



**Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation**

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December 9, 2009

Hon. Robert LiMandri
Commissioner, NYC Department of Buildings
280 Broadway, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Robert C. Tierney
Chair, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: 43 MacDougal Street, Charlton-King-Vandam Historic District

Dear Commissioner LiMandri and Chair Tierney,

I write to you regarding 43 MacDougal Street, the unoccupied, deteriorating 1846 townhouse located within the Charlton-King-Vandam Historic District.

I am grateful that the Landmarks Preservation Commission has begun to initiate a Demolition By Neglect case against the owner (which would legally compel him to repair the property), and that the Department of Buildings has begun to perform routine inspections, many of which have resulted in the issuance of Emergency Declarations to stabilize the building. In late October, we were encouraged that the owner – for the first time – responded to the latest of these declarations by cleaning out the interior of the building. This clean-up has been ongoing for over a month, and has, happily, resulted in the removal of large volumes of refuse and potentially hazardous materials from the building.

However, despite these latest advancements, we remain very concerned about the condition of the property. Though the owner's recent responsiveness is hopeful news, many steps still need to be taken before the building's deterioration is halted and reversed, and before the building can be adequately restored.

I therefore urge the Department of Buildings and the Landmarks Preservation Commission to continue to work toward alleviating the building of its rodent problems, water damage, and general deterioration. Work must be done to restore the storefront, which is currently hidden under plywood, and to repair the windows and cracked and spalling brick facade. Even as the owner continues his clean-up, his history of unresponsiveness makes it all the more necessary that your respective agencies remain prepared to take the necessary legal actions to save this threatened building. I urge you inspect the building's interior as soon as the clean-up makes it safe to do so, and to continue pursuit of the Demolition by Neglect lawsuit to force the owners to make further improvements on the property in an expedited manner, before the deterioration becomes irreversible. I also urge your agencies to continue to aggressively pursue payment of the outstanding \$120,000 in unpaid fines by the owner of this building for ignoring health, safety, fire, buildings and landmarks regulations.

Thank you for your continued attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Andrew Berman
Executive Director