

DISTRICT OFFICE
47-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD, SUITE 205
SUNNYSIDE, NEW YORK 11104
TEL: (718) 383-9566
FAX: (718) 383-9076

CITY HALL OFFICE
250 BROADWAY, SUITE 1815
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10007
TEL: (212) 788-7370
FAX: (212) 788-7195



THE COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
JIMMY VAN BRAMER
COUNCIL MEMBER, 26TH DISTRICT, QUEENS

CHAIR
CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES &
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

COMMITTEES
FINANCE
TRANSPORTATION
PARKS & RECREATION
HEALTH
CIVIL RIGHTS
GENERAL WELFARE
PUBLIC HOUSING

July 16, 2012

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

Re: 186 Spring Street, proposed South Village Historic District, and LGBT history

Dear Chair Tierney:

I write to urge you to reconsider the decision not to move ahead immediately with designation of the proposed South Village Historic District and to protect the immediately-threatened 186 Spring Street. Among the many reasons why the Commission should move right away to designate this area, including this threatened 1824 house, is its powerful and unique connection to the early gay rights movement and New York's earliest lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) communities and their struggle.

In the immediate post-Stonewall era, 186 Spring Street was home to an array of critical figures in the early gay rights movement. From this house, they helped establish some of the most important organizations working to advance the cause of equality for the LGBT community, and had a profound influence upon the present-day social, political, and cultural landscape as it relates to LGBT people.

Being involved with the historic preservation efforts of my neighborhood in Sunnyside Gardens, I deeply value the work of preservationists for their important efforts of keeping our history intact. After speaking with the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation Executive Director, Andrew Berman, I strongly believe that 186 Spring Street should be preserved.

The extraordinary significance of 186 Spring Street and the South Village generally to LGBT history is only one of many reasons why the Landmarks Preservation Commission should move ahead immediately to consider designation of this area, as it promised to do several years ago. As you know, the New York State Historic Preservation Office, in determining the area eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, said that the South Village contained "a rich array of buildings of architectural, historical, and cultural significance... Beginning in the early decades of the twentieth

century and continuing beyond the post-World War II era, the South Village has been the setting of important counter-cultural movements, institutions, and trends including the bohemian-era, jazz clubs, gay bars, off-Broadway theater, Beat culture, and the folk music revival,” while the Preservation League of NY State, in declaring the South Village one of the seven most historically significant endangered locations in New York State, said the South Village contained “a wealth of architecturally and historically significant buildings and sites constructed between the 1820s and 1930s... associated with the immigrant experience, bohemian and artistic achievements (especially in music) and counter-cultural movements.”

In light of this additional information regarding the unique cultural significance of 186 Spring Street, which is threatened with imminent demolition, as well as the well-documented outstanding historic significance of the South Village as a whole, I urge you to move ahead to protect this site and this entire area as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jimmy Van Bramer". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jimmy Van Bramer
New York City Council Member

Jvb:mw