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May 29, 2019

Commissioner Sarah Carroll, Chair  
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission  
David M. Dinkins Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project – Landmark Designations**

Dear Chairwoman Carroll,

On behalf of the Preservation League of New York State, I write in support of the individual landmarking of the six sites relating to LGBT cultural history. These individual sites are extremely significant to local, state and national history and must be protected under the rule of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

The Preservation League applauds the work of the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project to nominate these sites as individual NYC landmarks. The members of this project team were awarded a Preservation League of NYS Excellence in Preservation Award in 2019 and a New York State Historic Preservation Award in 2018 for their research, documentation and outreach efforts. The NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project has served as a local, state, and regional example of expanding National Register designation to include sites relating to underrepresented history and has truly set a new standard for cultural sites and underrepresented communities, which is now being replicated in Western New York. It is extremely important that the Landmarks Preservation Commission advance the mission of the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project by affording these sites the full protection and recognition of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Law:

- ***Gay Activists Alliance Firehouse, 99 Wooster Street, Manhattan***  
The GAA formed in December 1969 and became the most influential American gay liberation and political activist organization in the early 1970s. This building was used as the GAA headquarters from 1971 to 1974.
- ***James Baldwin Residence, 137 West 71<sup>st</sup> Street, Manhattan***  
This site is currently under consideration for the National Register of Historic Places and was the former residence of literary icon and civil rights activist James Baldwin. Baldwin wrote several novels that featured gay and bisexual characters throughout his lifetime and spoke openly about same-sex relationships and LGBT issues.

- ***Women's Liberation Center, 243 West 20<sup>th</sup> Street, Manhattan***  
The Women's Liberation Center operated in this building from 1972 to 1987 and served as an important meeting space for many women's groups, including those that specifically served the lesbian community.
- ***Audre Lorde Residence, 207 St. Paul's Avenue, Staten Island***  
This building was the former home of acclaimed black lesbian feminist, writer and activist Audre Lorde. She lived at 207 St. Paul's Avenue from 1972 to 1987 with her partner and two children, authored numerous influential books and spoke at the 1979 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. She also co-founded Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, an activist feminist press with close ties to the National Black Feminist Organization while living at this residence.
- ***The LGBT Community Center, 208 West 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Manhattan***  
The LGBT Community Center, located in this space in Manhattan, has served as an important support system for millions of people since 1983 and has inspired the founding of many additional important LGBT groups, including the Gender Identity Project.
- ***Caffe Cino, 31 Cornelia Street, Manhattan***  
The Caffe Cino is widely recognized as the birthplace of off-off Broadway and was located on the ground floor of this building from 1958 to 1968 during a time when the depiction of homosexuality on stage was still illegal. Performances that occurred here were pioneer efforts in the development of gay theater. This property was recently nominated to the State and National Registers of Historic Places in 2017.

When considering the multitude of culturally significant social history that occurred in each one of these buildings, it becomes clear that these physical structures are markers of an important place in our history and must be adequately preserved. Giving these six properties the full protection of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Law will ensure that these stories are continuously told and that these physical spaces remain safe from insensitive development or demolition because their history is valued. We applaud the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission for considering landmarking for these significant properties and we fully support the efforts of the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project to designate them as such.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you might have about this letter.

Sincerely,



Jay DiLorenzo  
President