



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

Testimony Before the Landmarks Preservation Commission Regarding First Avenue Estate on November 14, 2006

LIZ KRUEGER July 15, 2010

Good morning. My name is Liz Krueger and I represent the 26th State Senate District, which includes the Upper East Side, East Midtown and Midtown neighborhoods of Manhattan.

I appreciate the opportunity to express my full support for the restoration of landmark status to 429 East 64th Street (“429”) and 430 East 65th Street (“430”) as part of the City and Suburban Homes Company’s First Avenue Estate. These buildings reflect both the culture and history of the community in which they are located, as well as a wider movement that aimed to bring better living conditions to all New Yorkers.

As you are well aware, the Landmarks Preservation Commission voted unanimously in 1990 to designate as landmarks both properties under consideration today when it approved a plan to confer landmark status upon the entire block (East 64th Street to East 65th Street between First and York Avenues). Unfortunately, the Board of Estimate subsequently chose to exclude 429 and 430, ignoring the recommendations of the Commission, the historical preservation community, and all of the area’s elected officials. Devoid of architectural or historical considerations, the decision was widely regarded at the time as a politically motivated choice. An uninformed ruling rendered by a body no longer in existence should not have superseded the careful deliberations of the preservation community and the

Commission. A *New York Times* reporter even remarked after that Board of Estimate decision that he could not “remember a set of landmarks more thoroughly researched and discussed than City and Suburban.”

The two buildings under consideration hold great architectural, historical, and cultural significance that must be preserved. The Commission found in 1990 that the City and Suburban Homes Company was the most successful of the privately financed, limited-dividend companies that attempted to address the housing problems of the nation’s working poor at the beginning of the twentieth century. These buildings, which served as national examples for the “model tenement” movement, were designed around an inner courtyard to ensure that every apartment had access to substantial light and air. In fact, the fifteen-building complex is one of only two full-block developments of light-court tenements in the country.

It is time that the Landmarks Preservation Commission properly acknowledged this heritage and reversed a misguided political decision that has stood in error for almost fifteen years. I am pleased to be joined in my support for the restoration of landmark status by a wide range of elected officials and community organizations including Borough President Scott Stringer, Congressmember Carolyn Maloney, Assemblymember Pete Grannis, Councilmember Jessica Lappin, Community Board 8, Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, the East 79th Street Association, and the East Sixties Neighborhood Association.

Thank you for granting me opportunity to speak at today’s hearing.