



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

## My Testimony to LPC Opposing a Certificate of Appropriateness for Alterations to Historic 104 East 10th Street

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL August 8, 2017



My name is Brad Hoylman and I am the State Senator representing New York's 27th Senate District, which includes the neighborhoods of Clinton/Hell's Kitchen, Chelsea, Times Square, Greenwich Village, Midtown/East Midtown, the East Village, Columbus Circle, the Lower East Side, and the Upper West Side. Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the Certificate of Appropriateness for a proposed two-story addition to 104 East 10th Street in the St. Mark's Historic District. This proposal includes the construction of two additional stories to the existing three-story structure, set back 14 feet at the first level and 18 feet at the

second level. I join Community Board 3, Manhattan, neighborhood preservationists and residents in strongly urging the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) to deny this application. To alter 104 East 10th Street would denigrate the historical and architectural integrity of this important building and prove out of context from its historically intact neighbors.

Under the current proposal, the new two-story addition would cause 104 East 10th Street to rise above neighboring buildings, creating an eyesore and leading to a structure out of context and character with the surrounding buildings. As the proposal document shows, 104 East 10th Street is flanked on one side by a three-story building and three four-story buildings on the other side. A five-story building in the middle of these, as is proposed, would clearly create a structure out of context with the surrounding area. The mass and scale of the proposed addition is an unwanted intrusion for current residents and their access to light, air, and a view of the neighborhood that is consistent with the local character.

The St. Mark's Historic District is a residential area of distinct architectural variety and historical qualities. As described in the original January 14, 1969 LPC designation report, this historic district "in the heart of our City...represents a residential area of exceptional charm and historical significance."<sup>1</sup> In 1984, it was determined that 102 and 104 East 10th Street were of such historical and architectural importance that the LPC extended the St. Mark's Historic District to include them.

Built in 1879, 104 East 10th Street is an important example of the neo-Grec style that serves as a critical part of this historic area. In its June 19, 1984 decision to extend the St. Mark's Historic District, the LPC highlighted the "special character and special historical interest and value" of these two significant buildings "which cause this area...to constitute a distinct section of the City."<sup>2</sup> The report continues "...the two dwellings complement and complete the residential character of the existing district...the relation of these buildings to each other

and to the streetscape furthers the architectural coherence of the St. Mark's Historic District and adds to its significance as a residential area of exceptional charm and importance.”<sup>3</sup>

Too often we see proposals for the alteration or demolition of buildings within historic districts. While I understand that sometimes change can be beneficial to historic districts when it is responsible, community-driven, and consistent with neighborhood character, the proposal under consideration today does not meet these criteria.

Approving this application will set a precedent for the future and lead to other, similar proposals to alter historically important buildings which are supposed to be protected against these out of context variations because they are located in protected areas. What is the purpose of a designated historic district if it does not protect the buildings that comprise it and make it special?

I echo the sentiments raised by Community Board 3 in their recent resolution opposing this change, as well as residents and neighborhood preservationists who have expressed concerns, including the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation and the East Village Community Coalition. The importance of community input cannot be understated and our community has spoken out against this proposal, which would chip away at the unique character and beauty of our neighborhood. I urge the Commission to deny this proposal and uphold the commitment to preservation and the continuation of a low-rise, architecturally unique, and historic neighborhood as the St. Mark's Historic District is meant to protect.