



THE ADVOCATE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

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March 19, 2019

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

RE: White Horse Tavern Interior, 567 Hudson Street

Dear Chair Carroll,

The Historic Districts Council echoes our colleagues and partners of Village Preservation in their call to landmark the interior of the White Horse Tavern at 567 Hudson Street in the Greenwich Village Historic District. For many New Yorkers, local bars are extensions of our living rooms, and the Horse has provided this atmosphere for well over a century. In addition to its significance in the literary world and one of the few surviving fixtures of Jane Jacobs' New York, the space itself is among a small handful of bar-restaurants in the City that retains its nineteenth century interior. This space and its patina possesses an authenticity that cannot be created, and should be preserved as a cultural interior landmark. As the LPC continues to explore and pursue landmarking for cultural purposes, New York's historic bars are excellent candidates worthy of consideration.

While LPC can't preserve our city's old businesses, preserving their interiors is a strategy that ensures that, while the name of the next business may change, the atmosphere won't look too different. In one recent and extraordinary case, the interior landmarked Gage & Tollner space will serve a new business that chose to revive the historic name of the restaurant. Public support to reconstitute this storied restaurant was so popular that the owners successfully raised all of the funds to bring "back" the eatery merely through crowdsourced investors, and substantially surpassed their financial goal. This is reflective of the current cultural shift away from franchise and chain dining, and the broad public interest and investment in the one-of-a-kind.

Regardless of what the future holds in terms of ownership or use in this space, LPC designation would not be a hindrance to business operations thanks to its pivotal corner location and its notoriety as a beloved drinking and dining space. While the LPC traditionally has reserved interior landmark designation for public spaces within high architecture, HDC suggests exploring the vernacular—the places of the people—as well. After all, pubs or "public houses" are the original and ultimate public spaces.

Sincerely,

Kelly Carroll
Director of Advocacy & Community Outreach

Cc: Andrew Berman, Executive Director, Village Preservation