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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXCELLENCE IN PRESERVATION AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Eldridge Street Synagogue on Lower East Side to be honored

ALBANY, NY – May 1, 2008 – The Preservation League of New York State has selected **Eldridge Street Synagogue** in New York City to receive its prestigious Excellence in Historic Preservation Award. This statewide awards program recognizes individuals and organizations for demonstrating an outstanding commitment to the preservation of New York State’s irreplaceable architectural heritage.

“In 1984, my predecessor Brendan Gill presented one of our first Historic Religious Properties Awards to the Eldridge Street Synagogue, in recognition of its historical and architectural significance and organized efforts to restore the structure,” said Jay DiLorenzo, President of the Preservation League. “Twenty-four years later, we are delighted to recognize this magnificently restored and hallowed place not just as a relic of the past, but as an example of how a successful historic preservation project can revitalize diverse neighborhoods and communities.”

Contributing to the success of this effort were the non-profit cultural institution overseeing the restoration, the Eldridge Street Project; project architect Walter Sedovic Architects of Irvington; architects Wiss Janney Elstner Associates of New York; owners representative Simpson, Gumperts & Heger of New York, structural engineer Robert Silman Associates, PC of New York, construction manager T Higgins Construction Inc. of Ridgewood, NJ, Reynaldo C. Prego, P.E. of New York and many others.

The 1887 Synagogue, the first great house of worship built on the Lower East Side by Eastern European Jews, was an architectural marvel when it first opened. However, as the neighborhood changed and the congregation dwindled, age and weather began to take a devastating toll on the building.

“This is one of three or four historical sites that tell in a nutshell the whole story of the Lower East Side, and Jewish immigration,” said Roberta Brandes Gratz, founder of the Eldridge Street Project. “If we didn’t save this building, we’d have had to reinvent it.”

(more)

“I am proud to have been able to witness and support the hard work the Museum’s architectural team applied with its thoughtful restoration plan,” said Sheldon Silver, Speaker of the New York State Assembly, who represents the Lower East Side community in which the Synagogue is located. “Through the efforts of the Eldridge Street Project, the Synagogue has been restored to its former grandeur. In addition, Eldridge Street serves as a gathering place for young people of diverse backgrounds as they learn about Jewish culture, immigration, Lower East Side history, architecture and historic preservation.”

The award will be presented at the Preservation League’s Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony in New York City at 6:00 p.m. on **Thursday, May 15th** at the historic **Park Avenue Armory**, 643 Park Avenue.

In addition, the Preservation League will *Celebrate Seven to Save* – its list of New York’s most endangered historic places – at the museum at the magnificently restored **Eldridge Street Synagogue** on **Tuesday, May 20**, with a cocktail reception from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. This benefit is open to the public, and tickets for the event start at \$100. For more information or to receive an invitation, call **518-462-5658 x11**.

The complete list of award winners is: Webb Lofts in Buffalo, Erie County; MacNaughton House Stabilization in Newcomb, Essex County; U.S. Post Office & Courthouse, Cadman Plaza, Brooklyn, Kings County; Downtown Revitalization Program, Canajoharie, Montgomery County; Eldridge Street Synagogue, Lower East Side, New York County; Proctors, Schenectady, Schenectady County; Hotel Kirkland, Kingston, Ulster County; Model Development Block, New Rochelle, Westchester County. The Hudson Valley Chapter of the American Society of Home Inspectors will be honored for organizational excellence, and Trude Brown Fitelson of Rochester will be honored for individual excellence. *Preserving New York: Winning the Right to Protect a City’s Landmarks* by Anthony C. Wood (Routledge, 2007) will also receive a special citation.

“Excellence in Preservation Awards are our principal means of honoring the preservation community and educating the public about the important contribution that historic preservation projects make to our quality of life throughout New York State,” said DiLorenzo. “Each year, we are impressed by the number and variety of laudable projects, and this year was no exception. We are delighted to give the Eldridge Street Synagogue the statewide recognition it deserves.”

The Preservation League’s Excellence in Historic Preservation awards program is funded by a generous grant from the Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Foundation of Miami, Florida.

By leading a statewide preservation movement, sharing information and expertise and raising a unified voice, the Preservation League of New York State promotes historic preservation as a tool to revitalize our neighborhoods and communities, honor our heritage and enrich our lives.

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