



**Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation**

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September 5, 2012

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

delivered via e-mail

Re: Additional Information re: 186 Spring Street, Manhattan

Dear Chair Tierney,

I write to provide additional information regarding the extraordinary historic significance of 186 Spring Street, Manhattan. I urge the Commission to consider this information and move ahead immediately with consideration of the site, and the entire proposed South Village Historic District of which it is a part, for landmark designation.

As has already been established, Jim Owles, Arnie Kantrowitz, and Bruce Voeller, residents of 186 Spring Street and leaders of the Gay Activists Alliance, played a key role in having the first bill introduced in the New York City Council and in the New York State Legislature in 1971 that would have banned discrimination based upon sexual orientation. **However, we have since become aware that these were actually the very first “gay rights” bills ever introduced anywhere in the country** (see [HERE](#)). Versions of these bills were enacted by the City of New York in 1986 and the State of New York in 2002, **but it must also be noted that since this first bill was introduced at the initiation of these residents of 186 Spring Street (among others), twenty-one states and the District of Columbia, as well as literally hundreds of municipalities and counties, have passed similar legislation** (see [HERE](#)).

Additionally, as Director of the National Gay Task Force, **Bruce Voeller played a key role in having the very first federal legislation outlawing discrimination based upon sexual orientation introduced in the U.S. Congress** (see [HERE](#)). **Voeller also, as co-director of the Task Force, arranged and co-lead the very first delegation of gay rights leaders to ever meet with the White House in 1977** (see [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)); at a press conference that followed, attendees proclaimed “history was made today” and the meeting led to multiple changes in the ways in which various federal agencies treated lesbian and gay Americans (see [HERE](#)).

Based upon this and the extensive prior documentation provided to the Commission [by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation](#) and the [National Gay and Lesbian Task Force](#), I believe that it is undeniable that 186 Spring Street is of extraordinary significance in not only our city but our state and our nation’s history. Based upon the [standards the Commission has applied in other similar cases, such as the Louis Armstrong House](#), I believe the Commission must move ahead with landmark designation of 186 Spring Street immediately.

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