February 14, 2020

Hon. Sarah Carroll, Chair
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker and Councilmember, 3rd District
224 West 30th St, Suite 1206
New York, NY 10001

RE: Support for landmark designation of 70 Fifth Avenue, former headquarters of the NAACP and The Crisis Magazine

Dear Chair Carroll, Mayor de Blasio, and Speaker Johnson,

As the 1st Vice President of the New York State NAACP and the President of the NAACP Mid-Manhattan Branch, I am writing to express my strong support for the effort by Village Preservation to secure landmark status for 70 Fifth Avenue as part of a historic district designation for the area. This 1912 Beaux Arts style office building is significant as the former headquarters of the NAACP and The Crisis magazine. These organizations were based here from 1914 until the mid-1920s, a critical, seminal period in their history when their agendas were highly controversial and faced widespread opposition. While here, the NAACP undertook groundbreaking, successful campaigns which affected the lives of millions and altered the course of history in our country.

From its 70 Fifth Avenue headquarters, the NAACP opposed President Wilson’s imposition of segregation upon the federal workforce, protested the demeaning portrayals of African Americans and the glorification of the Ku Klux Klan in the film The Birth of a Nation, and called for federal anti-lynching legislation to stem the rising tide of race-based violence in the country. The organization worked to propose new legislation prohibiting race-based discrimination in housing and employment, and demanded fair and equal treatment for black soldiers in World War I, securing the right of African Americans to become commissioned officers and to join the American Bar Association. The NAACP successfully advocated for Supreme Court rulings striking down “grandfather” clauses that disenfranchised black voters and “white only” primaries which prevented black candidates from running for office. Documentation indicates that it was here the organization began its iconic campaign of hanging a flag printed with the words “A MAN WAS LYNCHED YESTERDAY” outside its office window to call attention to these acts of racist terror.
At the same time, 70 Fifth Avenue housed The Crisis Magazine, the oldest black magazine in the world which became a vital voice in the Civil Rights movement and showcased noteworthy writing and art for over a century. W.E.B. DuBois and Augustus Granville Dill’s publishing house, which printed The Brownies’ Book, the very first magazine published for African American children, operated out of 70 Fifth Avenue as well. The Brownie’s Book, along with The Crisis, featured the writings of now-revered authors including Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Countee Cullen, among many others. Several of these authors’ works were published for the first time in the pages of these publications.

Without a doubt, the rich history of the NAACP and The Crisis is inextricably linked to this area, which throughout the mid-to-late 20th century fostered the growth of many civil rights and social justice organizations, notable among them the National LGBTQ Task Force and the New York Woman’s Suffrage League. I therefore strongly urge you to move ahead with the proposed historic district including 70 Fifth Avenue and its surroundings.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey E. Eaton  
President  
NAACP Mid-Manhattan Branch  
500 7th Avenue, 8th Floor  
New York, NY 10018
February 18, 2020

Hon. Sarah Carroll, Chair  
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
One Centre Street, 9th Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor  
City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker and Councilmember, 3rd District  
224 West 30th St, Suite 1206  
New York, NY 10001

RE: Support for landmark designation of 80 Fifth Avenue, former headquarters of the National LGBTQ Task Force

Dear Chair Carroll, Mayor de Blasio, and Speaker Johnson,

As the Executive Director of the National LGBTQ Task Force, I am writing to express my strong support for the effort by Village Preservation to secure landmark status for 80 Fifth Avenue as part of a historic district designation for the area. This 1908 Renaissance Revival style office building served as the original headquarters of the National LGBTQ Task Force, then known as the National Gay Task Force. As the first national LGBTQ rights organization in the United States, the Task Force accomplished a number of groundbreaking changes in the dozen or so years it was located here, initiating battles for civil rights that are still being fought today.

The National Gay Task Force was founded by Dr. Howard Brown, Martin Duberman, Barbara Gittings, Ron Gold, Frank Kameny, Natalie Rockhill, and Bruce Voeller in 1973. Among its early accomplishments, the Task Force helped get the federal government to drop its ban on employing gay people, and pushed the American Psychiatric Association to remove homosexuality from its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. It also advocated for the
ultimately successful ruling by the U.S. Civil Service Commission eliminating the longtime ban upon gay people serving in federal government, ending decades of witch hunts against government workers suspected of being gay. In 1977, the Task Force arranged the first meeting between the White House and a gay advocacy group.

