



**Greenwich  
Village  
Society for  
Historic  
Preservation**

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*Founded in 1980, the  
Society fights to protect  
the architectural heritage  
and cultural history  
of the Village.*

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F. Anthony Zunino III

March 7, 2006

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

**Re: Tunnel Garage, 520-528 Broome Street/51-55 Thompson Street**

Dear Chair Tierney:

I write to inform you that the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation has just become aware that the owner of the Tunnel Garage is seeking permits to demolish this wonderful building. The threat to this local landmark is now no longer theoretical, but very real. I therefore urge you to take a final look at this building before it is too late, and act to landmark it to save it from demolition.

As you can see from the recent photos at [www.gvshp.org/SVblock489.htm](http://www.gvshp.org/SVblock489.htm), the Tunnel Garage, now stripped of the advertising billboards which long marred its façade, is a stunning building, almost completely intact and in the same condition as when it was built nearly 85 years ago.

As you know, the building has been determined eligible for listing on the State and National Register of Historic Places, and our call for landmarking the building has been supported by the Historic Districts Council, the Art Deco Societies of New York and Los Angeles, Friends of Terra Cotta, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, State Senators Martin Connor and Tom Duane, Assemblymember Deborah Glick, and literally hundreds of neighbors and admirers of the building's early art deco design who have written letters and signed petitions to the Commission.

While there are a few older extant purpose-built automobile garages in New York, the building marks both the coming of the automobile age and the nearby construction of the Holland Tunnel, which was the first vehicular connection to cross the Hudson. While garages of this type and in this style became common throughout Manhattan as the City entered the automobile age, this one is particularly distinguished for its vibrant brickwork, its elegant terra-cotta polychromy and signage, its dramatic and unusual rounded corner, the intactness of nearly all historic details including ornamentation and early industrial windows, and its prominent siting. This may be the finest architectural expression in our city of this form, which exploded in the 1920's with the boom of automobile production and the subsequent transformation of our cityscape and our country in its wake.

It would be a terrible shame to lose this building, and I hope the Commission will reconsider action before it is finally and irretrievably too late.

Sincerely,

Andrew Berman  
Executive Director



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October 14, 2005

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

**Re: Tunnel Garage, 520-528 Broome Street/51-55 Thompson Street**

Dear Chair Tierney:

I write regarding the threat of demolition to the above-referenced property, which falls within the South Village Historic District study area being examined by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation.

The Tunnel Garage, constructed in 1922 to the designs of Hector Hamilton, is an iconic industrial structure in this Lower Manhattan neighborhood. This late Arts and Crafts/early Deco-Modern garage has long been a local landmark at this prominent location, and its demolition or alteration would be a terrible loss. One of the oldest extant purpose-built automobile garages in New York, the building marks both the coming of the automobile age and the nearby construction of the Holland Tunnel, which was the first vehicular connection to cross the Hudson. While garages of this type and in this style became common throughout Manhattan as the City entered the automobile age, this one is particularly distinguished for its age, its vibrant brickwork, its elegant terra-cotta polychromy and signage, its dramatic and unusual rounded corner, the intactness of nearly all historic details including ornamentation and early industrial windows, and its prominent siting. Additionally, it is an integral element of this historic neighborhood, which has long been characterized by industrial architecture at its edges.

While the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation continues the enormous task of compiling and analyzing data upon this 35-block study area to submit a proposal(s) for landmark designation to the Landmarks Preservation Commission, we urge you to consider measures to protect this building from demolition or inappropriate alteration. GVSHP would be happy to share any information we have with you regarding this building or its surroundings to assist with such a consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew Berman  
Executive Director

Cc: State Senator Tom Duane  
City Councilmember Christine Quinn  
City Councilmember Alan Gerson  
Assemblymember Deborah Glick  
Community Board #2, Manhattan  
Historic Districts Council  
Friends of Terra Cotta  
DOCOMOMO Tri-State Chapter  
Modern Architecture Working Group