



Making an invisible history visible

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June 29, 2021

Hon. Sarah Carroll

Chair, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Letter of Support for 80 Fifth Avenue, former National Gay Task Force Headquarters**

Dear Chair Carroll,

On behalf of co-directors Andrew Dolkart, Ken Lustbader, and Jay Shockley, I am writing in support of the Request for Evaluation recently submitted by Village Preservation for 80 Fifth Avenue, in Manhattan, which was the longtime headquarters of the National Gay Task Force (now the National LGBTQ Task Force). We also support VP's historic district proposal for the area south of Union Square, which includes other LGBT-related sites.

As you know, the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project is a cultural heritage initiative and educational resource that documents historic sites connected to the LGBT community throughout New York City from the 17th century to 2000. Our website features over 350 historic sites, including the former National Gay Task Force Headquarters. This site is also included in our award-winning *Historic Context Statement for LGBT History in New York City* (2018), which was undertaken as part of an Underrepresented Communities Grant from the National Park Service.

The National LGBTQ Task Force, the first national gay rights organization, was established in 1973 with the intention of bringing the LGBT rights movement into the national mainstream of American civil rights. Some of the founders were former Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) members disaffected by that group's internal squabbles, and included Dr. Bruce Voeller, Barbara Gittings, Frank Kameny, Dr. Howard Brown, Arthur Bell, Ron Gold, Nathalie Rockhill, and Martin Duberman. The "establishment" organization played a crucial role in helping to draft local gay rights bills across the United States, repeal sodomy laws, and encourage LGBT visibility. Its headquarters from October 1973 to 1986 was on the fifth floor of 80 Fifth Avenue. Renamed the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in 1985, it moved to Washington, D.C., in 1986.

In 2019, we were thrilled that the LPC met with our organization to discuss LGBT historic sites and, following a list of recommendations that we submitted to your agency, the LPC designated six buildings New York City Landmarks for their significance to LGBT history. Among those were the GAA Firehouse, in Soho, and the Women's Liberation Center, in Chelsea, two sites of LGBT organizing and activism connected to the immediate post-Stonewall era. We ask that the LPC continue to recognize the fight for LGBT equality as a key part of the city's history by designating 80 Fifth Avenue a New York City Landmark.

We have been working on a follow-up list of recommendations for you to consider, and the former headquarters of the National Gay Task Force will be included. We look forward to sharing that list with you in the following weeks and working with the LPC in designating more LGBT landmarks across New York City.

Please let us know if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,



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