



**Greenwich  
Village  
Society for  
Historic  
Preservation**

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August 28, 2012

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

**Re: Inconsistent Applications of Standards for Consideration of Landmark  
Designation to 186 Spring Street, Manhattan**

Dear Chair Tierney,

I am responding to the August 15<sup>th</sup> letter from the Landmarks Preservation Commission's (LPC) Director of Research Mary Beth Betts regarding 186 Spring Street. In it, she says that in response to information submitted by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation about 186 Spring Street's unique role in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) rights movement and our request that the site be considered for landmark designation, "although the events and figures associated with 186 Spring Street are historically significant, the building lacks the requisite architectural integrity to warrant recommending 186 Spring Street to the full Commission for consideration as an individual landmark."

As per the recent letter from architectural historian Andrew S. Dolkart (who authored many of the Commission's own designation reports and served as an editor for the first three editions of the LPC's *Guide to New York City Landmarks*), this would seem to be a wholly inconsistent application of standards for consideration of landmark designation as it regards 186 Spring Street. As Professor Dolkart noted, the standard the LPC has applied elsewhere for consideration of landmark status for a historically significant site has been the degree of alteration and architectural integrity for a site as it relates to the period of significance, which in this case would be ca. 1970 to 1981. As documented by the city's own 1980 tax photo, 186 Spring Street is virtually unaltered from this time period. As Professor Dolkart pointed out, one need only look to the Louis Armstrong House, among other sites, where the Commission designated in spite of significant alteration from the original form of the house (much more significant than in 186 Spring Street's case), because it was largely uncompromised from the period of significance, when Mr. Armstrong lived there.

It would be profoundly disturbing if the LPC were applying a different standard to this site than others in declining to consider 186 Spring Street for landmark designation. Given that the Commission has never designated a single site in New York City based upon its significance to LGBT history, in spite of the incredibly rich array of sites in New York City connected to the LGBT civil rights movement, unfortunately we have no other examples from which to compare.

The lack of any cases where the LPC has designated a site primarily for its significance to LGBT history or the LGBT civil rights movements is an unfortunate oversight on the part of the Commission and fails to reflect the pivotal role that New York City has played in the broader LGBT civil rights movement and that this movement has played in the life of our city. That oversight should be corrected. Given 186 Spring Street's incredibly strong connection to the LGBT civil rights struggle and the consistency of its architectural integrity with other sites the LPC has landmarked for associations with historically significant figures and movements, I urge you to reconsider this decision. I hope the LPC will move ahead with consideration of 186 Spring Street for landmark designation, as well as the whole proposed South Village Historic District, as you promised to do years ago.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman  
Executive Director

cc: City Council Speaker Christine Quinn  
State Senator Tom Duane  
Assemblymember Deborah Glick  
City Councilmember Daniel Dromm  
City Councilmember Jessica Lappin  
City Councilmember Rosie Mendez  
City Councilmember James Van Bramer  
Preservation League of NY State  
Historic Districts Council  
NY Landmarks Conservancy  
Municipal Art Society  
NY Preservation Archive Project  
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force  
Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation  
Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club  
Stonewall Democratic Club  
Gay and Lesbian Independent Democrats  
Queer History Alliance  
LGBT Community Services Center History Project