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*Established in 1966 to protect the
cultural and architectural heritage
of Greenwich Village.*

December 5, 2002

Commissioner Patricia Lancaster
New York City Department of Buildings
280 Broadway, 3rd floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioner Lancaster:

I write to you to express extreme concern about the condition of three buildings within the Greenwich Village Historic District, 305 West 11th Street/755-7 Greenwich Street, and 311 West 11th Street. As you know, the structural integrity of each of these buildings was compromised by work done some seven weeks ago by the owner of 305 West 11th/755-7 Greenwich, Annie Liebovitz. Seven weeks later, the damage has not been repaired, and the family living in 311 West 11th Street which had to be evacuated due to the danger to their home has still not been able to return.

We fear that current weather conditions combined with ongoing lack of repairs will make the likelihood of further structural compromise or collapse significantly greater. Several windows on the Greenwich Street side of the buildings have no coverings, allowing snow to enter and accumulate in the building. The 311 West 11th Street building which had to be evacuated suddenly has never had its pipes flushed, and therefore runs the danger of those pipes freezing and bursting, which could have disastrous consequences.

We understand that Ms. Liebovitz, the owner responsible for the work which resulted in this dangerous situation, has been asked to do emergency shoring of the buildings. We also understand that that has not happened, nor is its performance in any way imminent. To avoid a building collapse or the further compromise of the integrity of these structures, we strongly urge the City to do the emergency shoring work immediately and bill the liable property owner for the work. If such work is not done right away, we fear that current conditions may result in the loss of three historic, 1830's rowhouses, intended to be protected and preserved by New York City landmark designation.

In addition to the original work having been performed without permits, we also understand that the work may have been performed without an appropriate licensed architect or engineer. We strongly urge that such a dangerous breach of safety and professional practices be investigated and all appropriate action taken against all responsible parties.

We hope that you will act expeditiously.

Sincerely,

Andrew Berman
Executive Director