Also, during its time at 80 Fifth Avenue, in the late 1970s the Task Force staff conducted the first national survey of corporate hiring policies (called Project Open Employment) to determine whether U.S. employers explicitly barred discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. This was followed by another survey of municipal police departments, laying the groundwork for ongoing campaigns to secure protections by government and private employers against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation (and eventually gender identity as well). The Task Force was further instrumental in drafting and securing the introduction of the very first federal gay rights bill in Congress in 1975 by local Congressmembers Bella Abzug and Ed Koch, as well as several other representatives. While the bill did not pass then and still has not passed the entire Congress, it has been consistently reintroduced in various forms — most recently as the Equality Act — in the forty-five years since, gaining increasing support. It has become the basis for non-discrimination laws passed by 22 states and the District of Columbia, as well as hundreds of cities, counties, and localities throughout the United States. While headquartered here the Task Force also secured the first federal funding for AIDS education, approval of the first HIV test, and a change of the name “Gay Related Immune Deficiency Syndrome” to “Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.”

The National LGBTQ Task Force remains a social justice advocacy non-profit organizing the grassroots power of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community and advancing a progressive vision of liberation. Without a doubt, the history of the organization is inextricably linked to this area, which throughout the mid-to-late 20th century fostered the growth of many civil rights and social justice organizations, notable among them the NAACP and the New York Woman’s Suffrage League. I therefore strongly urge you to move ahead with the proposed historic district including 80 Fifth Avenue and its surroundings.

Sincerely,

Rea Carey
Executive Director
Hon. Sarah Carroll, Chair
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Carlina Rivera, City Councilmember, 2nd District
254 East 4th Street
New York, NY 10009

Date 15 January 2020
Betref Support for landmark designation of 88 East 10th Street and surrounding area south of Union Square

Dear Chair Carroll, Mayor de Blasio, and Councilmember Rivera,

I am writing to express my strong support for the effort by Village Preservation to secure landmark status for 88 East 10th Street and its surroundings as part of a historic district designation for the area. From 1952 to 1959, 88 East 10th Street was the home and studio of Dutch-American painter Willem de Kooning, one of the most significant abstract expressionists who redefined the international art world. While de Kooning’s history here warrants designation on its own, the blocks around his former home boast an even deeper Dutch-American history, as the land was long owned by the Brevoorts and Stuyvesants. Both families played a major role in the early development of New York City, including the area south of Union Square.

De Kooning lived and worked at 88 East 10th Street during some of his most important years as an artist. He and his contemporaries formed an artists’ enclave on East 10th Street, which drew a larger movement of artists from Greenwich Village to the more affordable East Village. 88 East 10th Street was the first place where de Kooning combined his working studio with his residence – a trend for artists in the mid-20th century which transformed nearby neighborhoods like SoHo and NoHo, of which this was an early example.

In his studio at East 10th street, de Kooning completed many of his major works, such as the Women series (1950-53). Women I was bought by The Museum of Modern Art, and Women II by John D. Rockefeller III and Blanchette Rockefeller. One of De Kooning’s most famous abstract urban landscapes, Backyard on 10th Street (1956), depicts the backyard of 88 East 10th Street.

After World War II, New York supplanted Paris as the center of the art world, and following the death of Jackson Pollock in 1956, de Kooning was considered the master of abstract expressionism. In the 1950s artist-run galleries began to flourish, particularly on de Kooning’s block. Examples are Tanager in 1952, at 90 East 10th Street, and Camino, Brata, March, and Area Galleries. These galleries stood in contrast to the conservative uptown galleries and functioned within a collaborative spirit among the artists. They not only served the ‘old guard’ of
artists such as de Kooning, Jackson Pollock and Franz Kline, but also new artists coming to New York City. Though de Kooning found a new, larger studio space by 1958 or early 1959 at 831 Broadway, he continued to work in his East 10th Street studio while a renovation of the new space occurred, and rented out No. 88 until 1963.

