



THE ADVOCATE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

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May 30, 2013

Howard Mendes, Chair
Landmarks Committee
Manhattan Community Board 5
450 Seventh Avenue, Suite 2109
New York, NY 10123

Dear Howard:

The Historic Districts Council supports the request for evaluation submitted to the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission by Concerned Citizens of Gilsey House for several properties to be considered for individual landmark status on West 29th Street between Broadway and Fifth Ave. We hope that Manhattan Community Board Five shares our feelings and likewise will send a positive message to the Landmarks Preservation Commission to expedite their consideration of these worthy properties.

The buildings submitted to LPC for review are:

3-7 West 29th Street, the Bancroft Building: Designed by prominent architect R. H. Robertson for client Edward H. Van Ingen. Buildings of Robertson's design that have been designated as NYC landmarks include the Park Row Building and American Tract Building in Lower Manhattan, the Lincoln Building on Union Square, New York Savings Bank on West 14th Street, the Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew on the Upper West Side, and the Phelps-Stokes House on the Upper East Side among others.

9 West 29th Street: a small commercial structure altered in 1900-01 with a cast-iron façade by John B. Snook & Sons. The firm had a specialty in cast iron architecture and more than a dozen buildings in the designated SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District as well as several individual landmarks in Lower Manhattan are representative of the firm's high standard of work.

11 West 29th Street: One of a set of three 1850's Italianate rowhouses, each one of these buildings retains a high level of architectural detailing including original cornices. The two-story commercial storefront dates to the early 20th century and was also done by Snook & Sons. Additionally, the American Geographical Society made its first home here in 1879.

13-15 West 29th Street: Considered as a pair, 13-15 are also 1850s Italianate style rowhouses with intact cornices and original turn of the century commercial storefronts. Number 13 housed the important Woodcraft League of America, a predecessor and inspiration for the British Boy Scouts. According to research done by Christopher Gray and published in The New York Times in 2004, Number 13 also was home to the famous boy soprano John Chatterton.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Simeon Bankoff
Executive Director