - Local I-26 - Uniformed Fire  
Patrolman's Association  
Ed Kirkland, Chelsea Historical Association