



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas K. Duane

Fighting for the Preservation of LGBT Historic Site 186 Spring Street

THOMAS K. DUANE September 27, 2012

In early July, it came to my attention that a demolition application had been filed with the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) for 186 Spring Street, part of a rare row of surviving federal-style houses that were deemed eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places as part of the South Village Historic District. I was disappointed when the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) rejected the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation's (GVSHP) request that the building be landmarked on the grounds that it "lacks the requisite architectural integrity" and was even more upset by that determination when I and many others learned or were reminded of the building's historical and cultural significance in connection to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) and HIV/AIDS activism and history. I was joined by my openly-LGBT colleagues, New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and New York State Assemblymember Deborah Glick, in urging LPC to reconsider its decision based on this new information.

I subsequently attended an August 22 rally and press conference at which I noted the entire South Village's unique and continuing legacy as a gathering spot for LGBT individuals and an incubator of LGBT activism. Regrettably, LPC rejected all the calls to landmark 186 Spring Street, even after the State and National Register of Historic Places deemed it eligible for listing based upon the LGBT history connected to the site. DOB has now issued a demolition

permit for the building and it will soon be coming down. By leaving 186 Spring Street unprotected, LPC sacrificed an important piece of our history. In the wake of this tremendous loss, we must redouble our efforts to secure Historic District designation for the remainder of the proposed South Village Historic District.