Today, it is undeniable that de Kooning and the artists’ enclave on East 10th Street transformed New York City and the broader art world. However, very few of the structures housing the former galleries and artists’ studios central to this abstract expressionist school of the 1940s and 1950s remain from this period. 88 East 10th Street, by contrast, is nearly intact to its appearance during de Kooning’s time. It is nothing short of remarkable that this most significant structure is still extant, and landmark protections would not only recognize this significance, but ensure its preservation.

The highly-significant Dutch-American history of the area goes back even further. The Stuyvesant family, descendants of Director-General of New Amsterdam Petrus Stuyvesant (1610-1672), continued to own the land of the family’s original farm into the first half of the 19th century. Petrus Stuyvesant (1727-1805) was credited with the original layout of the streets of the area, which led to the urban development of this neighborhood and remains visible in the still extant Stuyvesant Street. Peter G. Stuyvesant (1777-1847) owned land sold for the development of a number of extant buildings that give the area south of Union Square its distinctive architectural and cultural character.

The Brevoort family also owned land south of Union Square. Henry Brevoort Sr. (1747-1841) was so influential that he is the reason why Broadway swerves to the northwest at 10th Street – to avoid demolishing his orchard located where Grace Church stands today. The younger Henry Brevoort Jr. (1782-1848), a patron of the arts and literature known for his close association with writers Washington Irving and Sir Walter Scott, exerted no less of an influence upon New York’s development. Like his father, the younger Brevoort had designs upon shaping New York real estate, and did so extensively.

Without a doubt, Willem de Kooning’s very important place in American and Dutch-American art history is inextricably linked to the area south of Union Square. The deep Dutch-American roots of the neighborhood and its development connect to some of the most important facets of New York’s development. I therefore strongly urge you to move ahead with the proposed historic district including 88 East 10th Street and its surroundings.

Sincerely,

Joost Taverne
The Netherlands Cultural Attaché to the United States

Date
15 January 2020
Hon. Sarah Carroll, Chair  
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
One Centre Street, 9th Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor  
City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Carlina Rivera, City Councilmember, 2nd District  
254 East 4th Street  
New York, NY 10009

RE: Support for landmark designation of sites associated with the history of Reginald Marsh

Dear Chair Carroll, Mayor de Blasio, Councilmember Rivera,

I am writing to express my strong support for the effort by Village Preservation to secure landmark status 11 East 12th Street, 11 West 12th Street, and 4 East 12th Street as part of a historic district designation for the area.

All of these sites are significant due to their association with Reginald Marsh, and a host of other urban artists who lived and worked in nearby studios and residences attached to the vibrant Union Square and Fourteenth Street neighborhood of the 1920s and 1930s. In the history of Urban development coming from the presence of artists and their documentation of neighborhood social and cultural histories, Marsh and his peers continued a vital precedent for today that drew its own past from nineteenth-century New York.

As I wrote in my 1993 book, The ‘New Woman’ Revised: Painting and Gender Politics on Fourteenth Street, Urban Realist painter Reginald Marsh (1898–1954) lived at 11 East 12th Street and 4 East 12th Street in the 1930s. Marsh was one of the key figures of the ‘Fourteenth Street School’ of painters, an influential group of artists in the 1920s and 30s all of whom lived and worked in the area Village Preservation is seeking to landmark.

The Fourteenth Street School painters came to redefine urban realist painting, often focusing on their immediate and workaday surroundings on or near their namesake street — sometimes called “The Poor Man’s Fifth Avenue” — a center for bargain shopping and entertainment for average and working-class New Yorkers. Building on the work of the Ashcan School painters (Marsh was taught by John Sloan at the Art Students League, along with his mentor Kenneth Hayes Miller who lived and worked on
Fourteenth Street), they combined an interest in modern urban subjects with a knowledge of Renaissance art. The working and shopping women who were became their subjects continued an attention to the body informed by their experience of drawing from the nude at the Art Students League. In addition to Marsh and Miller, the group included Isabel Bishop (and her young clerical working girl subjects from area businesses like Con Edison), and Raphael Soyer (and his milleners and shop girls from Kleins). All the artists focused on Union Square park and its unemployed men from the Depression, even supporting one who was a regular model.

Marsh was born in Paris to expatriate artist parents who returned to the United States around 1900. In 1916, he entered Yale University, where he majored in art and drew illustrations for the Yale Record. Following graduation, he arrived in New York and soon established himself as a successful freelance illustrator, working for popular publications including the New York Daily News, the New Yorker, Vanity Fair, and Esquire. In 1921, Marsh began attending classes at the Art Students League, where he studied with other members of what would become the Fourteenth Street School, with whom he developed a lifelong relationship. After visiting Europe early in 1926, Marsh’s interest in the Old Masters increased, as did his commitment to becoming a painter rather than an illustrator.

In 1928, he began working at a studio at 21 East Fourteenth Street (since demolished), where many of his fellow painters also worked. A careful though detached observer, Marsh excelled at representing crowds of New Yorkers, showing lively scenes of both the unemployed and the working class going about their daily activities. Burlesque shows, movie houses, elevated trains, Depression homeless encampments, and places of work all figured prominently in Marsh’s paintings, often of scenes not far from his perch just off Union Square.

It was during the 1930s, when Marsh was on East 12th Street, that he gained his greatest prominence and his most celebrated works were produced. Marsh, who made linocuts, lithographs, drawings, engravings and etchings as well as paintings, also lived across the street at 4 East 12th Street. Marsh’s etching ‘Box at the Metropolitan’ was printed on his press at 4 East 12th Street. In his later years Marsh would teach at the Art Students League, where a young Roy Lichtenstein, who would cite him as one of his most prominent influences, was one of his students. Marsh’s murals grace the rotunda of the landmarked U.S. Customs House at 1 Bowling Green, and his work can be found in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Brooklyn Museum.

The area south of Union Square in the mid-to-late 20th century was one which attracted painters, writers, publishers and radical social organizations many of whom were challenging social and cultural American mores. Reginald Marsh’s very important place in American art history is inextricably linked to the area south of Union Square. I therefore strongly urge you to move ahead with the proposed historic district for the sites associated with him and his work.
Sincerely,

Ellen Wiley Todd, Associate Professor Emerita
Department of History and Art History
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA. 22030-4444
etodd@gmu.edu
ellenwileytodd@gmail.com
December 6, 2019

Hon. Sarah Carroll, Chair  
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
One Centre Street, 9th Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor  
City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Carlina Rivera, City Councilmember, 2nd District  
254 East 4th Street  
New York, NY 10009

RE: Support for landmark designation of 204 East 13th Street, former home of  
NEA Jazz Master Dr. Randy Weston, and environs

Dear Chair Carroll, Mayor de Blasio, Councilmember Rivera,

I am the widow of NEA Jazz Master Dr. Randy Weston and I am writing to express my strong support for the effort by Village Preservation to secure landmark status for 204 East 13th Street, which was his home during the 1960s, as part of a historic district designation for the area.

NEA Jazz Master Dr. Randy Weston was not only a gifted jazz pianist compared with the likes of Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk, but he was also an innovator and visionary in his compositions exploring the connections between African and American music. His contributions to the American history of jazz music constitute a significant chapter in that history and he has profoundly influenced generations of musicians to follow.

The area south of Union Square of New York City has a number of sites that are part of the American Jazz story, as many prominent blues and jazz musicians lived and worked in this area during the mid-20th century. I therefore strongly urge you to move ahead with the proposed historic district including 204 East 13th Street and its surroundings.

Sincerely,

Fatoumata Weston
Hon. Sarah Carroll, Chair  
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
One Centre Street, 9th Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor  
City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Carlina Rivera, City Councilmember, 2nd District  
254 East 4th Street  
New York, NY 10009

RE: Support for landmark designation of sites associated with the history of Hammacher & Schlemmer

Dear Chair Carroll, Mayor de Blasio, Councilmember Rivera,

I am writing to express my strong support for the effort by Village Preservation to secure landmark status for 133 Fourth Avenue as part of a historic district designation for the area.

From 1904-1926 this 1897 building on the corner of 13th Street and 4th Avenue was home to our trailblazing hardware store, Hammacher & Schlemmer.

Hammacher & Schlemmer was the city's first hardware store, opened in 1848, and is the country's longest running catalog, first published in 1881.

The store originally opened in 1848 at 221 Bowery at a time when high-quality hardware was hard to find. Then just 12 years old, William Schlemmer would sell tools in front of his uncle's store. By 1867, he, along with newly acquired partner Alfred Hammacher (a fellow German immigrant), bought the business and renamed it Hammacher & Schlemmer. The two men turned this local shop into a national company, introducing American consumers to such items as the pop-up-toaster (1931), electric dry razor (1934), automatic steam iron (1948), microwave oven (1968), cordless telephone (1973), among many others.

In 1904, having outgrown its quaint Bowery location, Hammacher & Schlemmer moved to 133 Fourth Avenue (also known as 127-135 Fourth Avenue and 102-104 East 13th Street). Built in 1897 by Marsh, Israels & Harder, this building occupies a unique plot of land- picture a square corner lot with a little square cut out of the very corner.

The Fourth Avenue facade is more elaborate than its 13th Street counterpart, as it was the entrance to the store. This eclectic mash-up of styles makes this building extremely unique,
not dissimilar from our hardware store that earned the motto, "if you can't find it, try Hammacher & Schlemmer," for its wide array of hard-to-find products.

By 1926, our company had once again grown too large for this home and moved to 147 East 57th Street, where we are today. 133 Fourth Avenue, however, remained in the family until 1936 under the ownership of William Schlemmer's daughter Ida S. Bruch, who owned several other properties in the area. The 57th Street location is still our company's flagship store today and the catalog continues to thrive.

The area south of Union Square in the mid-to-late 20th century was one which attracted painters, writers, publishers and bookstores and us, Hammacher & Schlemmer, New York City's first hardware store. We strongly urge you to move ahead with the proposed historic district for the sites associated with us and the other notable figures of history and examples of architecture.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Richard W. Schlemmer
President
Hammacher Schlemmer
December 5, 2019

Hon. Sarah Carroll, Chair
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Carlina Rivera, City Councilmember, 2nd District
254 East 4th Street
New York, NY 10009

RE: Support for landmark designation of 80 University Place, former home and office of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell

Dear Chair Carroll, Mayor de Blasio, Councilmember Rivera,

As the great, great niece of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman trained as a medical doctor in the United States, I am writing to express my strong support for the effort by Village Preservation to secure landmark status for 80 University Place as part of a historic district designation for the area. This former row house, originally No 44 University Place, served as the home and medical office at the beginning of Dr. Blackwell’s groundbreaking medical career in New York City starting in 1851.

Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell’s initial efforts to serve within the medical community in the United States was met with resistance and her first patients were primarily local Quaker women. Seeing a need among the women and children within the poorer communities in the Lower East Side, she set up a series of dispensaries there to service those populations. These efforts were furthered in 1857 when she established The New York Infirmary for Women and Children at the former James Roosevelt house on Bleecker Street. This was the first hospital for women, staffed by women, and run by women in the United States and patients were cared for free of charge. The hospital was responsible for innovations in hygiene critical in preventing disease and in educating the public on those benefits, such as bathing ailing patients and encouraging them to keep clean. Blackwell also launched a "Sanitary Visitor" program to visit the needy in their homes in the slums and improve hygiene.
In 1868, she along with two other female physicians, Dr. Marie Zakrzewska and Dr. Emily Blackwell (Elizabeth’s sister), opened and operated the Women’s Medical College of the New York Infirmary to provide both training to aspiring female doctors and medical care for poor women and children. This institution was the first to offer women medical training, to prioritize female medical care and, like its precursor of the New York Infirmary, it was also staffed entirely by women. The Women’s Medical College of the New York Infirmary was also ahead of its time in that it offered four year educational programs during a time in which medical schools, catering almost exclusively to men, only offered two year programs. In its thirty-one years of successful operation, the Women’s Medical College educated more than 350 female physicians.

The significance of the pioneering work of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell cannot be overstated. She changed the face of medicine promoting hygiene and preventative medicine among both lay persons and professionals and the promotion of medical education and opportunities for women physicians. It is fitting that such work began in an area of New York City which over the years has born witness to other innovations in the areas of civil rights – particularly women’s rights –, the labor movement, the arts, and publishing. I therefore strongly urge you to move ahead with the proposed historic district for 80 University Place and its surroundings.

Sincerely,

Jane Carey Blackwell Bloomfield
December 9, 2019

Hon. Sarah Carroll, Chair
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Carolina Rivera, City Councilmember, 2nd District
254 East 4th Street
New York, NY 10009

RE: Support for landmark designation of 80 University Place, former home and office of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell

Dear Chair Carroll, Mayor de Blasio, Councilmember Rivera,

I am a fourth-generation New Yorker and the author of a forthcoming biography of the groundbreaking sister doctors Elizabeth and Emily Blackwell. Elizabeth Blackwell was the first woman in America to receive a medical degree, in 1849. Emily Blackwell, eternally eclipsed, was the third, in 1854. Together, they founded the New York Infirmary for Indigent Women & Children, the first hospital staffed entirely by women. The book will be published by W.W. Norton in early 2021, to coincide with the bicentennial of Elizabeth Blackwell’s birth.

I am writing to add my strong support for the effort by Village Preservation to secure landmark status for 80 University Place as part of a historic district designation for the area. This former row house, originally 44 University Place, served as the home and medical office at the beginning of Dr. Blackwell’s medical career in New York City, in 1851.

Elizabeth Blackwell’s initial efforts to serve within the medical community in the United States were met with resistance. Seeing a need among the women and children within the poorer communities of the Lower East Side, she set up a dispensary to serve that population. This effort was furthered in 1857 when along with two other female physicians, her sister Dr. Emily Blackwell and Dr. Marie Zakrzewska, she established the New York Infirmary for Indigent Women and Children at the former James Roosevelt house on Bleecker Street. This was the first hospital for, staffed by, and run by women in the United States. The Blackwells promoted innovations in hygiene critical in preventing disease, and also launched a "Sanitary Visitor" program to visit the needy in their homes.

In 1868, Elizabeth and Emily Blackwell founded the Woman’s Medical College of the New York Infirmary to educate aspiring female doctors. Ahead of its time, it offered a more rigorous program than any existing medical college for men. In its thirty-one years of successful operation, the Women’s Medical College educated more than 350 female physicians.
The significance of the pioneering work of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell—both in promoting hygiene and in opening the medical field to women—cannot be overstated. It is fitting that such work began in an area of New York City which over the years has born witness to other innovations in the areas of civil rights—particularly women’s rights—the labor movement, the arts, and publishing. I strongly urge you to move ahead with the proposed historic district for 80 University Place and its surroundings.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]
November 5, 2019

Hon. Sarah Carroll, Chair
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Hon Carlina Rivera, City Councilmember, 2nd District
254 East 4th Street
New York, NY 10009

Re: Support for landmark designation of 17 East 13th Street, former home of Anais Nin’s Gemor Press

Dear Chair Carroll, Mayor de Blasio, and Councilmember Rivera,

The Anais Nin Trust was created in 1975 to manage the literary estate of Anais Nin. The Trust is dedicated to preserving Anais Nin’s legacy through the promotion of Nin scholarship, productions, and publications. We maintain copyrights over text, images, and recordings of or by Anais Nin, as well as Henry Miller’s letters to Anais Nin and Ian Hugo’s engravings.

I am writing today to express our strong support for the effort by Village Preservation to secure landmark status for 17 East 13th Street, the former home of Anais Nin’s Gemor Press, via historic district designation for the area.

Nin was a singularly important figure in 20th century literature and in the development of the female voice in western culture. Her work, which emanated from this building, had a profound effect upon the direction of her career and her success as a writer. Works produced here such as This Hunger were key to her recognition as a writer and her development of an audience for her work. The design and printing of these works of literature – which were actually works of art as well – was directly overseen by Nin, and reflected her unique and revolutionary approach to literature. As noted in the submission by Village Preservation, Nin was drawn to this area because it was a center of publishing as well as radical thought, which she combined in her work.

P.O. Box 26053, Los Angeles, CA 90026
That this building is virtually entirely intact to the time period when Nin’s press was located here is extraordinary. This tiny building housed many printers, though none as significant as Nin’s, but it speaks to the intimacy of the process involved and the personal involvement of Nin in this aspect of the production of her work. To lose this building almost eighty years after Nin’s remarkable time here would be a tragic loss, and preventable.

Given Nin’s significance, the role this building played in her work and life, and the connection which her location here bore to the related activities going on around her, I strongly urge you to move ahead with the proposed historic district designation for this and surrounding buildings.

Sincerely,

Tree L. Wright
Author’s Representative, the Anais Nin Trust
Secretary, the Anais Nin Foundation
treeleya@me.com
ph: 323-491-5776
fax: 323-443-3533